

Executive Summary: *Inclusion and Diversity*

Problem: Despite past efforts, data shows that overall Missouri's state employee workforce continues to fall short of mirroring Missouri's population demographics based on race and gender. Past efforts focused on "solving" for a lack of diversity as a one-time project, and did not address the underlying mindsets. As a result, our everyday business operations do not intentionally practice inclusion and diversity. We are too uncomfortable to have real, authentic, and open conversations about race, gender, and other hard topics.

Solution: To create real and lasting change, state government leaders must openly and intentionally practice inclusion and diversity, to make it a habit and role model for others. Research finds that organizations that are more gender diverse are 21% more likely to outperform others; those that are ethnically diverse are 33% more likely to outperform others (*McKinsey & Company*). Research suggests that increased performance comes in part from improved: problem solving, customer service and engagement, and perception of brand. However, these benefits will not materialize or be sustainable without inclusion. Inclusion is when every single person in the organization is valued, heard, respected, empowered, and feels a true sense of belonging. It goes beyond tolerance and speaking out against discrimination, to elevating every person on our team and appreciating the value added of diversity of thought.

Three areas of focus:

- What our state government can do
 - Communicate importance of integrating I&D into daily business performance
 - Publish I&D specific dashboard metrics and goals
 - Standing agenda item every six months at Cabinet Meetings
 - Formalized/Informal Mentorship Program (suggested for next Leadership Academy capstone)
 - Ensure State Government services are provided to our diverse citizens
- What our individual organizations can do
 - Integrate I&D into all business operations
 - Conduct self-analysis, and publish metrics and results
 - Form I&D employee resources groups/councils
- What each of our cabinet leaders can do
 - Explain why I&D matters, and talk about it everyday
 - Role model a commitment to I&D
 - Promote and celebrate I&D, a lot
 - Seek/develop future diverse leadership (e.g, Diversity in Leadership Academy)

Next Steps:

Immediate steps that cabinet leaders can do:

- Locate the leadership checklist provided in the supplemental materials and start doing them.
- Encourage your peers to do the same and hold each other accountable.
- Formalize an agency plan, using the resources and tools provided.
- Seek guidance from those you trust and can help you move forward.

Fostering inclusion and diversity is a long-term investment. Agencies that make it a business practice will experience better decisions, faster results, creative solutions, improved fiscal management as they maximize the potential of every employee and understand the unique needs of the citizens we serve.