MEET THE CEIOO

Karrah Herring, J.D
State of Indiana | Chief Equity, Inclusion & Opportunity Officer

On November 19, 2020, Indiana governor, Eric Holcomb announced his appointment of Karrah to his cabinet as Indiana’s first-ever Chief Equity, Inclusion and Opportunity Officer for the state.

In this role, she works with the governor and his team to improve state government operations as well as remove hurdles in the government workplace and services the state provides.

Within the first 6 months, Karrah has engaged with over 200 stakeholders, built the infrastructure of the office, and in conjunction with other agencies rolled out the State of Indiana's first ever equity website and Equity Data Portal. Her team's two-year strategic plan will focus on equity in Community, Economic and Workforce Development.
DEFINING DEI FOR YOUR ORGANIZATION
Ensuring everyone in your organization utilizes the same definitions of diversity, equity and inclusion may be a heavy lift depending on the size of your organization. However, for the purposes of streamlining efforts, consistency and eliminating confusion, this should be a high priority.

DEFINING DEI FOR YOUR ORGANIZATION
Rather than googling definitions and simply inserting them into your culture, consider convening a group of key stakeholders within your organization and incorporating their feedback. Additionally, try and consider the mission, vision and or foundational values of your organization and work to align your definitions with the organizational culture.
DEFINING DEI FOR YOUR ORGANIZATION

RESOURCES

• Glossary of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Terms
• Racial Equity Tools
• Workplaces that Work for Women
STARTING WITH CIVILITY AND RESPECT
At the State of Indiana Workforce, we understand that everyone enters the DEI space at varying points on the continuum. Our goal is to meet people where they are and ensure we all utilize the foundational principles of civility and respect. Our “Next Level TEAMS” training is designed to define the importance and practical application of the tools of Civility, Constructive Disagreement and Compassionate Listening in order to prepare teams to be active Champions of Diversity.
Additionally, utilizing these concepts helps to normalize and operationalize equity and inclusion into the culture of the state of Indiana workforce teams and services. The goal is that one day, empathy and respect will be our normal modes of operation, and a culture of civility, diversity and inclusion will be engrained into the very fabric of our being.
STARTING WITH CIVILITY AND RESPECT

If you would like to learn more about the State of Indiana’s foundational “Next Level TEAMS” training session, click here.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Civility in the Workplace
- Civility Video from LinkedIn
- Workplace Civility Blog

Constructive Disagreement
- TED Talk with Julia Dhar

Compassionate Listening
- Your Brain At Work
- Compassionate Listening
- 5 Practices of Compassionate Listening
“Sticks and stones may break my bones, but words will never hurt me!”

So not true! Words can significantly impact our interaction with others. Words can also make a break the way your organization receives your DEI efforts. Regardless of our motive and intentions, words may harm or enhance dialogue.
Inclusive language furthers social and cultural diversity in a positive way and reduces negative stereotypes. People feel included when we adopt the correct words in conversation. It is important not to isolate particulate groups, place blame or make employees feel guilty about their own identities or privileges.

Learning and incorporating the most current terminology encourages a more productive dialogue about diversity and inclusion. We won’t always get it perfect, but incorporating a growth mindset is key.
INCLUSIVE
LANGUAGE

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

• 18F Inclusive Language Guide
• Inclusive Language for Recruiters
• Workplace Guide
LEADERSHIP 
BUY-IN/ 
MAKING 
THE CASE
It may feel frustrating and quite antiquated that we are still discussing the need to get leadership buy-in of diversity and inclusion efforts. The good news is more and more c-suite executives, university leadership and executive boards are proactively seeking to create more diverse and inclusive institutions.
Gaining the support of leadership increases the likelihood your organization will:

- Ensure the messaging is coming from and or affirmed by the most senior levels of leadership within your organization

- Build DEI into performance measures

- Provide adequate staffing and monetary resources to DEI efforts
The numbers don’t lie. Providing an accurate view of your workforce by job level/classification, recruiting efforts, hiring data, promotions and turnover disaggregated by race/ethnicity, gender and more, may help make the case for the need to implement DEI strategy.

Utilizing a cultural assessment to gain qualitative data is also a foundational necessity.

DEI efforts are not one size fits all. Tailor your DEI needs to your organization. A thoughtful and targeted approach for your company’s needs, resonates well with the leadership. Understand your culture.
Go after the “low-hanging fruit” so quick progress can be shown

- Creating Employee Resource Groups, holding monthly DEI talks with guest speakers or highlighting key books/articles and keeping a DEI calendar to acknowledge diverse cultural events and holidays are simple things your company can begin to explore in order to begin to transform the culture of inclusion. Additionally, working with your HR team to expand recruiting practices begins to diversify your applicant pools and can be done via relatively inexpensive measures.

Show how long-term strategy and adequate resources (staffing/funding) will have a significant ROI on the organization

- Diverse teams yield greater financial returns
- Inclusive teams see a decrease in turnover, thus saving the organization money
- Positive PR for organization thus enhancing recruiting efforts
- Decreases complaints of harassment and discrimination saving the organization money on investigations and litigation
ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- Getting Leadership Buy-In
- The Conversation Before the Conversation
- Showing the ROI of DEI
Additional information and resources can be found on our website

in.gov/equity