

# HUMAN RESOURCES ACTION PLAN: To address departmental diversity issues

August 1, 2007

The Human Resources Manager's vision for Human Resources employees is that they feel valued as individuals and that they know that their individual strengths contribute to the department's overall effectiveness in recruiting, hiring, training and retaining a workforce that provides the highest level of service to the customers it serves—Tempe residents and city of Tempe employees.

Five areas identified by the city of Tempe 2002 Diversity Audit (Inclusion, Bias, Good-Old- Boy Network, Promotions and Conflicts) and Human Resources' plan for responding to each area follows:

1. **Inclusion: "An inclusive workplace encourages all employees to participate fully and contribute at their highest level. Inclusion promotes equity."**

What is Human Resources doing to be more inclusive?

- Human Resources employees are provided an opportunity to discuss areas of concern or ask questions privately, team build, and celebrate individual and group successes through department and "team" meetings. Examples follow:
  - Department staff meetings
  - Employee Benefits 'team' meetings
  - Recruitment & Selection, Classification & Compensation and Employee Relations 'team' meetings
  - Tempe Learning Center (TLC) 'team' meetings
  - Individual meetings upon request
- Human Resources department team building activities include:
  - Breakfasts
  - Potlucks
  - Dessert parties
  - Holiday celebrations
  - Department retreats
  - Training and development opportunities
- Human Resources recognizes its employees' accomplishments as follows:
  - Recognition e-mails to entire Human Resources department
  - Cash gift certificates

- On-the-spot verbal acknowledgments
- Cause for Applause on-the-spot recognition certificate
- Human Resources encourages and supports formal and informal cross-training opportunities for its employees wherever possible.
- The “Front Desk/Receptionist” position is vital to Human Resources’ success because it is typically the first point of contact for internal and external customers. In order to ensure coverage, all Human Resources employees are asked to provide back-up support to the Front Desk position. Front desk duty helps participants better understand the customers’ needs and develop camaraderie.

What can Human Resources do to be more inclusive?

In 2002, the Six-sided Partnership was established to provide employees, regardless of position, a voice in the organization. The Six-sided Partnership includes the following employee groups:

- International Association of Fire Fighters Association (IAFF)
- Tempe Officers Association (TOA)
- SEIU Local 5 – PWU (Public Works Non-supervisory)
- SEIU Local 5 - NSU (All other non-supervisory)
- Tempe Supervisors’ Council (TSC)
- Senior Management Team

The Human Resources Department will:

- Continue to improve communication to the ‘confidential’ employee group (which does not participate as a member of the Six-sided Partnership), as well as identify a way for this employee group to have a voice in the organization.
- Continue to identify additional training and development opportunities for employees throughout the organization.
- Continue to identify additional cross-training opportunities for Human Resources employees, whenever possible.
- Continue to identify opportunities for Human Resources employees to serve as project leads; thus promoting additional opportunities for their exposure to city wide issues.
- Continue to encourage open communication within Human Resources and organizationally.

2. **Bias: “Everyone has stereotypes and biases. Continuous education and open dialogue is needed to promote understanding and awareness of the biases that create barriers.”**

The Human Resources Department has a small, yet very diverse workforce in terms of ethnicity, sex, age, and individual beliefs and values. Human Resources’ diverse employee group better understands typical employee biases and stereotypes, which helps Human Resources employees look outside of their individual comfort zones in order to better meet the customers’ needs.

What is Human Resources doing to improve its awareness and understanding of bias?

- **Communication:** Human Resources finds ways to serve the organization by communicating in ways that best serve organizational and employee group needs at all levels, (e.g., e-mail, direct mailings, Intra- and Internet, in-person meetings, small group meetings, large group presentations, etc.)
- **Training & Education:** Human Resources encourages employees at all levels of the organization to attend or take advantage of various training or educational opportunities that are available to them—programs that help them identify and address their personal biases and stereotypes. For example:
  - **MST Series (Mandatory Skills Training)** – MST is mandatory for new supervisors or managers and is open to all city of Tempe employees.
  - **CPM Program (Certified Public Manager Program)** – This is a program that is offered by Arizona State University. It targets mid- to upper-level managers, but is open to all employees in the organization.
  - **Tempe Learning Center (TLC) Advisory Board** – Recruits members from all levels of the organization.
  - **Tempe Learning Center (TLC) Faculty** – A group of formal and informal organizational leaders who teach classes developed and offered by the Tempe Learning Center—a division of Human Resources.
  - **Educational Partnerships** – Bachelor of Arts and Master of Public Program academic degree programs.

- Mediation Training – Human Resources employees have been trained as mediators through the American Arbitration Association, and receive follow-up training as needed for the purpose of assisting others with conflict resolution and obtaining a better understanding of others’ positions and paradigms.
- Title VII Employment Law Workshops – Customized on-site ‘refresher’ workshop on Title VII employment law.

What can the Human Resources Department do to improve its awareness and understanding of bias?

- Continue to demonstrate through action and word that open communication is welcomed and encouraged.
3. **Good-Old-Boy Network: “The ‘Good-Old-Boy’ network refers to favoritism based upon group affiliation. Effective workplaces help employees and managers move beyond their comfort zone by creating opportunities for networking and systems for hiring/promoting the ‘best candidate,’ regardless of diverse characteristics. The term “Good-Old-Boy” should only be used when referring to the Diversity Audit Findings.”**

What is Human Resources doing to eliminate the perception of a “Good-Old-Boy-Network?”

- Human Resources employees are encouraged to work and interact directly with employees at all levels of the organization (e.g., department managers, deputy managers, supervisors, et al.,) to provide direct service and foster or enhance employee relations.
- Human Resources employees are encouraged to join or participate in various professional organizations such as:
  - The Tempe Professional Development Club (TPDC)
  - The Society of Human Resources Management (SHRM)
  - The International Public Management Association (IPMA)
  - The Certified Public Manager (CPM) program
  - The Worldwide Employee Benefits (WEB) network
- Human Resources employees have learned each other’s ‘Team Colors’ – a training tool that is available to all employees in the organization to facilitate on-site an understanding and appreciation of each other’s differences.
- Human Resources employees are represented on the City’s:

- Downtown Employee Parking Board
- Recruitment Outreach Subcommittee
- Diversity Steering Committee
- Human Resources creates opportunities for networking and systems for recruiting and promoting the best candidates through:
  - Tempe Essentials – a new employee orientation program that provides employees with an overview of the City and its organizational mission, goals, and culture
  - Presentation skills courses – teaches employees powerful communication tools to enhance their leadership skills
  - Interviewing workshops – teaches employees methods for improving one’s interviewing skills
  - Education career consultations – meetings to discuss resources available to employees to help them reach their personal career goals
  - Educational partnerships – programs to help employees obtain vocational licenses and professional certifications or earn academic degrees

What can Human Resources do to eliminate the perception of a “Good-Old-Boy Network”?

- Continue to identify training, educational and professional affiliation opportunities for employees.
- Continue to promote an environment in which employees believe that their opinions and ideas are not only heard, but respected; thus promoting good-will and improving communication throughout the organization.

**4. Promotion: “Effective workplaces ensure equity by developing and implementing fairness and objectivity in their hiring, recruitment and promotional practices.”**

What is Human Resources doing to overcome a perception of inequity in its recruitment and promotional practices?

- Continue to serve as a “model” for other city departments charged with being responsible for ensuring fair hiring and employment practices are followed throughout the organization.
- Human Resources advocates promoting from within, whenever possible.

- Human Resources encourages the use of public employee forums as a tool to give employees working directly with the applicant an opportunity to ask questions and provide anonymous feedback.
- Human Resources encourages cross-training as a mechanism to provide its employees growth and promotional opportunities wherever possible.
- Human Resources promotes fair and objective recruiting and promotional practices by providing:
  1. The MST series learning sessions, which focus on the City's promotional and recruitment practices and
  2. Workplace Standards and Accountabilities refresher workshops, which focus on employment law and the City's Personnel Rules and Regulations in terms of creating a fair, unbiased and objective organization.
- Minus a formal training budget, Human Resources identifies monies to fund formal and informal training and employee development programs, such as:
  - Local seminars, conferences and workshops
  - Training & educational programs
  - Tuition Reimbursement Program, and
  - In-house workshops

What can Human Resources do to improve its internal promotional opportunities?

- Continue to identify potential training, development, educational, and cross-training opportunities for Human Resources employees.
- Continue to educate city employees (management, supervisory, and non-supervisory) of fair and equitable employment practices (e.g., recruitment, selection and promotion).
- Continue to educate interview panel members of fair employment practices (e.g., rater errors, application review, etc.)
- Continue to educate city employees on how to properly prepare employment applications, learn effective interviewing techniques, learn how to mentor/coach others, etc.

- Continue to oversee, develop, and improve the City’s recruitment, selection and employment practices to ensure that all processes (including promotional) are administered fairly and consistently.
  - Continue to ensure that Human Resources employees and city managers or supervisors are kept abreast of current employment laws.
  - Continue to investigate allegations of impropriety or violation of the City’s Personnel Rules & Regulations and discrimination, as necessary.
5. **Conflict: “Effective organizations help staff recognize that conflict can be healthy. Employees and managers learn to accept and appreciate differences. They learn how to resolve conflict before it becomes a major issue.”**

What is Human Resources doing to help its employees manage conflict in the workplace?

- Human Resources holds annual “team building” retreats to:
  - Provide Human Resources employees an opportunity to get to know each other on a personal level, which promotes a feeling of unity.
  - Communicate Human Resources’ mission and goals.
  - Reinforce the benefit of constructive conflict.
  - Reestablish ground-rules on dealing with differences and conflict resolution.
  - Encourage and support conflict resolution through words and actions.

What can Human Resources do to help its employees become better managers of workplace conflict?

- Continue to promote an environment in which healthy conflict resolution techniques are communicated to employees and demonstrated through word and action – not only from the top down, but throughout the organization.
- Continue to identify strategies and coping mechanisms for staff to use when dealing with conflict through programs such as:
  - The Customer Service Program, which helps employees overcome conflict with customers in a positive and professional manner.

- The Conflict Management Course, which focuses on conflict in the workplace and how to provide healthy resolutions.
- The Ethics Workshop, which focuses on real-life workplace ethical scenarios that can create 'ethical conflicts of interest' for public employees.

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