



..... Equity, Diversity & Inclusion Team

## Michigan League for Public Policy Hiring Guidelines\*

### Introduction

The Michigan League for Public Policy's mission is rooted in using public policy and advocacy as tools to achieve prosperity for all people living in Michigan. As an organization, this has involved making racial equity a central value in order to reduce disparities faced by communities of color. The League believes it is necessary to "walk the talk" internally. This will ultimately improve our ability to achieve the organization's overall mission and achieve prosperity for all through the incorporation of racial equity tools and policies. This document includes recommendations for hiring to increase diversity and create policies and a culture that help retain people of color with the ultimate goal of increasing people of color in positions of leadership. These recommendations condense some of the resources passed on by the Center for Social Inclusion (CSI), Lakeshore Ethnic Diversity Alliance and other state partners. They are only part of the overall framework that must be implemented. Moreover, the League hopes to avoid the pitfall many organizations face when hiring diverse staff without making the necessary cultural changes to retain and support new ways of thinking and ideas. This document is a work in progress to truly uphold racial equity as a value of the organization.

The League's workforce equity objectives are:

- To recruit and hire more people of color.
- To create an organizational culture that facilitates retention of people of color.
- To have our staff better reflect the people we serve.
- To demonstrate diversity in leadership and governance.

### The League's History and Efforts

In recent years, the League has been intentional in its efforts to hire diverse staff leading to two women of color in director positions out of five senior staff. There are 16 employees total and, over the past five years, the League has averaged two to three employees of color. The fellow program has provided opportunities to have more diverse analysts for one- to two-year assignments. The League has intensified its diversity and inclusion training internally to create an environment that can successfully retain employees of color. This can be accomplished with careful planning, implementation and an intentional approach to equitable practices.

This guide begins by providing an overview of the nonprofit sector and barriers to workforce equity. It then offers steps to achieve greater equity within the organization over time. Here is an outline of recommendations it includes:

### Barriers to Workforce Equity

Workforce equity means that the workplace is inclusive of people of color and other marginalized groups of people and that institutional and structural barriers that impact employee recruitment, selection, advancement and retention have been eliminated. People of color have experienced a number of

institutional barriers in the workforce, including limited access to training, lack of appropriate support and fewer opportunities for career growth. Additionally, on an individual-level, [implicit bias](#) is--and has been--a barrier for people of color in the professional context. Biases, whether conscious or unconscious, are a choice that we each have the power to overcome by identifying them and then learning how to manage them. Training to promote unbiased employment decisions, such as the use of this guide, and targeted recruitment and retention efforts can support the goal of workplace equity.

## Hiring and Retention

Hiring a diverse staff is a small piece of a larger picture to inclusiveness in the workplace. The following considerations shall be intentionally thought through and developed:

- **Analyze hiring and retention data.** Supplement this with feedback or qualitative information that is available on workplace culture challenges. Use exit interviews to further analyze retention efforts. Numerical data cannot be used as justification to fill spots or “check the diversity box.” This common pitfall can be avoided by implementing other suggestions in this guide. Qualitative information can be obtained through tools like Colorado’s Organization-wide Assessment, which involved data collection, analysis and plan of action implementation.
- **Use the racial equity tools provided by CSI** to analyze implicit bias and institutional racism in human resource documents (personnel manual). Based on this analysis, take proactive steps to eliminate implicit bias and institutional racism. An additional list of articles, texts and videos to understand implicit bias are attached in the appendix.
- **Create a workplace culture where racial equity is a value and operationalized.** This must happen at all levels of the organization: board, management and staff. This is an ongoing process, and the ultimate goal is to have a workplace that is inclusive and provides space for individuals to work to address and improve organizational practices that enhance racial equity. Further work is needed to outline exactly what this means and may become more clear following a [Colorado-type internal survey](#).
- **Implement pipeline development programs** (i.e., training and professional development with opportunities for advancement). Have a professional development plan, as well as a work plan, with input from new hires. New staff members should be trained in the state legislative and budget process. Office buddy connections should be decided on an individual basis around professional development, common policy interests or culture. All staff, especially supervisors and buddies, should be familiar with or offered cultural competency training.

The following sections provide further guidance on the search process and interview process.

## Initiating the Search Process, Search Committee and Initial Discussions

- Verify that there is a focus on equitable search practice and a goal of identifying outstanding people of color and underrepresented groups.
- Provide professional support and articulate that diversity and excellence are fully compatible goals and should be pursued simultaneously.
- Agree upon selection criteria and develop the position prior to the search (see appendix).
- Formulate a plan to actively recruit underrepresented people of color prior to starting the search.
- Review practices that will mitigate the kinds of evaluation biases that result in unfair evaluations of people of color and underrepresented groups (see appendix).

- Think of ways to introduce the League's work to potential candidates and organizations with access to candidates throughout the year.
- *Avoid offending recruits. People of color and/or other underrepresented recruits will not appreciate subtle or overt indications that they are being valued on characteristics like race or gender. Candidates may already understand that outreach is geared towards recruiting underrepresented groups. It is important that recruitment focus on these candidates' qualifications and potential as analysts, advocates, administrative staff and executives.*
- Use this guide as a resource throughout the process.

## Defining the Position

- Review legal considerations and discriminatory questions around things like family status, race, religion, residence, etc.
- Create a candidate evaluation sheet that can serve as an unbiased tool. Consider key selection criteria for all candidates regardless of their own demographic characteristics that include the ability of the candidate to add intellectual diversity and successfully work with diverse colleagues.
- Establish selection criteria and procedures for screening, interviewing and recordkeeping prior to advertising.
- Ensure that all members of the hiring committee accept and understand the criteria for the position. To prevent potential misunderstandings, refrain from assuming that everyone is on the same page.
- Ask search committee members for specific feedback about candidates' potential rather than requesting generic feedback following the interview. For example, ask about outreach experience, public speaking and research, instead of "What did you think?"
- Expect and encourage negotiating. For example, women are less likely to negotiate better salaries on their own behalf; whereas, men often assume that it is a legitimate part of the process. This has been attributed as one factor in income inequality in the workplace. Those from underrepresented groups may not have adequate experience in this area. Encourage candidates to share or state their expectations and desired work and benefit goals, and seek to provide a fair outcome that works for all sides.

For outreach and hiring, the following considerations must be intentionally thought through and developed:

- **Write a job description with the minimum requirements** to perform the position advertised to succeed and perform objectively well. Include "or equivalent experience" where appropriate.
- **Do outreach for the job search**, in conjunction to doing equitable outreach overall, to diverse groups and partners with access to diverse groups.
- **Engage from all levels** (board, organizational leadership and staff) to ensure that everyone is on the same page and policies can be put into practice.
- **Create and implement goals and tools** to track progress and a process for accountability.

The following sections provide further guidance on the outreach and onboarding process.

## Posting Positions

- Include minimum requirements and preferred qualifications, along with equivalent experience requirements, to open the application process to groups that traditionally may have had less access to certifications like master's degrees, but have similar qualifications in terms of work experience,

etc. Look out for nontraditional career paths with equivalent qualifications.

- Use proactive language to indicate the organization's commitment to diversity.
- Review current process of outreach and implement ways to broaden this outreach.
- [Advertise](#) widely, reach out to groups and individuals that might have access to qualified and diverse candidates, and track outreach (i.e., MSU's James Madison College has a Students of Color in Public Policy group that could be directly targeted for internship opportunities).
- Advertise HR policies that are inclusive (i.e., family-friendly policies like paid leave, holiday leave and health care). This should be done after a review of HR policies.
- If a pool does not have any applicants of color, consider more extensive outreach and/or extending the deadline.
- All outreach and connections should be viewed as opportunities to connect with diverse communities with the goal of recruitment. Invite those who attend our equity conference to apply.

### **Onboarding with Positive Outcomes**

- Consider how hiring diversely improves overall outcomes for the organization. Beyond just "checking the box," this person may have experience and expertise through community involvement or advocacy experience. This benefit should go beyond demography, and it should be made clear to applicants and new hires that their skills and experience are valued. For organizations with a small staff, everyone should be made aware of these qualifications and experience.
- Make sure that all staff and new hires have access to clear and public procedures for evaluation and promotion, mentoring and professional development, and there is annual evaluation of these policies.
- Put into place a formal procedure to address the expression of racist, sexist, homophobic or other inappropriate attitudes, and make applicants and new hires aware of it.
- Make sure that implicit bias training is available to the hiring committee as well as all staff and is an integral and ongoing project of the organization.
- Consider paying a small stipend to interns or working with schools on course credit options.

### **Search Evaluation**

A search evaluation should include the following questions:

- If the search was successful, what policies and practices contributed to that success?
- If the applicant pool was not as large, qualified or diverse as desired, what policies and practices led to this (i.e., outreach, job description, etc.)?
- If candidates of color chose not to accept, what reasons did they offer?

### **Conclusion**

**Imagine how racial equity will benefit the organization as a whole.** As stated in the introduction, the League does not simply want to check a box, but to advance and enhance the current work around equity. Hiring a diverse staff will bring new perspectives that may initially be challenging but overtime will improve ideas and products that the League strives to advance.

\*Much of this information has been taken from the Government Alliance on Race and Equity (GARE) report and adapted for the purposes of the League's equitable hiring practices.

## **Appendix: Implicit Bias Readings and Videos**

### *Video:*

McKinsey Training on Gender bias

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JFW2cfzevio>

### **Microaggressions**

MTV Decoded:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KPRA4g-3yEk>

Stanford/Columbia Professor:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Nrw6Bf5weTM>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xAIFGBIEsbQ>

NYTimes

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=\\_85JVcniE\\_M](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_85JVcniE_M)

### *Articles:*

[http://ssir.org/articles/entry/nonprofits\\_dont\\_really\\_care\\_about\\_diversity](http://ssir.org/articles/entry/nonprofits_dont_really_care_about_diversity)

<http://commongoodcareers.org/diversityreport.pdf>

<http://racialequityalliance.org/newsite/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/Public-Sector-Jobs-Final1.pdf>

<http://www.kenan-flagler.unc.edu/~media/Files/documents/executive-development/unc-white-paper-the-real-effects-of-unconscious-bias-in-the-workplace-Final>

<https://web.duke.edu/equity/toolkit/documents/DiversityMatters.pdf>

[http://www2.johnson.cornell.edu/alumni/enterprise/fall2012/index.cfm?action=inside&inside\\_id=42&item=3](http://www2.johnson.cornell.edu/alumni/enterprise/fall2012/index.cfm?action=inside&inside_id=42&item=3)