

RESOLUTION NO. 126 - APPROVAL OF TOMPKINS COUNTY DIVERSITY POLICY GUIDELINES

Moved by Mrs. McBean-Clairborne, seconded by Mr. Dennis.

WHEREAS, the Tompkins County Legislature adopted the Tompkins County Diversity Statement under Resolution No. 126, dated July 5, 2005, and

WHEREAS, Tompkins County Departments have requested an expanded Diversity Statement from the Workforce Diversity and Inclusion Committee to assist department managers in carrying out County diversity efforts with respect to recruitment, retention and promotion as well as to ensure that diversity is valued by each and every employee within the County, and

WHEREAS, the Workforce Diversity and Inclusion Committee has developed a comprehensive Diversity Statement outlining the purpose, goals, strategies, and expectations for consideration, now therefore be it

RESOLVED, on recommendation of the Workforce Diversity and Inclusion and the Personnel Committees, That the Diversity Policy Guidelines shall be as follows:

DIVERSITY STATEMENT

Tompkins County government is committed to creating a diverse and fully inclusive workplace that strengthens our organization and enhances our ability to adapt to change by developing and maintaining: an organization-wide understanding and acceptance of the purpose and reasons for diversity; recruitment and retention policies that assure a diverse workforce; a workplace environment that is welcoming and supportive of all; awareness, understanding and education regarding diversity issues; zero tolerance for expressions of discrimination, bias, harassment, or negative stereotyping toward any person or group; and a workforce ethic that embraces diversity and makes it the norm for all interactions, including delivery of services to the public.

I. PURPOSE

A. Tompkins County government shall foster an organizational culture of inclusion and full representation in every County department in which:

1. Groups, as well as individuals, are appreciated for their uniqueness and treat each other with respect;
2. Employees understand and appreciate the heritage and culture of many different groups and are responsive to the uniqueness of each individual as well as the community that the workforce serves;
3. Individuals reach beyond their own experience to appreciate and work effectively with people who are not similar in values and backgrounds; and,
4. All employees reach their full potential in pursuit of organization objectives and goals.

B. Tompkins County government shall strive to reflect in the Tompkins County workforce the multi-cultural community that it serves. As an organization we must look beyond that which is promulgated in our local law, Tompkins County Law 6-1991, as amended in 2004, and recognize that valuing diversity requires both a change in the way we do business and how we interact with each other. Valuing diversity requires changes in policies and practices to the point of changing the culture of our county organizations.

C. Tompkins County government acknowledges and accepts that a diverse workforce provides advantages both internally, in terms of the human resources potential offered by a variety of perspectives, and externally, in increasing the County's ability to serve and be served by an equally diverse community. In order to treat people fairly and provide equal opportunity, County departments must seek out and learn from the different perspectives and values that characterize diverse employees and clients.

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II. GOALS

- A. Build on the foundation of equality of opportunity and diversity, and embrace these concepts as necessary to ensure fair representation and treatment of diverse employees and the multi-cultural community we serve.
- B. Establish a strategic plan to promote an organizational culture that values diversity in every County department.
- C. Ensure equal employment and promotional opportunities for all members of our diverse workforce.
- D. Create an organizational culture that fosters accountability for learning about, appreciating, and respecting employee differences and promoting openness to multiple perspectives.
- E. Make diversity a core organizational value, one that is practiced and communicated at all levels of county government and the workforce.
- F. Conduct employee education sessions regarding: respecting the individuality of others by creating an openness to the experience of others; generating awareness of personal perceptions; imparting knowledge of diversity attributes, and by teaching skills to apply cultural concepts in everyday working behaviors.
- G. Hold all managers accountable for demonstrating leadership in promoting an organizational culture that values diversity.
- H. Involve and encourage union leadership in promoting an organizational culture that values diversity.
- I. Ensure that awareness of diversity issues is a regular part of daily functioning that is internalized by all County Personnel.

III. STRATEGY

Workplace cultures usually require people to conform to the style historically dominant in the organization. In contrast, with an increasingly diverse workforce and community, the County must assess its culture and identify policies and practices that both help and hinder the inclusion of a wide range of employees and the culturally sensitive provision of services to the community.

- A. The County must move further toward a culture of inclusion, thereby increasing the consciousness and appreciation of differences associated with the heritage, characteristics, and values of many different groups, as well as increasing the respect for the uniqueness of each individual.
 - 1. Tompkins County will strive for a pluralistic workforce in an effort to be more responsive to the service needs of the community.
 - 2. For the County to continue to provide competent and quality services, we must acknowledge the changing demographics and recognize the impact on the way we do business. In order to be effective, we will identify the needs of the public and how they view the services we provide.
 - 3. It is imperative that we recruit, hire, and retain highly capable and productive employees into the County. To do this, we need to attract all qualified individuals, ensure that employees are acknowledged for their contributions, and encourage employees to achieve their full potential.

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4. We must create programs that address diversity issues and include the full participation and involvement of managers, supervisors, union leadership, and employees representative of the many different groups that make up the County workforce.
- B. Valuing diversity can have a synergistic effect as the total workforce of Tompkins County becomes greater than the sum of its parts. With this strategy guiding our actions, we will be ready to face the challenges of the 21st Century.

IV. EXPECTATIONS

The Tompkins County Legislature expects that departments will develop opportunities to draw on the diverse skills, energies, abilities, knowledge, and perspectives of all employees in order to create a climate of a more open, flexible, responsive, and responsible work environment – where people can achieve their full potential, thus becoming more efficient and productive.

For these expectations to be realized, we must:

1. Assess organizational culture with respect to valuing diversity.
2. Involve managers, supervisors, union leaders, employees, and community members in the development and implementation of the diversity program.
3. Implement new open and inclusive practices and policies for the workplace.
4. Provide annual diversity training to develop new skills for managers, supervisors, union leaders, and employees.
5. Appreciate and encourage non-traditional approaches to employment, e.g, flexible work schedules.
6. Achieve an inclusive work environment for all employees.
7. Work through tensions and conflict or cultural clashes toward respectful and productive resolution.
8. Provide a mentoring and formal development program for all employees.
9. Create a checks and balances system, wherein each level of recruiting, hiring, transfer and promotion is reviewed and improved upon when necessary.
10. Enforce existing recruitment, retention and promotion policies created to assure a diverse workforce, including active participation by the entire workforce.

V. RESPONSIBILITIES

1. The Commissioner of Personnel will continue to track the interviewing, hiring, transfer, promotion and discharge of all personnel in order to ensure the achievement and maintenance of diversity within the Tompkins County workforce.
2. The Commissioner of Personnel and the Tompkins County Human Rights Commission will monitor complaints and ensure that there is zero tolerance for discrimination, bias, harassment, or negative stereotyping toward any person or group. After a thorough investigation, if

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discrimination is found, disciplinary action will be taken as outlined by Civil Service law or the appropriate collective bargaining agreement, or if any one act of discrimination or bias by any one individual is so egregious, there exists the potential for possible law enforcement action.

3. The County Administrator shall assemble a small team, including the Commissioner of Personnel and a member(s) of the appropriate legislature committee dealing with diversity to evaluate annually each Department's approach to incorporate the County's diversity and cultural goals and action plans. In addition, this group/team shall be responsible for evaluating each Department Head's ability to initiate, manage, and be accountable for cultural change and effectiveness in achieving those goals.

4. On an annual basis, in consultation with the appropriate legislature committee dealing with diversity, the County Administrator shall recognize Departments that achieve their diversity goals. The County Administrator, or his/her designee, in consultation with appropriate legislature committee responsible for diversity will work with Departments whose diversity goals were not met, to develop a corrective action plan that will be presented, discussed, and acted upon with all employees within the department.

SEQR ACTION: TYPE II-20

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cc: Administration – via Network
Finance
Public Works
Personnel

STATE OF NEW YORK)
) ss:
COUNTY OF TOMPKINS)

I hereby certify that the foregoing is a true and correct transcript of a resolution adopted by the Tompkins County Legislature on the 18th day of July, 2006

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and affixed the seal of the said Legislature at Ithaca, New York, this 19th day of July, 2006.

, Clerk
Tompkins County Legislature