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Occasional Updates

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Guidelines for Achieving Staff & Board Diversity

If you are looking for ways to ensure that your organization's staff and Board are more diverse, consider these three steps.



Step 1. Identify the likely reasons that racial diversity hasn't yet been achieved. Some possible answers include:

"We don't have a diverse set of networks to call on."

"We have to hire quickly, so we rely on our usual networks."

"Where we advertise may not be the best outlets for reaching diverse audiences."

"We're not perceived as being a diverse organization, so people may be reluctant to apply."

"We have a weak reputation in communities of color."

"The job description may not be appealing to candidates of color."

"The pool of potential applicants is limited."

"Maybe we're judging applicants differently."

What other possible reasons might you imagine?

MORE

RACE MATTERS offers additional resources that align with the perspective of the RACE MATTERS Toolkit.

Turn the page to see what you can do.

Guidelines for Achieving Staff & Board Diversity (continued from p.1)

Step 2. Note that the solutions are embedded in the explanations. Devise strategies for change based on where the explanations lead you.

Some possible strategies related to usual explanations include:

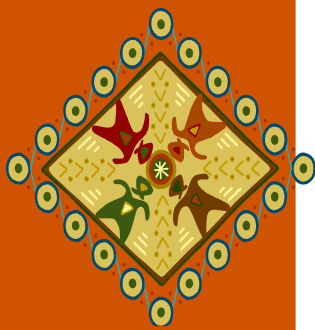
“We don’t have a diverse set of networks to call on.” Invest time in expanding your professional networks. Connect with local universities, including Historically Black Colleges & Universities (HBCUs), Hispanic-Serving Institutions (HSIs), and Tribal Colleges. Reach out to community-based and faith-based organizations closely connected to the range of populations in your community (e.g., La Raza affiliates, Urban League chapters, Mutual Assistance Associations, groups assisting newcomer immigrant families). Consult with Board and staff members of color to identify additional possible contacts.

Also, build your applicant pipeline. Seek a diverse set of interns -- from nearby colleges and universities or professional organizations serving people of color -- who can turn into employees or can tell others about your organization.

“We have to hire quickly, so we rely on our usual networks.” Once you’ve expanded your networks, this won’t remain an issue.

“Where we advertise may not be the best outlets for reaching diverse audiences.”

Learn about and use outlets whose target audiences are likely to include specific communities of color – e.g., newspapers and radio stations serving minority audiences, websites of professional associations of color, college and university research centers focused on social issues within communities of color, and community nonprofits, religious organizations, and advocacy groups that have diverse memberships.



“We’re not perceived as being a diverse organization, so people may be reluctant to apply.” Expanded networks will ease this perception. Doing your work in a way that produces racial equity is an even stronger image-changer. (The full *Race Matters Toolkit* can help with work toward racial equity.)

“We have a weak reputation in communities of color.” Expanding your networks and working for racial equity apply here, too. Further, inviting Board members of color to participate in the recruitment and interview process may create a more comfortable situation for a candidate of color.

“Maybe we’re judging applicants differently.” Ask staff to check one another about any tendency to apply different interpretations to comparable applications – for example, one candidate has “a wide range of job experience” while another “seems to have moved around a lot.” The first interpretation suggests an asset; the second raises questions about the very same information.

“The job description may not be appealing to candidates of color.” At the risk of over-generalization, candidates of color may be more interested in job descriptions that use

phrases to describe the work like, “with particular attention to reducing disparities,” “with the goal of equity for all children and families,” “need for staff who can relate to a wide range of communities,” and so forth. Work that seeks equity is a powerful magnet for the recruitment of more diverse pools of applicants.

“The pool of potential applicants is limited.” Keep in mind that you are usually only looking for one person at a time! So a small pool is not necessarily a problem. With lead time, you will be able to expand the pool by expanding your networks using the strategies mentioned above. A small pool of applicants is not a problem if the right person is in it!

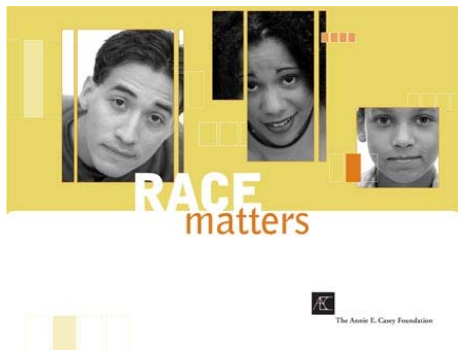
What other explanations did you identify for lack of diversity? They are also likely to have solutions embedded in them.

Turn the page for Step 3.



The Race Matters Toolkit
is available from:

The Annie E. Casey Foundation
701 St. Paul St.
Baltimore, MD 21202
racematters@aecf.org



What users are saying
about the *Race Matters*
Toolkit:

“Every minute of extra work is well worth it – otherwise, how can we say we are addressing all children in our work?”

“Our work wouldn’t have happened without the Toolkit.”

“It keeps you on track.”

Guidelines for Achieving Staff & Board Diversity (continued from p.3)

Step 3. Maintain the strategies just identified as a routine part of organizational practice and (re)commit to work that produces racial equity.

- The suggested practices can produce staff and Board diversity in the short-term and are healthy for your organization’s community connectedness over the long term.
- Be aware that the achievement of diversity without equitable approaches to organizational operations/programs risks losing newly recruited talent prematurely.
- Organizational equity can only be fully achieved when diverse people, opinions, and voices are engaged.
- Recognize that an organizational commitment to equity in program and policy work – while essential in its own right – sends a strong positive signal to diverse staff and Board.
- Use the *Organizational Self-Assessment* tool in the *Race Matters* Toolkit to identify other steps that can be taken to advance an organizational commitment to diversity and equity.