

**GOVERNMENT-WIDE
STRATEGIC PLAN
TO ADVANCE
DIVERSITY, EQUITY,
INCLUSION, AND
ACCESSIBILITY IN THE
FEDERAL WORKFORCE**

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Government-wide Strategic Plan to Advance Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility in the Federal Workforce

Overview and Background

On June 25, 2021, President Biden signed [*Executive Order 14035, Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility in the Federal Workforce \(Executive Order\)*](#). This Executive Order launched a whole-of-government initiative to cultivate a federal workforce that draws from the full diversity of the Nation and that advances equitable employment opportunities. The Executive Order reaffirms that the United States (U.S.) is at its strongest when our Nation’s workforce reflects the communities it serves, and when our public servants are fully equipped to advance equitable outcomes for all American communities.

Even with decades of progress building a federal workforce that draws from the full diversity of the Nation, many underserved communities¹ remain under-represented in the federal workforce, especially in positions of leadership. As the Nation’s largest employer, the federal workforce must be our country’s model of excellence for diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility (DEIA). Meeting this mandate requires all of us – public servants at all levels of every agency – to contribute to advancing DEIA in the federal workforce.

The Executive Order establishes a DEIA Initiative to be led by the Director of the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) and the Deputy Director for Management of the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) – in coordination with the Chair of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) and in consultation with the Assistant to the President for Domestic Policy, Secretary of Labor, Director of the Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP), Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs (NSA), Director of the National Economic Council (NEC), and the Co-Chairs of the Gender Policy Council (GPC). The DEIA

¹ The Executive Order defines “underserved communities” as populations sharing a particular characteristic, as well as geographic communities, who have been systematically denied a full opportunity to participate in aspects of economic, social, and civic life. In the context of the federal workforce, this includes individuals who belong to communities of color, such as Black and African American, Hispanic and Latino, Native American, Alaska Native and Indigenous, Asian American, Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander, Middle Eastern, and North African persons. It also includes individuals who belong to communities that face discrimination based on sex, sexual orientation, and gender identity (including lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, gender non-conforming, and non-binary (LGBTQI+) persons); persons who face discrimination based on pregnancy or pregnancy-related conditions; parents; and caregivers. It includes individuals who belong to communities that face discrimination based on their religion or disability; first-generation professionals or first-generation college students; individuals with limited English proficiency; immigrants; individuals who belong to communities that may face employment barriers based on older age or former incarceration; persons who live in rural areas; veterans and military spouses; and persons otherwise adversely affected by persistent poverty, discrimination, or inequality. Individuals may belong to more than one underserved community and face intersecting barriers.



Initiative provides leadership, technical assistance, and guidance to agencies as they work to achieve the directives in the Executive Order and advance DEIA policies and practices.

This Government-wide Strategic Plan to Advance DEIA in the Federal Workforce (Government-wide DEIA Plan) offers a roadmap for implementing the Executive Order and lays out key steps agencies can take to strengthen DEIA in their workforce policies, practices, and culture. The Government-wide DEIA Plan:

- Provides vision and mission statements;
- Establishes five operating principles to advance and sustain DEIA within agencies;
- Further outlines the DEIA priorities expressed in the Executive Order;
- Details strategies for advancing DEIA;
- Provides an example maturity model to support growth;
- Outlines steps to create a comprehensive framework to address workplace harassment; and
- Explains next steps for advancing DEIA.

The Executive Order charges all agencies with analyzing the current state of DEIA across their workforce by reviewing their agency data to assess whether employees, including members of underserved communities, face barriers in accessing employment opportunities. Building on these findings, by March 23, 2022, all agencies are charged with developing an Agency DEIA Strategic Plan to advance DEIA within their workforce and address any barriers to equal employment opportunities.



SECTION ONE: Vision & Mission Statements

Federal Government-wide DEIA Vision Statement

The federal government will advance and embed Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility (DEIA) throughout its workforce.

Federal Government-wide DEIA Mission Statement

Across the federal government, agencies will work collaboratively to drive innovation and organizational outcomes, draw from the full diversity of the nation, and position the federal government to serve as a model employer that values and promotes equity for all Americans.



SECTION TWO: Operating Principles for DEIA

To advance DEIA, agencies should adopt strategies that incorporate the following five foundational principles:

- Use data and evidence-based decision-making;
- Focus on continuous improvement;
- Adopt a collaborative whole-of-agency mandate with partnership engagement;
- Prioritize accountability and sustainability; and
- Understand the perspectives of the workforce and the customers.

Principle 1: Use Data and Evidence-based Decision-Making

In addition to this Executive Order, the Foundations for Evidence-based Policymaking Act of 2018 (Public Law 115-435) and the U.S. [Federal Data Strategy](#) provide authorities, frameworks, and tools for agencies to drive forward a data-driven approach to DEIA. This approach requires analysis of demographic data, while also providing for new insight through qualitative and quantitative examination of organizational practices, policies, and programs. In addition, this approach embeds accountability and transparency through a cadence of quarterly reviews. The goal of this approach is to evaluate data, learning, and evidence gathered at all phases of the employment cycle from sourcing, outreach, recruitment, hiring, development, advancement, work-life programming, benefits, and retention. A data-driven approach allows agencies to assess activities and outcomes, and then use proven practices, programs, and policies to advance DEIA.

The DEIA Initiative will provide centralized support to agencies in their progression toward a more data-driven approach to DEIA. Importantly, agencies must maintain a data-driven culture where evidence informs decision-making and policy development. Agencies must be able to:

- Readily gather workforce data, such as that provided under the Management Directive-715, Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey (FEVS), and post-audit Applicant Flow Data;
- Analyze data to assess progress, evaluate root causes, and build evidence on key questions regarding DEIA initiatives;
- Integrate insights into policymaking and operations; and
- Engage the workforce in regular listening sessions to obtain qualitative data for implementation and feedback.



Principle 2: Focus on Continuous Improvement

Continuous improvement is a concept that focuses an agency’s effort on achieving systematic, ongoing improvement of processes and outcomes, instead of cyclical or one-time achievements. As explained below, industry best practices use “maturity models” - models that describe different levels of DEIA maturity in order to support organizations in assessing the current state of DEIA with a focus on advancing to more proven DEIA policies, practices, and processes. Continuous improvement practices can be used by agencies as they work to embed DEIA in their strategic planning and long-term processes.

A focus on continuous improvement within an existing process may include:

- Identifying an opportunity and plan for change;
- Implementing the change on a small scale;
- Using feedback and data to analyze the results of the change and determine whether it made a difference; and
- If the change was successful, implementing it on a wider scale and continuously assessing results. If the change did not work, begin the cycle again.

Principle 3: Adopt a Collaborative, Whole-of-Agency Mandate with Partnership Engagement

Strengthening the federal workforce by promoting DEIA is a cross-functional priority that must leverage the efforts, capabilities, and resources of the whole agency. DEIA should be reflected in the norms and values of each agency. DEIA is not an add-on or separate program, but rather a priority that must be integrated into and across agency functions and embedded into agency culture. This framework ensures DEIA is further incorporated into organizational planning documents, including an agency’s budget, learning agenda and annual evaluation plan, regulatory agenda, performance planning, human capital operating plan, and overall strategic plan. Prioritizing DEIA across functions requires senior leadership involvement and commitment at all levels. Ensuring DEIA implementation and assessment is the responsibility of the entire workforce, not the job of one person or office. Integrating a commitment to DEIA across the agency may require leaders to rethink how they do business, including working across traditional siloes, identifying and collaborating with new partners, challenging long-held assumptions and processes, and demonstrating a willingness to try new approaches.

Agency DEIA Implementation Teams should work closely with functional teams that oversee the budget process, including the legislative and public affairs process, the regulatory agenda, performance planning, information technology and data, the human capital operating plan, Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) compliance, and strategic planning to embed DEIA priorities across the enterprise. Moreover, a commitment to advancing DEIA should be woven into each of these functional teams.

Agency DEIA Implementation Teams can develop strategic partnerships with a variety of non-profit organizations and educational institutions, in accordance with applicable law. The DEIA Implementation Teams can also engage with a wide range of contracting sources beyond those



focused solely on recruitment to extend the reach of government in sustaining relationships with underserved communities.

Principle 4: Prioritize Accountability and Sustainability

The Executive Order directs the head of each agency to make advancing DEIA a priority within the agency’s management agenda and strategic plan. DEIA efforts and policies should be embedded throughout the entire agency and led by individuals with a direct line to the Secretary or agency head. This principle includes ensuring that leaders in the agency are consistent champions of DEIA, and that DEIA is integrated into the decision-making, the governance structure, the core mission, and the goals of the agency. In addition, leaders within each agency should determine near-term priorities and strategic goals, prioritize areas of focus, and champion requests for resources to successfully advance DEIA. Leaders should include priorities and strategic goals as part of their executive meeting agenda and seek opportunities to champion DEIA as an essential value and component of the agency’s mission. Leaders should encourage the adoption of DEIA practices and measure the performance of executives consistent with merit system principles and executive core competencies to hold the agency accountable to its DEIA goals and vision. Leaders should also seek opportunities to increase transparency around DEIA efforts through websites, periodic written reports, agency values statements, onboarding briefings, and community engagement and partnerships to underscore the importance and impact of DEIA in improving organizational outcomes.

Principle 5: Understand the Perspectives of the Workforce and the Customers

Government must design and deliver services with a constant focus on the lived experiences of the people it serves. Government must also work to deliver services more equitably and effectively, including for those who belong to underserved communities and doing so requires understanding the inextricable link between the employee experience and the American public’s experience.

The term “customer experience” in the federal context means the public’s perceptions of, and overall satisfaction with, their collective interactions with a government agency, product, or service. “Employee experience” is the perception employees have of their collective interactions with their employer. A better understanding of what employees need to do their jobs effectively and the different challenges employees manage outside of the workplace can help improve the employee experience. An improved employee experience ultimately can lead to an improved customer experience.



SECTION THREE: Government-wide DEIA Executive Order Priorities

The Executive Order requires a whole-of-government approach to cultivate DEIA across agencies. It charges all federal agencies with taking steps to reinvigorate and advance DEIA policies and practices across all aspects of employment. This will be accomplished through the following government-wide DEIA priorities:

- ***Safe Workplaces:*** Create a framework to address workplace harassment, including sexual harassment; and promote training, education, prevention programs, and monitoring to create a culture that does not tolerate harassment or other forms of discrimination or retaliation and that supports employees who have experienced domestic violence, sexual assault, or stalking.
- ***Chief Diversity Officer:*** Establish or elevate Chief Diversity Officers or diversity and inclusion officers within agencies to promote diversity and inclusion within the workforce.
- ***Data Collection:*** Improve the collection of voluntarily self-reported demographic data about the federal workforce to take an evidence-based approach to reducing potential barriers in hiring, promotion, professional development, and retention practices.
- ***Promoting Paid Internships:*** Remove barriers for low-income and first-generation professionals, including by reducing reliance on unpaid internships and expanding paid internship opportunities.
- ***Partnerships and Recruitment:*** Establish new recruitment partnerships to build a more diverse pipeline into public service and facilitate recruitment, including the recruitment of individuals from underserved communities.
- ***Professional Development and Advancement:*** Advance equity and transparency in professional development opportunities.
- ***DEIA Training and Learning:*** Expand the availability of DEIA training so that federal employees are supported and have the tools to promote respectful and inclusive workplaces.
- ***Advancing Equity for Employees with Disabilities:*** Serve as a model employer for disabled employees by charging key agencies with coordinating across the federal government to develop processes to increase accessibility and reduce barriers to employment.



- ***Advancing Equity for LGBTQI+ Employees:*** Advance equity for LGBTQI+ employees by striving to ensure that the federal health benefits system equitably serves all LGBTQI+ employees and their families, expanding the usage of gender markers and pronouns that respect transgender, gender non-conforming, and non-binary employees, and working to create a more inclusive workplace.
- ***Pay Equity:*** Advance pay equity so that public servants are fairly compensated for their talents, including federal employees who may face discrimination based on race or gender, and working with agencies to review and, if necessary, revise job classifications and compensation practices.
- ***Expanding Employment Opportunities for Formerly Incarcerated Individuals:*** Assess potential barriers that formerly incarcerated individuals face when seeking federal employment and seek to expand job opportunities for individuals with past convictions.



SECTION FOUR: DEIA Roadmap for Agency Action

When federal employees reflect the communities they serve, the government is more effective and successful in serving the public. An effective workplace empowers people at all levels to contribute the best of their talent toward the agency's mission. The federal government should be a model employer where all employees, including employees from underserved communities are treated fairly and thrive in an inclusive work environment. The following roadmap for agency action is designed to improve policies and practices that advance DEIA across the employee experience including hiring, promotion, requests for accommodations, and long-term retention.

Diversity Roadmap

The federal government must be able to hire and promote the nation's best talent and build a diverse and representative workforce through an open and fair process consistent with merit systems principles. Building a representative workforce includes appropriately identifying talent, using multiple means to announce vacancies, supporting a pipeline of new members of the workforce, mitigating bias in the promotion process, and addressing any potential barriers in accessing job opportunities.

Examples include:

- Creating multi-year hiring projections of agency hiring needs and develop an outreach and recruitment plan to seek a diverse applicant pool;
- Evaluating post-audit applicant flow data regarding the recruitment process, initial hiring processes, and opportunities for current employees who apply for internal opportunities;
- Ensuring selection panels and hiring officials complete trainings that promote adherence to [merit system principles](#);
- Soliciting and considering feedback from prospective job seekers regarding their interest in federal employment opportunities;
- Assessing whether recruitment materials are effective in attracting a broad range of talent, including individuals from underserved communities; and
- Building leadership training programs to help create a pipeline of promotion-eligible candidates, including individuals from underserved communities.



Equity Roadmap

The term “equity” means the consistent and systematic fair, just, and impartial treatment of all individuals, including individuals who belong to underserved communities. The federal government must ensure that all employees, including employees who may experience multiple forms of discrimination, have equal opportunities to advance in their careers and grow as leaders by mitigating any potential biases or barriers to professional development and promotion. Internally, the government has the responsibility to take steps to ensure fair outcomes and access to services.

Examples include:

- Reviewing policies and procedures (e.g., assessment tests, vacancy announcements, eligibility criteria, suitability requirements, etc.) to identify and address potential barriers to full participation in the workplace;
- Regularly conducting pay equity audits to assess whether similarly situated individuals are equitably compensated for similar work;
- Establishing policies that do not rely solely on prior salary history to set pay and establishing a process to communicate salary bands for job applicants;
- Seeking opportunities to promote paid internships, fellowships, and apprenticeships;
- Evaluating leadership and career development programs to increase access to opportunities, including for members of underserved communities;
- Adopting an approach that maps and assesses the employee experience (i.e., employee journey mapping), as opposed to reviewing data and feedback from a singular time period or experience; and
- Providing employees and their eligible dependents, including LGBTQI+ employees, with equitable access to support services.

Inclusion Roadmap

To advance DEIA, all agencies should provide opportunities for employees to learn, develop, and grow, so that employees’ talents are supported, utilized, and embraced to create an engaged and high-performing workforce. This strategy focuses on ensuring employees feel supported in an inclusive workforce and that agencies strengthen feedback loops for employee input, including through listening sessions and climate surveys.

Federal agencies should advance equitable access to employee benefits, including health and retirement benefits, employee services, work-life programs, and pay and compensation policies.

Examples include:

- Investing in an infrastructure that provides the timely and effective accommodations for people with disabilities and religious accommodations;
- Embedding accessibility as a core design component of physical and digital spaces;



- Training supervisors and management officials on the requirements and processes for providing reasonable accommodations and increasing accessibility;
- Training supervisors and management officials on the requirements and processes for providing religious accommodations and publicizing religious accommodations policies across the agency;
- Creating opportunities to expand the use of individual development plans, including skills assessments, mentoring, and coaching;
- Expanding the availability of DEIA trainings so that federal employees are supported and encouraged to promote respectful, safe, and inclusive workplaces and have increased understanding of implicit and unconscious bias;
- Redesigning Employee Resource Groups (ERGs) as integral partners in supporting agency mission priorities and as strategic consultants to better understand the needs of the agency workforce;
- Partnering with work-life programs to encourage culturally competent services that meet the needs of the workforce and destigmatizing participation in mental health, financial well-being, trauma-informed care, substance abuse, and other employee support services;
- Reviewing and updating policies and processes, as necessary, to provide assistance to employees and applicants who may face discrimination based on their status as a parent or caregiver;
- Conducting and assessing the results of exit and stay interviews, and analyzing demographic trends in survey response data; and
- Designing a “Voice of the Employee” program with a sophisticated, mixed-method approach to collecting employee feedback (e.g., 360 reviews, focus groups).

Accessibility Roadmap

The federal government must consistently design, construct, develop, and maintain facilities, technology, programs, and services so that all people, including people with disabilities, can fully and independently use them. The federal government’s commitment to accessibility should include proactive engagement with users and efforts to modernize infrastructures to support the rapid adoption of technological innovations. To support this work, OMB, in consultation with the General Services Administration (GSA), U.S. Access Board, and the Chief Information Officer (CIO) Council, will review existing accessibility guidance and best practice resources and make updates as necessary to help agencies build and sustain an accessible federal technology environment. In addition, agencies should seek to bring together DEIA Implementation Teams, including CIOs and Chief Procurement Officers (CPOs), in decisions affecting accessibility.



Examples include:

- Providing training and guidance on processes to make physical and virtual environments, including common and individual environments, equitable spaces;
- Training users and operators of virtual environments on conducting accessible meetings, creating accessible documents, and addressing potential physical and attitudinal barriers to equitable opportunities;
- Regularly assessing information technology and facilities against benchmarks and industry standards to support equitable access and to remove potential barriers;
- Ensure all technology, whether developed in-house or externally, is compliant with Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act before deployment;
- Assessing the average time for resolution of accommodation requests for individuals with disabilities and religious accommodations requests and implementing practices to improve efficiencies; and
- Evaluating the need to establish a centralized fund to improve accessibility and provide accommodations.



SECTION FIVE: A Maturity Model is a Tool to Advance DEIA

Since the issuance of the Executive Order, agencies have developed promising practices for advancing DEIA and conducted self-assessments. Their work informs this Government-wide DEIA Plan and will be the basis for continual intergovernmental collaboration. By March 23, 2022, agencies will develop Agency DEIA Strategic Plans that align with the Executive Order and the Government-wide DEIA Plan. Agencies will assess their workforce policies, organizational structures and alignment, and the adequacy of DEIA resources.

Agencies should advance DEIA from a compliance-driven approach to full utilization of DEIA throughout the agency's mission. Agencies can measure their organizational effectiveness in advancing DEIA by utilizing a Maturity Model, an industry best practice for improving organizational DEIA outcomes. To help advance DEIA, the DEIA Initiative is encouraging federal agencies to considering using a DEIA Maturity Model, which enables agencies to identify their DEIA maturity along a continuum, from building foundational capacity for DEIA work to leading and sustaining practices.

The Maturity Model is an example tool for agencies to consider employing to assess the effectiveness of DEIA within their workforce policies and culture. This model can be adapted to meet an agency's unique structure and needs. All agencies, regardless of placement on the continuum, should seek to continually improve DEIA and share best practices within a culture of continuous improvement. The levels of the example maturity model are summarized below and further described in APPENDIX II: Maturity Model of this document, but are introduced below:

- ***Building Foundational Capacity:*** On the first level of the maturity scale, an agency's focus may be on complying with statutory and regulatory requirements related to DEIA. The agency's DEIA work is ongoing, but may be siloed or decentralized.
- ***Advancing Outcomes:*** On the second level of the maturity scale, the agency may have adopted DEIA priorities and policies throughout the enterprise and shown improved results beyond statutory and regulatory requirements. DEIA is a critical component of the agency's mission and work, but may not be fully embedded into the strategic plan and vision.
- ***Leading and Sustaining:*** On the third level of the maturity scale, the agency may have demonstrated that DEIA is an integral part of the overall organizational strategy by embedding DEIA in its vision, values, policies, and practices. The agency may be executing its DEIA strategic plan, monitoring progress, and making appropriate adjustments. The agency may also be acknowledged, cited, and benchmarked by others for its DEIA accomplishments.



SECTION SIX:

Framework to Promote Safe and Inclusive Workplaces and Address Workplace Harassment

As the Nation’s largest employer, the federal government must strive to ensure that all employees are treated with dignity and respect in the workplace. Creating a respectful, inclusive, and safe workplace leads to healthier environments where employees can thrive, develop their potential, and contribute to the success of their workplace. Strong workplace harassment policies may also reduce employee turnover and increase productivity and morale.

Maintaining a safe, respectful, and inclusive workplace requires commitment and prioritization from senior leadership, as well as access to relevant tools, policies, and resources to support the workforce. Workplace safety is multi-dimensional and includes all efforts to minimize risks to the physical, mental, and emotional well-being of the federal workforce, including providing support for federal employees who have experienced domestic violence, sexual assault, or stalking.

The federal government should serve as a model employer in preventing and addressing workplace harassment (including sexual harassment), fostering a safe environment, and preventing retaliation. This includes preventing and responding to workplace harassment experienced by federal employees, including employees from underserved communities. The cornerstone of a successful harassment prevention strategy is consistent and demonstrated commitment of senior leaders to create and maintain a culture in which harassment is not tolerated. Agency leadership must also appreciate that all forms of harassment, including sexual harassment, take place as part of a continuum of harm, and that prevention and accountability are critical in reducing the risk of further harm in the workplace.

Under the Executive Order, agencies will adopt a comprehensive framework to prevent and address workplace harassment, including updating policies and practices; promoting multiple mechanisms for reporting misconduct, including anonymous reporting; promoting respectful workplaces and bystander intervention; improving training and monitoring; and creating a culture that does not tolerate workplace harassment, discrimination, or retaliation.

Government-wide progress on this framework involves three phases:

- Agencies have already completed a self-assessment and reviewed internal policies and procedures. This assessment included:
 - Reviewing responses relating to workplace safety policies and procedures;
 - Reviewing leadership engagement, internal policies and procedures on workplace safety, and reporting structures; and
 - Examining policies and programs to support federal employees who have experienced domestic violence, sexual assault, or stalking.



- After review of the self-assessment, agencies will implement promising practices with specific milestones for attainment. Agencies will prioritize the following areas:
 - Embedding an anti-harassment and safety emphasis at every level and ensuring leadership engagement in harassment prevention and response efforts;
 - Conducting preliminary climate surveys to assess harassment and safety issues;
 - Ensuring leadership accountability, including for managers and supervisors at all levels;
 - Establishing or updating comprehensive and clear policies and procedures;
 - Updating and mandating training about the harassment policy and complaint system. Ensuring effective, ongoing, and interactive training on workplace harassment, anti-bullying, anti-discrimination, and implicit and unconscious bias;
 - Regularly and effectively training supervisors and managers about how to prevent, recognize, and respond to conduct that, could rise to the level of prohibited harassment, discrimination, or retaliation;
 - Ensuring that federal employees responsible for receiving, investigating, and/or resolving complaints are well-trained to perform their functions promptly, fairly, and in a trauma-informed manner;
 - Allocating sufficient resources for effective implementation of prevention strategies and for effective responses to incidents of discrimination, harassment, and retaliation;
 - Providing support for federal employees who have experienced workplace discrimination, harassment, and retaliation; and
 - Establishing or updating workplace policies that are supportive of federal employees who have experienced domestic violence, sexual assault, or stalking.
- To support sustainability and continued improvement, assess evidence, and adopt evidence-based policies, practices, and processes, agencies will prioritize the following areas:
 - Conducting regular climate surveys to assess discrimination, harassment, and retaliation;
 - Building a prevention and complaint system that is fully resourced, accessible to all employees, includes multiple avenues to report misconduct (including anonymous reporting), and is regularly communicated to all employees;
 - Tracking complaints related to discrimination, harassment, and retaliation;
 - Collecting data on complaints of discrimination, harassment (including sexual harassment), and retaliation;



- Where appropriate, conducting periodic surveys of individuals who filed complaints to assess the quality of the response and the service provided during the complaint process; and
- Tracking compliance with training requirements.

Each agency will include strategies to review and update workplace safety policies and procedures and promote a culture of respect in their Agency DEIA Strategic Plans, due March 23, 2022. The Agency DEIA Strategic Plan will include the following:

- Comprehensive reviews and updates of agency policies and processes for responding to harassment and supporting federal employees who have experienced domestic violence, sexual assault, or stalking. These reviews may include research reports, focus groups, and scenario-based exercises to so that responsible offices provide consistent guidance to supervisors and offer support for federal employees. Key partners may include offices of security, human resources, EEO offices, legal counsel, anti-harassment coordinators, and workplace safety organizations.
- 120 days after submission of the Agency DEIA Strategic Plans, where necessary, agencies will update their policies, climate surveys, trainings, systems of investigation and accountability, and support services. These updates will include a renewed effort to center and communicate the leadership commitment and agency vision for promoting a respectful, inclusive, and safe workplace.
- Agencies will take steps to update and provide relevant educational resources to supervisors, bystanders, and federal employees, and make resources readily available through multiple channels such as hotlines, onsite staff, and employee assistance services.
- Agency heads will promote employee assistance programs, work-life programs, and available on-site mental health experts and/or referral services.
- In an effort to encourage and reduce the stigma of reporting, investigators will be trained to communicate with employees in a trauma-informed manner.



SECTION SEVEN:

Advancing DEIA in the Federal Workforce - Next Steps

The Executive Order charges all agencies with assessing the current state of DEIA across their workforce by analyzing data to assess whether employees, including employees from underserved communities, may face barriers in accessing employment opportunities. Agencies conducted a self-assessment that analyzed their current practices and policies regarding DEIA. Agencies across the federal government provided thoughtful, deliberative work on the self-assessments, which demonstrates a strong and renewed commitment to DEIA across the federal workforce. The self-assessment provides agencies with a sense of their current state of DEIA as they work toward growth in the future. Building on these findings, by March 23, 2022, all agencies will develop an Agency DEIA Strategic Plan that will address how they plan to advance DEIA within their workforce and address any potential barriers to equal employment opportunities.

Agency DEIA Strategic Plans will address each requirement of the Executive Order, building on the government-wide DEIA priorities identified above, and will include annual goals to improve DEIA, potentially through practices illuminated in the promising practices survey. As described in Section Six, agencies will also develop a Workplace Safety and Harassment Prevention and Response Plans within their strategic plans.

Agency implementation teams should continue to serve as multifunctional and diverse units, working under the guidance of Chief Diversity Officers or diversity and inclusion officers. As agencies progress, they will build in reporting and evaluation processes on a quarterly basis to track progress. The DEIA Initiative will support agencies in building relationships with one another and will help develop evidence-based approaches to assess progress. The DEIA Initiative will also continue to provide feedback, learning opportunities, and technical assistance.

Taken together, these steps will help strengthen the federal workforce and improve the delivery of critical government services and capabilities.

Agencies will create annual goals and take actionable steps achieve those goals, using standards of success to assess their progress. Agencies should conduct an internal quarterly review to assess their progress toward achieving their goals. The DEIA Initiative will also ask for annual reporting on agency progress, and then provide support to agencies in their advancement.



The DEIA Initiative will share further guidance on agency reporting requirements prior to the submission of Agency DEIA Strategic Plans. This work is a continuous growth cycle, building toward leading and sustaining practices that create a diverse, equitable, inclusive, and accessible workforce that is an example for the entire Nation.

A federal government that reflects the diversity of the nation is more successful and effective. The Executive Order and the work of each and every agency will support a federal workforce where qualified people from every background and walk of life have an equal opportunity to serve our Nation in an inclusive and accessible workplace.



APPENDIX I: Defining Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility (DEIA)

Diversity	The practice of including the many communities, identities, races, ethnicities, backgrounds, abilities, cultures, and beliefs of the American people, including underserved communities.
Equity	The consistent and systematic fair, just, and impartial treatment of all individuals, including individuals who belong to underserved communities that have been denied such treatment.
Inclusion	The recognition, appreciation, and use of the talents and skills of employees of all backgrounds.
Accessibility	The design, construction, development, and maintenance of facilities, information and communication technology, programs, and services so that all people, including people with disabilities, can fully and independently use them. Accessibility includes the provision of accommodations and modifications to ensure equal access to employment and participation in activities for people with disabilities, the reduction or elimination of physical and attitudinal barriers to equitable opportunities, a commitment to ensuring that people with disabilities can independently access every outward-facing and internal activity or electronic space, and the pursuit of best practices such as universal design.

Advancing DEIA requires that the federal workforce address the needs of many communities who may be underserved in the federal workforce, including:

- People of color, such as Black and African American, Hispanic and Latino, Native American, Alaska Native and Indigenous, Asian American, Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander, Middle Eastern, and North African persons;
- Individuals who belong to communities that face discrimination based on sex, sexual orientation, and gender identity (including lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, gender non-conforming, and non-binary (LGBTQI+) individuals);
- Individuals who face discrimination based on pregnancy or pregnancy-related conditions;
- Parents and caregivers;
- Individuals who belong to communities that face discrimination based on their religion;
- Individuals with disabilities;
- First-generation professionals or first-generation college students;
- Individuals with limited English proficiency;



- Immigrants;
- Individuals who may face employment barriers based on older age;
- Formerly incarcerated individuals;
- People who live in rural areas;
- Veterans and military spouses;
- People adversely affected by persistent poverty, discrimination, or inequality; and
- People experience overlapping forms of discrimination.



APPENDIX II: Maturity Model

DEIA Maturity Model Overview

This Maturity Model is an example tool for agencies to consider employing to assess the effectiveness of Diversity Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility (DEIA) within their workforce policies and culture. This DEIA Maturity Model supports agencies in effectively building an infrastructure for DEIA within their organization to improve efficiency, effectiveness, and equity within their workforce. This model can be adopted or adapted to meet an Agency/Component’s unique structure and needs. The practices described here serve as examples within each level and are not exhaustive.

SIGNALS OF MATURITY	LEVEL 1 Foundational Capacity	LEVEL 2 Advancing Outcomes	LEVEL 3 Leading and Sustaining
DEIA approach	Focused on complying with non-discrimination legislation and regulatory requirements.	DEIA initiatives yielding improved results and outcomes driven by dedicated resources, strategic planning, goal setting and evaluation. Agency/Component practices promote the values of DEIA, but DEIA may not yet be integrated across Agency/Component mission and strategic planning.	DEIA is an integral part of overall Agency/Component mission, vision, values, strategy, policies, and practices. Systematic implementation of DEIA driven through goal setting, data-driven analysis, and continuous improvement. Agency/Component undertakes structural reforms of policies and practices to mitigate barriers, if any.
Diversity framework	Definition of diversity confined to EEO categories.	Inclusive definition of underserved communities.	Connecting, interrelated approach embraces multiple identities.
Organizational structure	DEIA work may be under-resourced within the organization and/or decentralized across the Agency/Component.	DEIA work integrated across EEO, HR, civil rights, and D&I program offices.	DEIA work fully resourced and led at highest levels of Agency/Component leadership with significant and sustained SES responsibility.
DEIA integration	DEIA work may be siloed within the Agency/Component and/or disconnected from mission and strategic planning.	DEIA goals reflected in Agency/Component strategic planning.	DEIA goals fully and strategically integrated with Agency/Component strategic planning, performance management, and learning agendas.