



Objective: Hire and retain a diverse and inclusive workforce of staff and faculty.

Efforts to recruit and retain a diverse workforce is beneficial not just for employees and organizations but for consumers as well. As we become increasingly diverse as a nation, it is imperative that our workforce, including that of the AUCD Network, reflects both the general population and the populations of those we serve. Two goals repeatedly recommended in the Toolkit team information-gathering process were: an organizational commitment to 1) identify and hire, and 2) retain staff from diverse backgrounds to contribute to a stronger, more successful workforce as well as a better served community.

A commitment to a diverse workforce addresses an organization's legal obligation as well as its social responsibility (Wentling & Palma-Rivas, 1998). Diversity in the workplace also helps to improve job performance as well as job satisfaction, and potentially improves the financial outlook for the organization (Patrick & Kumar, 2012). Training to enhance knowledge of cultural differences and enhance self-awareness is essential to promote inclusiveness and mitigate discrimination.

Strategies:

1. Create a staff position primarily for diversity, inclusion, and cultural and linguistic competence, as this makes a statement about the importance of the topic. This role is the cheerleader/coach/facilitator for others, rather than having sole responsibility for all efforts in this area. Create a clear and concrete job description; responsibilities could include partnering with diverse community organizations, other related initiatives underway in university/medical school, community, State or Territory, national organizations, and/or federal agencies; raise awareness through professional partnerships in Title V, academic, and State or Territory arenas; lead internal workgroup; and monitor and collaborate on student curricula and/or staff training, recruitment plan, and faculty/staff professional development and evaluation. This could be a person with life experience, plus have the education and qualifications to influence others in the UCEDD/LEND. For greatest impact, this position could have authority, report to the UCEDD/LEND Director, and participate in evaluation of staff/faculty in this area.
2. Be a key supporter of cultural and linguistic competence, diversity and inclusion in networking discussions, bringing disability into wider conversations on the topic. This serves to alert others to organizational values, and can attract others with similar values to join the team.
3. Provide training to all staff, faculty, and volunteers on accommodations for employees with disabilities, ableism, and communicating with people with autism spectrum disorders and other disabilities.
4. Provide training to all staff, faculty, and volunteers on racism, bias, and microaggressions; white privilege and systems of oppression; class discrimination; ableism; teaching diverse students

and English Language Learners; resiliencies and disparities; family- and person-centered care; cultural and linguistic competence; defensiveness, bias awareness, motivation; self-awareness and reflection; culturally effective mentorship, and benefits and joys of being more diverse.

5. Set goals for diversity, inclusion, and cultural and linguistic competence of staff/faculty according to the needs within the program or organization.
6. Engage underrepresented staff/faculty to fill position vacancies.
7. Include all layers of personnel in conversations and decision-making within and across projects, thus ensuring diverse and inclusive perspectives in planning, recruitment, and program implementation. Strive toward inclusive decision-making, both personally and professionally: bottom-up, top-down, inside-out and outside-in. This also serves to provide opportunities for multiple layers of personnel to gain leadership experience and develop career-building skills.
8. Formalize a means for leadership to periodically check in individually with all employees to get a sense of comfort level in the workplace, and solicit and implement ideas and recommendations for addressing any discomfort. Support and celebrate small steps toward long-range goals.
9. Prepare for a sustained effort when recruiting in diverse populations. Budget for it, engage for it, be present for it consistently over time. Include this topic in organizational management plan.
10. Communicate with people personally, using as much connection as possible (in-person, Skype, phone, email, and social media) to enhance relationships from first contact to schedule interviews, through entire hiring process and throughout employment.
11. Systematically review and monitor hiring practices and identify how diversity, inclusion, and cultural and linguistic competence are addressed at every stage of the process from recruitment to interviewing to hiring. This could be completed by Board of Directors, a Diversity and Inclusion Committee, or other entity not directly responsible for hiring.
12. Provide thorough orientation to all new staff and faculty, recognizing that new staff may not be aware of the resources within the Center/Program, University, and surrounding community. Provide resources to help all new staff feel welcomed and comfortable. Provide training on topics such as transportation, benefits, travel, communication, teaching culture of working in a professional organization, what to do if there is a conflict of interest and/or a difference of opinion about advocacy or policy, how to access systems such as email, Blackboard, etc. This ensures new staff feel welcomed and more equal to existing staff.
13. Develop job descriptions for all employees to include responsibilities in the area of diversity, inclusion, and cultural and linguistic competence.
14. Recruit employees who are representative of partnering communities and have the needed skills and experiences. Provide additional financial benefit in compensation package to affirm and honor those additional skills and experiences.
15. Increase outreach to young professionals in recruitment efforts, providing information about organizational structure and opportunities. Many young professionals are not aware of career and support options in academic environments.
16. Support development of Employee Resource Groups within workplace.

17. Navigate how to pay people with disabilities for their work without negative impact on federal benefits such as Medicaid. Work closely with Human Resources office to share knowledge.
18. Evaluate your turnover rate of all levels of employees, and especially the turnover rate of those who are not from the majority culture in the workplace. Conduct exit interviews with employees who leave to identify reasons for leaving, and address any concerns as a means of course correction at the individual or organizational level.
19. Create an internal workgroup with representatives from different teams, positions, and key partners to meet, discuss, problem-solve, and push progress in diversity, inclusion, and cultural and linguistic competence within the workplace.
20. Employ and empower people with disabilities in all projects, recognizing them as experts through life experience that will inform project efforts. Provide opportunities to openly discuss and problem-solve organizational needs and initiatives from the perspectives of these experts. Serve as a model employer for other stakeholder groups who may not yet have addressed affirmative action in their recruitment and hiring plans.
21. Incorporate self-assessments of cultural and linguistic competence, exploration of bias and motivations, and related goal-setting into employee performance appraisals and professional development plans.
22. Interview and hire so that people feel they are being invited in for their expertise, and not simply that they represent a specific group or help meet a quota.
23. Be prepared to transition staff/faculty if they are not willing to engage in this work.
24. Reach out to University human resources office to explore opportunities to create pathways to leadership for UCEDD/LEND staff and faculty from marginalized communities.
25. Encourage and support culturally relevant scholarly activities that acknowledge and respect systems of beliefs in I/DD (intellectual and developmental disabilities) decision-making, care, support, healing, education and advocacy that emerge from different cultures and communities where diverse populations live, and are led by people from those cultures and/or scholarly allies who understand those traditions and systems.
26. Explore whether departments within the University are compensated for recruiting underrepresented faculty, faculty with disabilities, or faculty from other marginalized groups. Some Universities cover partial salary as an incentive to diversify workforce.
27. Review which faculty from diverse backgrounds are being hired around the university and reach out to them when they enter the University and see if disability studies is an area of interest/research for them.
28. Consider recruiting from cultural studies and language departments at Universities.
29. Create focused hiring events, reaching out to faculty associations for underrepresented groups or graduate student associations.
30. Create a variety of leadership opportunities for staff, faculty, and trainees to help enhance career experiences and open new opportunities.