

BRIEFING ROOM

FACT SHEET: President Biden Signs Executive Order Advancing Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility in the Federal Government

JUNE 25, 2021 • STATEMENTS AND RELEASES

Today, President Biden signed an Executive Order to advance diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility (DEIA) in the Federal workforce. This Executive Order reaffirms that the United States is at its strongest when our Nation's public servants reflect the full diversity of the American people.

Even with decades of progress building a Federal workforce that looks like America, the enduring legacies of employment discrimination, systemic racism, and gender inequality are still felt today. Too many underserved communities remain under-represented in the Federal workforce, especially in positions of leadership. This Executive Order establishes an ambitious, whole-of-government initiative that will take a systematic approach to embedding DEIA in Federal hiring and employment practices.

When public servants reflect the communities they serve, the government is more effective and successful. That is why the Biden-Harris Administration has appointed an historic number of diverse leaders. Today's Executive Order will help develop a Federal workforce that looks like America where qualified people from every background and walk of life have an equal opportunity to serve our Nation.

The Executive Order:

Establishes a government-wide initiative to advance diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility in all parts of the Federal workforce. This initiative will be led by the Office of Personnel Management and the Office of Management and Budget, in close partnership with the White House and the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. The initiative will reinvigorate the whole-of-government approach to DEIA first established in the Obama-Biden Administration. The initiative will advance opportunity for communities that have historically faced employment discrimination and professional barriers, including: people of color; women; first-generation professionals and immigrants; individuals with disabilities; LGBTQ+

individuals; Americans who live in rural areas; older Americans who face age discrimination when seeking employment; parents and caregivers who face employment barriers; people of faith who require religious accommodations at work; individuals who were formerly incarcerated; and veterans and military spouses.

Charges all agencies with assessing the current state of diversity, equity, inclusion and accessibility within their workforces, and developing strategic plans to eliminate any barriers to success faced by underserved employees. The Order charges all Federal agencies with reviewing within 100 days whether employees who are members of underserved communities face barriers to employment, promotion, or professional development within their workforce.

Directs agencies to seek opportunities to establish or elevate Chief Diversity Officers within their organizations. To help ensure the coordination of DEIA initiatives across the Federal government, the Executive Order directs all agencies to look for opportunities to establish senior leaders to promote diversity and inclusion within the workforce.

Expands diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility training throughout the Federal workforce. On his first day in office, President Biden rescinded a ban that prevented Federal employees from participating in diversity and sensitivity trainings. Today's Executive Order builds on that by directing all Federal agencies to expand the availability of DEIA trainings for their workforce, so that Federal employees are supported in building skillsets to promote respectful and inclusive workplaces and have increased understanding of implicit and unconscious bias. These types of trainings equip public servants to best serve the American public, and the many diverse communities that make American strong.

Addresses workplace harassment, including sexual harassment. Requires a government-wide, comprehensive plan to address workplace harassment, including sexual harassment. The plan will outline policies and practices to prevent report, respond to, and investigate harassment, and address training, education, and monitoring to create a culture that does not tolerate harassment or other forms of discrimination.

Reduces the Federal government's reliance on unpaid internships, which can create barriers for low-income students and first-generation professionals. The Federal government must be an engine of opportunity for Americans from every walk of life to serve our Nation through public service. But too often, unpaid Federal internships prevent hardworking and talented students and professionals from participating in Federal career advancement opportunities. The Executive Order directs key agencies to take steps to reduce the reliance on unpaid internships, fellowships, and apprenticeships to ensure that more Americans can take advantage of these opportunities.

Advances pay equity to ensure that all public servants are fairly compensated for their work and their talents. Many workers continue to face racial and gender pay gaps, and pay inequity disproportionately affects women of color. The Order directs the Office of Personnel Management to review Government-wide regulations and guidance that set pay and wage standards for public servants. It also directs the Office of Personnel Management to consider taking steps to prohibit agencies from seeking or relying on an applicant's salary history during the hiring process and compensation decisions, an important component of advancing pay equity.

Advances equity in the workplace for individuals with disabilities. The Federal government is stronger and more successful when individuals with disabilities have equal opportunities to lead at every level. In spite of decades of progress in removing barriers to employment for employees with disabilities, people with disabilities remain under-represented throughout the Federal government, and particularly in positions of leadership. The Executive Order directs the government to become a model employer for individuals with disabilities. It charges key agencies, including the Department of Labor and the U.S. Access Board, to coordinate across the Federal government to ensure that all Federal workplaces and technologies are fully accessible; improve the process for requesting reasonable accommodations; and ensure that all Federal employees understand their rights to request reasonable accommodations. The Executive Order also directs a review of Schedule A Hiring Authority for individuals with disabilities to assess opportunities to enhance employment opportunities and financial security for employees with disabilities. And the Executive Order directs the Secretary of Defense and the Secretary of Labor to take steps to expand the use of the Workforce Recruitment Program for college students and recent graduates with disabilities.

Advances equity in the workplace for LGBTQ+ public servants. For too long, LGBTQ+ employees have faced discrimination and harassment in the workplace. To advance opportunity for LGBTQ+ employees in the Federal workforce, the Executive Order directs agencies to ensure that the Federal health benefits system equitably serves LGBTQ+ employees and their dependents by expanding access to comprehensive gender-affirming health care. Agencies are also directed to take steps to ensure that federal benefits like sick leave and life insurance equitably serve LGBTQ+ individuals and all families with diverse family structures. The Order charges all agencies to ensure that the usage of gender markers and pronouns in the Federal employment process respects transgender, gender non-conforming and non-binary employees, and directs all agencies to take steps to expand access to gender-neutral facilities inside federal workplaces. Finally, the Order charges all agencies with ensuring that their employee support services equitably serve LGBTQ+ employees, including, transgender and gender non-conforming and non-binary employees who wish to legally, medically, or socially transition.

Builds a more diverse pipeline into public service through new recruitment partnerships.

Historically Black Colleges and Universities, Hispanic Serving Institutions, Tribal Colleges and Universities, Minority Serving Institutions, and women's colleges are engines of opportunity and innovation in our Nation. The Executive Order charges agencies with developing new recruitment partnerships to ensure that the Federal government can recruit our Nation's best talent.

Expands Federal employment opportunities for formerly incarcerated individuals.

Individuals with prior convictions experience must be supported in accessing employment as they fully re-enter society. The Federal government has an important role to play in supporting formerly incarcerated individuals in fully reintegrating into society and making meaningful contributions to our country. The Executive Order directs the Office of Personnel Management to assess the barriers that formerly incarcerated individuals face when seeking Federal jobs. The Executive Order also tasks the Office of Personnel Management with considering creating new Hiring Authorities to expand job opportunities for individuals with past convictions.

Advances equity in professional development. The Executive Order directs agencies to improve the collection of demographic data about which employees are able to access professional development and advancement opportunities to ensure that these programs equitably serve all Federal public servants.

Improves the collection of demographic data about the Federal workforce. The Executive Order charges key agencies with reviewing and improving guidance on the collection of demographic data about Federal employees. With improved data on the Federal government's workforce composition, agencies will be better able to take an evidence-informed approach to reducing inequitable barriers in hiring, promotion, professional development, and retention practices.

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