STATE OF COLORADO

CREATING A CULTURE OF BELONGING

A Guide for Retention

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Section I: Background and Purpose of this Guide

Beginning in 2018, 14 state agency representatives and 11 community organizations formed the Colorado Equity Alliance (the "Alliance"), to address inequities in health, opportunities, and resources. The Alliance's mission is to ensure state-funded efforts create equitable systems for all Coloradans to thrive through collaboration between communities and state agencies.

The Alliance developed *Creating a Culture of Belonging: A Guide for Retention* (this "Guide") to promote an inclusive workforce that reflects the community it serves. Complementary to this, the Alliance also developed a guide that focuses on equitable hiring practices. These guides are separate, but should be used concurrently in order to ensure an inclusive, equitable, and diverse workforce. This retention Guide is meant to inform state agency leadership, Human Resources team members, hiring managers, and other staff members of suggested steps to create an inclusive workplace and reduce turnover-specifically of employees with diverse backgrounds.

Why is Retaining a Diverse Workforce Important to the State of Colorado?

We will reach our full potential as a state when we create economic, social, and environmental conditions that work for all Coloradans and set all of us up to succeed. However, research has shown that discrimination in the United States has caused a legacy of inequities in health, education, housing, employment, income, wealth, and other areas that impact achievement and quality of life.

When people face barriers to achieving their full potential, there is a loss of talent, creativity, energy, and productivity. It is a loss not only for those impacted by historic disparities and inequities, but for communities, businesses, governments, and the economy as a whole. Research shows that heterogeneous groups make better decisions than homogeneous ones. Diverse groups also tend to have better problem-solving skills, are more creative, and deal more effectively with complex challenges.

There is more than a moral case for retaining a diverse workforce. Evidence suggests that removing bias and discrimination would result in significant economic prosperity for everyone. Greater equity benefits businesses by creating a healthier, more diverse workforce and by increasing the ability of underserved and under-represented populations to purchase more goods and services.

For the state as an employer, we are most successful in serving our residents when our workforce reflects the diversity of our communities. As an employer, we are committed to finding ways to actively retain our employees and creating a workplace where all individuals feel comfortable bringing their full selves into their work serving all Coloradans.

Significant progress has been made in eliminating illegal and overt forms of discrimination. However some policies, practices, and procedures operating in government today still result in disparate impacts on people of color and other marginalized identities. Further, an individual's unconscious biases are reinforced by daily messages - both subtly and overtly - and influence how we view ourselves and each other.

This Guide begins to address disparate impacts and biases that may be part of workplace culture among some teams at state agencies. This Guide provides recommendations that all employees, and especially those in leadership roles, can take to address the negative workplace experiences that people with

marginalized identities face. Following the policies and steps outlined in this Guide will help create a workforce that is reflective of the increasingly diverse Colorado we serve.

It's in the Numbers

While it is terrific if people with diverse backgrounds are hired at state agencies, if those individuals don't feel comfortable bringing their full self to work, it may result in a higher turnover rate. Additionally, an employee who did not feel welcome working at a state agency may suggest to their friends and family members that working for the State of Colorado is not a good idea, thus impacting our ability to continue recruiting members from the former employee's community. It is critical that all State of Colorado employees feel a sense of belonging at work; otherwise, hiring a diverse workforce will not result in solutions, and may actually be detrimental. There is a collective responsibility to making the State of Colorado an employer of choice - including leadership at all levels, teams, and individual contributors.

It is widely accepted that engaged employees are more productive and create more value for their employer. Emerging research is finding that employees who feel *a sense of belonging* have higher engagement. When inclusive practices are implemented and embraced in a work environment, it is more likely that employees experience this sense of belonging. The State of Colorado values belonging not only because we want our employees feeling safe and supported, but also because engaged state employees are more successful in their critical work serving the residents of Colorado.

In addition to a moral imperative, research also points to economic benefits of retaining a diverse workforce, including:
- Gender-diverse companies perform 15% better.
- Ethnically diverse businesses perform 35% better.
- For every 10% increase in diversity and gender of executive teams, company earnings before interest and taxes (EBIT) rose 8%.
- New employees are 42% more likely to stay in an inclusive workplace.

Research also shows that a focus on a culture of belonging has a number of positive impacts in the workplace, including:
- Boosts morale;
- Promotes a culture of learning;
- Drives innovation and productivity;
- Increases innovation revenues;
- Attracts talent of varying generations and perspectives; and
- Retains talent, which results in significant cost savings.

Diversity + Inclusion + Belonging = Retention

When we feel psychologically safe, we can show our best selves. When we are part of a team that values our opinion, we speak up and contribute more. Alternatively, when we don't feel like we belong, productivity is lost due to concerns about belonging and energy spent trying to assimilate. For example, research has shown that people of color and other historically marginalized groups spend 25-30% of their time trying to assimilate.

Often, interpersonal slights or seemingly harmless jokes between coworkers do not rise to the threshold of violating workplace discrimination law, but they still have an impact nonetheless. When a person experiences interpersonal slights at work, those experiences add up. As their name suggests, *microaggressions* can seem small when dealt with one by one, but when repeated over time, microaggressions can have a major impact. Microaggressions can be defined as brief or casual comments/exchanges, verbal and non-verbal, that send degrading messages to individuals because of their membership in any historically marginalized or oppressed group. The origin of the discussion and awareness of microaggressions is founded in race, specifically against Black/African American individuals, but has since broadened to include all marginalized/oppressed groups, including other people of color,individuals with disabilities, religious minorities, and the LGBTQ+ community.

Belonging

I can be authentic, I matter, and am essential to my team.

https://business.linkedin.com/talent-solutions/blog/diversity/2017/how-linkedins-hr-chief-is-changing-the-diversity-conversation-with-belonging

These slights are more likely to occur when there are low numbers of individuals with any given marginalized identity in a workplace culture. For example, one in five women say they are often *the only woman* or *one of the only women* in the room at work—in other words, they are "*Onlys*." This is twice as common for senior-level women and women in technical roles: around 40% of them are "Onlys."

Women who are "Onlys" have experienced a much different work culture than women who work more with other women. Over 80% experience microaggressions, compared to 64% of women as a whole. They are more likely to have their abilities challenged, to be subjected to unprofessional and demeaning remarks, and to feel like they cannot talk about their personal lives at work. Women "Onlys" are also 1.5 times more likely to think about leaving their job. Actively disengaged employees cost U.S. companies between $450 billion to $550 billion each year in lost productivity.

Section II: Initial Steps and Measurement

For decades, the State of Colorado has made efforts to become more inclusive. However, to achieve inclusive workplaces, state agencies must turn good intentions into concrete action. Key action steps include **setting goals, reporting on progress, and rewarding success to drive organizational change**. To get started, consider the following ideas and work collaboratively with your Human Resources office to:

- Establish target goals, reporting, and accountability. For example, if your agency has a survey around diversity and inclusion, set a goal to have a 3% increase in employees answering positively to questions around collaborative and inclusive workspaces, fair and equitable advancement opportunities, and feeling recognized, safe, and respected in the workplace.
- Review turnover rates by race, gender and any other available information.
- Examine internal promotions by race, gender, ability, etc. Strive to have a diverse workforce across all job classifications. Don't just rely on entry level positions to prove diversity.
- Actively engage senior leaders and managers as champions of creating a workplace of belonging.
- Foster an inclusive and respectful culture among team members. Consider creating an inclusive culture campaign to promote the idea of an inclusive, diverse, and respectful work environment and culture.
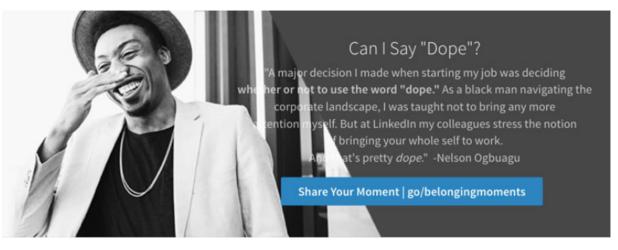- Make the "Onlys" experience rare.

- When Onlys are on a team, offer mentorship support.
- Offer employees the flexibility of work life balance.
- On an ongoing basis, evaluate the effectiveness and accessibility of your reasonable accommodation process and procedures and ensure your entire agency is informed and appropriately trained.

The concept of belonging may feel difficult to measure, but there are methods to gauge a culture of belonging. According to a recent study, most employees agreed that the following things make them feel like they belong:

- Being recognized for my accomplishments (59%);
- Having opportunities to express my opinions freely (51%); and
- Feeling that my contributions in team meetings are valued (50%).

The company LinkedIn created measures to understand how employees experience diversity, inclusion, and belonging in the workplace. Combining questions from its annual employee survey with new ones, the "DIBs Index" is now used to help focus the company's efforts around diversity, inclusion, and belonging, and to track progress over time. The following are sample measures from the DIBs Index:

- I feel comfortable being myself at work.
- I go out of my way to help others feel like they belong at LinkedIn.
- Even when something negative happens, I do not question whether or not I belong at LinkedIn.
- Someone I work closely with cares about me as a person.

Can I Say "Dope"?

"A major decision I made when starting my job was deciding whether or not to use the word "dope." As a black man navigating the corporate landscape, I was taught not to bring any more attention myself. But at LinkedIn my colleagues stress the notion of bringing your whole self to work. And that's pretty *dope*." -Nelson Ogbuagu

Share Your Moment | go/belongingmoments

https://business.linkedin.com/talent-solutions/blog/diversity/2017/why-creating-a-sense-of-belonging-is-a-gateway-to-diversity-and-inclusion

LinkedIn also found that two of the biggest drivers of employee engagement were belonging-related: "I make a big effort to help others feel like they belong at LinkedIn," and "Even when something negative happens, I feel like I belong at LinkedIn."   The company will continue to monitor this feedback against its belonging initiatives to measure impact.

To fully succeed at retaining a diverse workforce, observe two primary dimensions of respecting, retaining, and empowering a diverse workforce:

1. Establish a sense of belonging for everyone. Create and sustain a positive workplace culture that clearly conveys the importance of an inclusive and equitable organization. Consider creating Employee Resource Groups (ERG) to lead the charge.
2. Address the barriers that intentionally or unintentionally create and maintain institutional discrimination.

Section III: Additional Steps for Team Leaders

Creating a culture of belonging and retaining a diverse workforce happens as a result of deliberate and thoughtful actions and strategies. Inclusion occurs when differences - such as racial or cultural differences - are seen as assets that strengthen the organization. The following are practices and activities for entire teams to consider:

1. **Educate Yourself**
   a. Participate in a few implicit bias assessments, such as Harvard's Project Implicit, to learn about your own biases.
   b. Develop and implement workgroup and personal strategies - including annual performance goals - to move to an inclusive team environment.
   c. Participate in training and professional development sessions that focus on equity, diversity, and inclusion.
   d. Find resources to help understand diverse perspectives, like the ones below. Please see Appendix F for additional resources.
      i. From the Harvard Business Review, *Dear White Boss*
      ii. From the Harvard Business Review, *How to Show White Men that Diversity and Inclusion Efforts Need Them*
      iii. From IMD.org, *Thrive as an LGBT+ executive or ally*
      iv. A video produced by Disability:IN, Shattering Assumptions and Surprising Ourselves.
      v. From the Washington Post, *The problems veterans face in the professional workplace*

2. **Foster a Culture of Dignity and Empowerment**
   a. Engage in conversations about equity, dignity, and empowerment for people with oppressed identities. Assess where changes are needed. Commit to raising your self-awareness, acknowledging your biases and changing your behavior.
   b. Participate in mentoring, either as a mentor to someone, or as a mentee. As a mentor, consider looking for a mentee who might have a different background or identity than you. Be aware however, that a person from a historically marginalized group may prefer to be mentored by someone who reflects their identity, and might appreciate your assistance in securing that mentor. The best way to find out is to ask.
   c. Look for ways your implicit or explicit biases might oppress others (see Appendix A for specific examples).
   d. Consider normalizing the use of pronouns in email signatures or in meetings with new individuals. Because gender identity is internal -- an internal sense of one's own gender -- we don't necessarily know a person's correct gender pronoun by looking at them. Additionally, a person may identify as genderfluid or genderqueer and may not identify

along the binary of either male or female (e.g. "him" or "her"). Some people identify as both masculine and feminine, or neither. A genderqueer or non-binary identified person may prefer a gender-neutral pronoun such as the "they" (e.g. "I know Sam. They work in the Accounting Department"). Learn more about pronoun use [here](#).

3. **Create an Inclusive Work Environment**
   a. Encourage all employees to develop and progress professionally. Make employees feel valued for their unique talents and perspectives. Focus on practices that help all employees to bring their full selves to work.
   b. Identify barriers faced by traditionally underrepresented groups, and take action to address them. Barriers could include physical barriers, language barriers, cultural barriers, and policy barriers - such as benefits within a pay structure.
   c. When reaching out to staff who are not part of the dominant identity (e.g., a person with a disability) to serve on interview panels or other internal groups, be cognizant of how often the person is being asked to serve in this role. Be aware if they are constantly being tapped to be part of groups or committees to serve as the "diverse" member. Be intentional and clear about your intention in asking them to participate, and provide opportunity for them to decline if they are overcommitted with other competing requests.
   d. Avoid tokenizing one person's experience (making only a perfunctory or symbolic effort to be inclusive), and be aware of the emotional burden this may create for the person. In other words, if you are inviting an employee to be part of your group, ensure they are truly allowed to participate, that their perspective is valued, and they are not just there for optics.
   e. Delegate tasks to develop employees, and in a way that demonstrates trust. Delegation is an opportunity for employees to grow their careers, but only if you provide the coaching and support for them to be successful. Merely passing work to an employee without guidance and encouragement sets them up to fail. Align the delegation with an employee's growth interests, let them know you're confident in their abilities, and set up coaching sessions to ensure they have a way to ask for help if needed.
   f. Share personal stories and encourage others to share their own. This strategy can be particularly effective in helping people feel like they belong.

4. **Inclusive Ideas for Running Team Meetings**
   a. Ask people how they feel—and genuinely listen and use this to guide the meeting/work.
   b. Solicit input from all in meetings—and do not speak over them and use this input.
   c. If you are using a microphone, telephone system, or web conference system, ask everyone to speak clearly into the microphone.
   d. Announce your name each time you speak and avoid using acronyms.

5. **Measure Change; Course Correct as Necessary**
   a. Recognize and update practices that embrace the changing diversity of the workforce. Recognize that differences strengthen the organization when every individual is valued and respected.
   b. Commit to long-term change. Recognize that culture change takes time and it is not a "one-size-fits-all" approach. Embrace continuous quality improvement, be open to trying new strategies, and continue to engage in dialogue and training.
   c. Evaluate your progress and areas of improvement. For a list of self-assessment questions, refer to Appendix B.

      d.   Think of creative ways to motivate your team. Some teams have found success in creating a commitment tree: each employee writes down an individual commitment to diversity and inclusion. Those statements are put in a very public place so that all team members can see and celebrate signs of progress.

      e.   Celebrate successes! No one said this work would be easy, so it's important to maintain motivation over the long-term.

Section IV: Onboarding New Employees into a Culture of Belonging

While it is important to focus on hiring diverse talent, it is potentially more important to focus on the employee experience *after* the hiring and on-boarding process. **To retain and nurture top talent, it is critical to take an honest look at the end-to-end employee experience with an eye toward creating conditions that promote inclusion on a daily basis, and to design ways to measure the impact.** It has been said that diversity is like being invited to a party, inclusion is being asked to dance, and belonging is dancing like no one is watching—it's that sense of psychological safety that employees can be their authentic selves without fear of judgment. As new employees join a team, management should consider how that new employee may perceive this sense of psychological safety and that every employee is treated with dignity.

Intentionally devote time and effort into setting your new employee up for success right from the start. Here are a few tips for supervisors to consider:

- Familiarize new employees with the job, team, programs, and the department's culture. Follow your department's onboarding checklists if available.
- Create an agenda for the employee for the first week.
- Be available for the individual's first week and create time in your schedule to answer questions.
- Communicate opportunities for growth and advancement (e.g., professional development, mentoring program(s), involvement in projects that develop interest areas, etc.)
- Pair the individual with a buddy (someone other than the employee's supervisor) who can help provide additional support to the employee in their new role.
- Inform all individuals of the agency's reasonable accommodation policies and processes. Ensure all individuals are given the opportunity to ask for a job accommodation or job aide without stigma or fear of retaliation.
- Support new employee participation in an Employee Resource Group(s) (ERGs) so they can learn about the organization, build relationships, and share interests. See Appendix E for more information.
- Support new employees by connecting them with existing information on equity and inclusion, including training.

Recruitment and on-boarding are only part of building an all-inclusive workforce. When retaining employees, think about how you can engage and maximize the individual's time at your agency through providing avenues to build relationships and a sense of belonging. Provide opportunities for them to see opportunities to grow and advance their career through professional development, performance management, and continuous feedback. When conducting performance evaluations, consider using a tool to bring light to implicit biases, such as this one from [Bias Interrupters](#).

Section V: Appendices

Appendix A: Bias Awareness
Appendix B: Inclusive Leadership Self-Assessment Questions
Appendix C: Glossary of Terms
Appendix D: Employee Resource Groups
Appendix E: Citations
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Appendix A: Bias Awareness

When it comes to bias, awareness is key. Awareness allows us to manage our biases in a way that contributes to stronger and more positive relationships at work. When confronting your own biases, consider the following list to help move forward in a more constructive manner:

- Recognize your biases, and then work to eliminate or remain aware of them.
- Be as objective as possible.
- Focus on content.
- Dispel first impressions.
- Rate candidates against job competencies or an ideal candidate profile – not against one another.
- Justify your decisions and articulate your rationale.

Bias is often regarded negatively. For the purpose of this guide, we speak of *bias* in the context of partiality, preconceived notion, and predisposition. The reality is that biases come from our brains' use of *schemas* – templates of knowledge – to process the information that bombards our senses every moment of every day. We have schemas about objects, processes, and other human beings. For example, our brain uses a schema to assign the category of "chair" to an object based on its flat seat, back, and legs, even though the chair might be plain wood or lavishly upholstered. We may have a negative bias about plain wood chairs because we have had the uncomfortable experience of sitting in one for an extended period of time. We have a schema for the process of ordering food at a restaurant: we know what it means when a smiling person hands us a laminated document with descriptions of various dishes and prices. By observing assorted traits, we use schemas to naturally assign people into categories such as age, gender, race, and role.

Stereotypes are traits that we associate with a category. These associations may arise from direct personal experience or be relayed to us through stories, media, and culture. "Elderly people are frail" is an example of a stereotype.

Attitudes are overall evaluative feelings that are positive or negative. If we meet someone who graduated from the same university, we will tend to feel more at ease with that person.

Implicit bias includes both *implicit stereotypes* and *implicit attitudes*.

What is implicit bias? By definition, implicit biases are those we carry without awareness or conscious direction. It is the result of our human brains using schemas to organize information into categories. Most of the work our brains do occurs on the unconscious level. Implicit bias does not mean that we hide our prejudices – we literally do not know we have them. This is important for all members of a team because without awareness we cannot know if we are acting on hidden bias.

In contrast, *explicit bias* means that we are aware that we have a particular thought or feeling, and sometimes also means we understand the source of that thought or feeling. If you have an explicitly positive attitude toward chocolate, then you have a positive attitude, you know you have a positive attitude, and you consciously endorse and celebrate that preference.

Why do both types of bias matter?

Implicit Bias

As described above, implicit bias is problematic because we are unaware of certain preferences or attitudes. Use every opportunity to consider your reasons for making a joke or assumption about a coworker and challenge your thinking. Without this reflection and questioning, we cannot identify hidden bias and eliminate it.

Explicit Bias

How many times have you heard this before? "I always look for a candidate who makes direct eye contact. People who are afraid to look straight at you don't make good employees in the long run." This is an example of explicit bias in an interviewing process. The speaker is stating a known preference. In the context of candidate evaluation, the reason this particular bias is problematic is because in many cultures, direct eye contact is considered to be very rude and to be avoided whenever possible. Think about how this type of bias plays out in everyday work settings.

Examples of Bias

There is a subjective element to bias. In order to reduce the chance of making a poor decision, team members must make a conscious effort to recognize biases, both explicit and implicit, and eliminate them. The following are examples of bias which may be explicit, implicit, or both.

- First Impression: Many people think they can accurately assess someone within the first few minutes of meeting them. Making up your mind so soon is a bias that corrupts overall judgment.
- Halo Effect: Giving excessive weight to one positive characteristic, sometimes despite several negatives.
- Harshness/Horn Effect (opposite of Halo): Letting one negative characteristic overshadow the big picture view of a candidate.
- Nonverbal Bias: Body language, eye contact or lack thereof, etc. Consider cultural differences and avoid overemphasizing nonverbal behavior.
- Similar-to-Me: Many people subconsciously favor those who share a characteristic, hobby, alma mater, opinion, etc.
- Stereotyping: This bias happens when someone makes an assumption about someone else based on gender, ethnicity, religion, age, familial status, etc. As previously described, this category is one that is influenced by both implicit and explicit bias.

Appendix B: Inclusive Leadership Self-Assessment Questions

Inclusive Leadership   Brenda J. Allen, Ph.D.

Self-Assessment Questions

1. Are you actively engaged in improving your leadership skills, attitudes, and knowledge, especially as related to diversity and inclusion?
2. Do you frequently and consistently demonstrate your commitment to inclusion?
3. Does your team reflect diversity in its demographic make-up, background and perspectives?
4. Do you solicit feedback from those whom you manage or lead about how well you are helping them to perform their roles and to traverse their career paths?
5. In general, do you think those whom you manage or lead would describe your leadership style as transparent? How about individuals from underrepresented backgrounds?
6. Do you allocate resources to develop and advance diversity and inclusion?
7. Do you actively seek opportunities to interact with a diverse range of people?
8. Do you help those you manage or lead understand the larger organizational picture and their role within that context?
9. Do you coach anyone you mentor to become an inclusive leader?
10. Do you mentor individuals from underrepresented backgrounds to help them develop as leaders?
11. Do you encourage individuals (especially those from underrepresented backgrounds) to provide their unique perspectives?
12. Do you reward those whom you manage or lead for their contributions to enhancing diversity and fostering inclusion?
13. Do you hold those whom you manage or lead accountable for enacting inclusivity in their roles?
14. Do you question your peers if their behaviors do not seem to support inclusion?
15. Are you aware of types of implicit bias that you might enact?
16. Do you know how to mitigate implicit bias? If yes, are *you* actively striving to mitigate implicit bias?
17. Do you readily engage in difficult conversations with those whom you manage or lead related to inclusion and diversity?
18. Do you provide or support a variety of professional development opportunities for those whom you manage or lead?
19. Do you try to respect cultural differences in communication styles?
20. Do you create environments and endorse processes that can help everyone feel valued?

Appendix C: Glossary of Terms

Adopted from the Colorado Office of Health Equity [Glossary of Equity Terms,](#) 2nd Edition

Ally: Someone from a dominant group (who experiences unearned access and/or power) who acts in support of non-dominant group members. Allies practice genuine allyship. That is, they take action, reflect on their own thinking and beliefs, seek out learning opportunities, take initiative in interpersonal relations, and work to create systems of equity.

Community: Groups of people who are impacted by policies and programs. In the context of equity work, "community" refers to people who have historically been left out of the decision-making process. A community is not necessarily limited by geographic boundaries.

Disparities: Measurable differences among groups of people. Inequities cause disparities.

Displacement: A process by which families involuntarily have to move, generally to a new neighborhood or city, because they can no longer afford the high costs of new development. Oftentimes, families affected by displacement are low-income families and/or families of color who may have lived in a neighborhood for generations. In an international context, the term refers to the most vulnerable populations of a nation fleeing to become refugees as a result of political instability, persecution, violence, or human rights violations.

Diversity: A description of differences usually based on identities such as race, gender, ability, etc. Diversity ≠ Equity and does not always happen intentionally.

Equality: Assures everyone is treated the same regardless of the starting point or context. Equality ≠ Equity.

Equity: When everyone, regardless of who they are or where they come from, has the opportunity to thrive. This requires eliminating barriers like poverty and repairing injustices in systems such as education, health, criminal justice, and transportation.

Gentrification: The process of supposedly improving a neighborhood through new development such as food stores, bike lanes, and health services, which may lead to the displacement of long-time residents.

Implicit Bias: Attitudes or stereotypes that affect our understanding, actions, and decisions. People are usually unaware of their own biases because they operate at the subconscious level.

Inclusion: What you _do_ with diversity to ensure individuals have the opportunity to fully participate in decision-making processes. It intentionally promotes a sense of belonging where the inherent worth and dignity of all people are recognized and leverages abilities, unique qualities and perspectives of individuals.

Inequities: When systems, policies, and practices create less opportunity between groups that are systemic, avoidable, and unjust. These could be in health, education, housing, criminal justice, etc. and are based on factors like gender, race, physical and mental ability, sexual orientation, or immigration status.

Intersectionality: The compounding effects of discrimination for individuals and communities who have more than one social identity that is oppressed on the basis of gender, race, class, age, ability, religious status, sexual identity, education level, language, etc. These intersecting identities lead to greater inequities (e.g., Native American women or white day men with disabilities).

Language Justice: An approach that creates inclusive, multilingual spaces in which all languages are honored equally and speakers of different languages benefit from sharing with one another.

Power: Our ability, as individuals and as communities, to produce an intended effect. Power manifests in both positive and negative ways and shows up formally and informally.

Structural racism: When our institutions, such as housing, education, and transportation, collectively create institutions and policies that work better for white people than for people of color. Structural racism limits opportunities for some, but contributes to poor outcomes for all. Other forms of discrimination may relate to classicism, ableism, heterosexism, etc.

Thrive: When a person has the opportunity to make healthy choices, afford food and housing, have good jobs that can sustain a family, attend quality schools for better education, and fulfil their potential.

Appendix D: Employee Resource Groups

Employee Resource Groups (ERG) are a business tool for attracting and keeping the best employees and a means of improving employee productivity and engagement by promoting a greater awareness and understanding of diversity, supporting employees from diverse backgrounds and fostering teamwork.

An ERG is defined as a group of employees who come together around common interests, issues and backgrounds. Employee resource groups exist to provide support, networking and professional opportunities. Examples of ERGs could include multicultural, LGBTQ+, individuals with disabilities or family members of people with disabilities, women, veterans, etc. A sample outline that can be used to create an ERG can be found on the next page.

It is important to ensure all agency ERG meetings or events are accessible to all employees, use the following document created by the Employer Assistance and Resource Network on Disability Inclusion to find strategies to ensure accessibility: Planning Accessible ERG Events.

A Sample Policy or Road Map to Create ERGs

Appendix E: Citations

The State of Colorado would like to acknowledge the City of Tacoma for granting permission to adapt content from its Handbook for Recruiting, Hiring & Retention, October 2015 for purposes of this Retention Guide.

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Appendix F: Additional Resources

This is not an exhaustive list of resources. To increase your awareness of various perspectives, the authors encourage you to further explore other research and resources.

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