



LGBTQ INCLUSION

WHAT EMPLOYERS CAN DO TO BE INCLUSIVE OF LGBTQ PEOPLE

Underrepresentation of LGBTQ people in workplaces continues to be an area in which employers need to do a better job. Employers of all sizes need to seriously consider what they can do to create more welcoming and affirming spaces for their employees. Below is a list of basic recommendations on how employers can develop policies to address diversity and inclusion.

1. FORMAL POLICIES

It is not enough to say that as an employer you welcome diversity. **It must be in writing!** A formal policy outlining the organizations' position and expected behaviors is a great first step. The two most basic policies to demonstrate inclusion are; Anti-harassment and/or Anti-discrimination policies. These policies must include specific language prohibiting discriminatory behaviors related to sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression.

CONSIDER THIS:

- Can job applications be modified to allow individuals to share their birthname and their chosen name?
- Can job applications be modified to allow individuals to share their gender at birth and their current gender identity?
- Can job applications be modified to allow individuals to share their pronouns?

REMEMBER:

- The policies should have clear language on what to do (who to report an incident), and what are the potential consequences for engaging in such behavior.
- Employers must follow through on consequences, otherwise, the policy will not have the desired impact.

2. LANGUAGE

When creating new policies, or revising current ones change gender-specific language (i.e., “he”, “she”). The use of the term **they** as a singular gender-neutral pronoun is acceptable. This will allow all your employees to feel included and respected.

3. DIVERSITY TRAINING

Creating and/or revising policies is part of the job, the main component is training. All employees regardless of their status (part-time, full-time, temporary, etc.) with the organization must be made aware of the organization’s policies. This can be accomplished by providing regular/ongoing organization-wide training. Everyone must attend, from your CEO to the newest hire.

4. DIVERSITY TRAINING SPECIFIC FOR MANAGERS

Managers are responsible for ensuring that teams work cohesively and professionally. Managers should receive diversity and inclusion training to help them understand their responsibilities and what to do in case of an incident.

5. BENEFITS

The needs of LGBTQ persons can differ from those of their non-LGBTQ peers. If as an employer, you do not know the specific needs of LGBTQ employees **ask!** More specifically ask for needs related to medical coverage, parental leave, bereavement, transition care, HIV/AIDS, etc.

6. EMPLOYEE RESOURCE GROUPS / AFFINITY GROUPS

Depending on the size of your organization this may apply or not. A good way to engage LGBTQ employees is to form an employee resource group (ERG) or affinity group. They can serve as a good resource, helping the employer identify blind spots, hiring strategies, benefits, trainings, etc.

7. PRACTICE

As an employer, you cannot afford to have Diversity and Inclusion Policies on a computer without being distributed and people being trained. Everyone who is part of the organization must get a copy of the policies, and be trained on its

contents, otherwise known as putting policy into practice. Without these two basic steps, your policies will fail.

8. EVALUATE

If you do not plan to evaluate the impact of your policies, do not bother creating them! These policies must be part of a bigger strategy (attracting better-qualified candidates, improving retention rates, ensuring promotions, rewards, and recognitions are equitable, etc.). These cannot be measured if you do not collect the data.

We recommend you consult with a Human Resource Professional and/or employment attorney before making any changes to your current employment practices.



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