



Creating a Model Workplace With DEIA

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Executive Summary

Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility (DEIA) is the new way of thinking about what constitutes a model workplace. A focus on DEIA is required because labor markets are increasingly more diverse compared to previous generational labor markets. Qualified people from every background and walk of life must have an equal opportunity for employment.

Over the years, advancing equity in the workplace has taken on many forms. ActOne Government Services (A1GS) stands ready with a framework for a comprehensive plan to improve diversity, equity, and inclusion in meaningful and measurable ways. Our size and scale allow A1GS to effect change using the tried and proven state-of-the-art Assessment, Design, Implementation, and Measurement (ADIM) process to assess the effectiveness of DEIA within businesses and organizations.

A1GS believes we can only be excellent by being diverse in the broadest sense of that word, and we all must strive to ensure that all individuals have an equal opportunity to succeed and reach their full potential. Our collective actions, behaviors, and workplace cultures must support DEIA to ensure no worker is left behind.

01 Excellence Through Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility

On his first day in office, President Biden signed Executive Order 13985, Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government. As the topmost steward of the public good, President Biden calls on us to embrace our common humanity and the inherent worth of all people. The order recognizes that the ideal of equal opportunity is the bedrock of American democracy and gives charge to the Federal Government to advance an ambitious whole-of-government equity agenda towards that ideal.

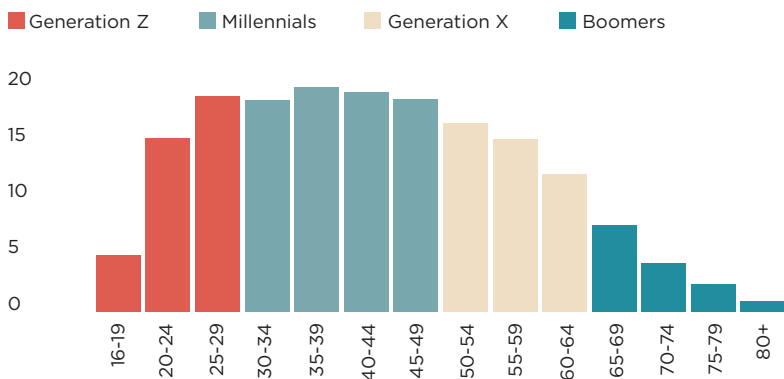
Six months later, President Biden signed Executive Order 14035, Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility in the Federal Workforce. Executive Order 14035 was the launch of a whole-of-government initiative to safeguard that the Nation’s largest employer, the Federal Government, be a model for diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility with a workforce that draws from the full diversity of the United States.

Diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility (DEIA) is the new way of thinking about what constitutes a model workplace. It is an effort to lean into the human-centric nature of who we are and fully realize the abilities and contributions of all workers. Whether in hiring, determining strategy, allocating resources, or other business practices, leadership on diversity, inclusion, equity, and accessibility matters.

A focus on DEIA is required because today’s labor market is increasingly more diverse than previous generational labor markets.

The Workforce in 2030

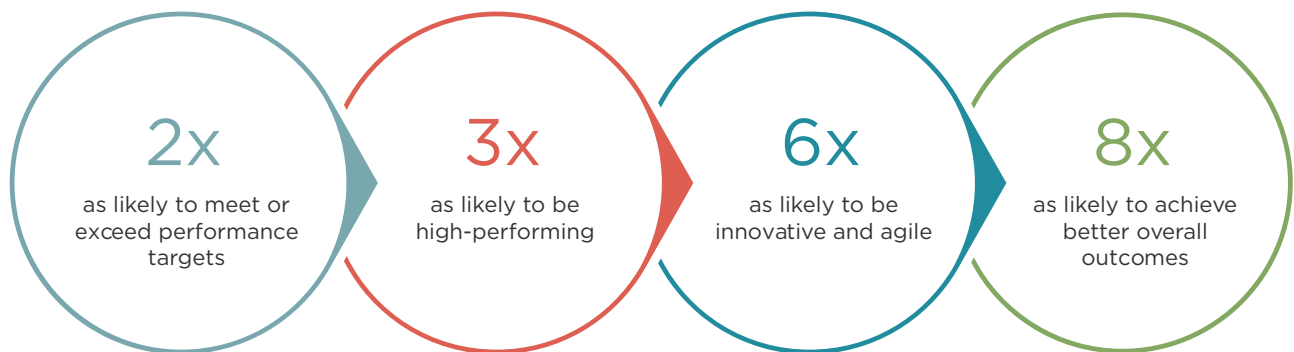
Projected size of U.S. labor force (in millions) by age, for the year 2030



Source: Department of Labor | WSJ.com

Progressive organizations and businesses have recognized these trends and started developing strategies and partnering with organizations to become more externally competitive in this more diversified labor market and more internally equitable and inclusive of the present-day population’s needs and desires.

Workforce Diversity draws on the skills, talents, and perspectives of a broader and more diverse range of employees. Diversity of viewpoints from different life experiences and cultural backgrounds strengthens a business organization. Those life experiences are primarily based on how one's affinity group characteristics interface with others. These affinity group characteristics include age, ability status, sexual orientation, color, religion, etc. Regardless of your affinity group, diversity offers a collection of attributes that augment a company's objectives most efficiently and effectively. In fact, according to research by Jenkins, R. (2018, June), organizations with increased diversity are:



Diversity includes, but is not limited to, national origin, language, race, color, disability, ethnicity, gender, age, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, socio-economic status, veteran status, and family structures. Diverse human cultures, beliefs, and lifestyles make for a stronger workforce.

It is common for organizations to define diversity using the framework of Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC), gender, and sexual orientation. However, this framework unintentionally excludes other affinity groups and can result in "us vs. them" behavior outcomes. Contemporary and strategic thinkers are redefining and utilizing the disabled, age, race (to include language), national origin, sex, color, armed services status, religion, and sexual orientation (to include marital status), (DARNSCARSS) framework developed by Dr. Milton J. Perkins. DARNSCARSS redefines diversity in an intentionally inclusive fashion. Although not perfect, the DARNSCARSS framework advances the prospect of greater diversity, equity, inclusivity, belonging, and accessibility to include the broader population.

According to Hewlett, Rashid, and Sherbin (2017), when we pursue and embrace a broader framework for diversity and otherness, employees are less likely to experience alienation (burnout), think about leaving (busting out), and are less likely to post or endorse negative comments on social media (blowing up). In fact, Borysenko (2018) notes that disengaged employees have 37 percent higher absenteeism, 18 percent lower productivity, and 15 percent lower profitability. Diverse human cultures, beliefs, and lifestyles make for a stronger workforce.

Workforce Equity, as defined in Executive Order 13985, is the consistent, systematic, fair, just, and impartial treatment of all individuals (workers), including those who belong to underserved communities that have been denied such treatment, such as Black, Latino, and Indigenous and Native American persons, Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders, and other persons of color; members of religious minorities; lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ+) persons; persons with disabilities; persons who live in rural areas; and persons otherwise adversely affected by persistent poverty or inequality.

Equity is about eliminating systemic barriers and privileges and ensuring all people have fair access, opportunity, resources, and power to thrive. The best equitable behavioral outcome is clearly defined and executed behavioral tactics to level the playing field for the increasingly more diverse labor market and workforce. Equity is about building and executing solutions that historically marginalized affinity group members can use to gain better access to the benefits of an organization.

Workforce Inclusion is the recognition, appreciation, and proactive use of the talents and skills of all backgrounds. An inclusive environment results in every affinity group having access to tools, benefits, and accession within an organization. Inclusiveness is about building an environment where all individuals feel valued and connected. The challenge for most organizations is how to communicate and train all employees on the concepts related to DEIA, such as the impact of unconscious bias on equity and inclusion.

Workforce Accessibility is the foundation on which the federal workforce must build diversity, equity, and inclusion for all. It is common for the implementation of these ideals to cascade to states, counties, municipalities, and quasi-government agencies. For purposes of Executive Order 13985, the term “accessibility” means the design, construction, development, and maintenance of facilities, information, and communication technology, programs, and services so that all people can fully and independently use them. The order encourages leaders to take the initiative and look at the environment where employees work.

Advancing equity, civil rights, racial justice, and equal opportunity is the responsibility of our government at all levels. The challenges are both readily apparent and frustratingly opaque. This whitepaper offers practical, tried, and proven solutions that will forward DEIA policies and practices and improve government accountability and performance for the good of the American worker.

At ActOne Government Solutions (A1GS), we are driven by our core values: Freedom to Innovate, Excellence in Delivery, Everything Matters, Time to Understand (FEET), and Real Love. A1GS is part of the globally successful multibillion-dollar ActOne Group. We are a customer-focused, diversity-certified, full-service contractor with internal businesses that include AppleOne, All'sWell, AllSTEM Connections, AgileOne, and A-Check Global. Our team of 2,700 employees in 225 United States locations, including Puerto Rico, exemplifies diversity and inclusion, core elements of the values embedded in A1GS culture.

02 ActOne Government Services' Next-Practice Methodology

Long before the mandated Executive Orders 13985 and 14035 were signed, AIGS put into practice a next-practice methodology that outlines definitive steps to baseline current-day practices, compare/contrast findings against best practices, design solutions to bridge the gap between current state and good-to-great, and provide analytics for evidence-based decision making.

Our method is referred to as ADIM – Assessment, Design Implementation, and Measurement. ADIM assesses the effectiveness of diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility within organizations through the foundational lens of workforce policies, values, culture, talent acquisition, total rewards, performance management, learning and development, employee engagement, and constituent impact and satisfaction.

Phase	Outcomes	HR Focus	Measures
Assessment	Baseline organizational outcomes with open and closed source (archived data, focus groups, surveys, interviews) data related to talent, vendors, and client satisfaction. We collect dimensioned data to see if there are any disparate outcomes and experiences for employees, vendors, or clients based on the intentionally inclusive diversity framework of DARNSCARSS – disability, age, race, national origin, sex, color, armed services status, religion, sexual orientation & marital status, socio-economic affinity group. Much of the data approach is based on labor market and general population demographic trends. Additionally, the entire project is anchored on published scholarly research illustrating the business case for a robust DEIA strategy for any organization.	Talent Acquisition Performance Management/Appraisal Employee Engagement Total Rewards (comp and benefits) Learning and Development Employee Alumni experiences	We use metrics like employee engagement scores correlated to organizational KPIs using methods like the Pearson Correlation Coefficient to show the increase in performance based on the DEIA designs we present (see below). We developed an analytic tool to report quantitative/qualitative data related to the employee's life cycle by demographic category. The reports are designed to illustrate what is happening (quantitative data), why it is happening (typically qualitative data), and what will happen (predictive analytics).

Phase	Outcomes	HR Focus	Measures
Design	<p>We use the baseline data (focus area and DEIA affinity group framework) to determine if there are gaps in best practices (as collected from open-source data and our expertise) and the current state practices. We design solutions to bridge the gaps related to:</p> <p>Diversity - how they source for and acquire diverse talent candidates and vendors, and how to better relate with a more diverse clientele, if required.</p> <p>Equity - how does the organization ensure equity in its performance management and appraisal process, total rewards (comp & benefits), and learning & development efforts? The Equity strategy will also include consultation on how to develop and sustain employee resource groups and DEIA Advisory Councils.</p> <p>Inclusion - the design of the solution will focus on the DEIA leadership competency model and development, all-employee DEIA training, bias training, and employee engagement tactics and practices. Inclusion design will also ensure the organization has the ability to measure how the employee population communicates a sense of belonging (the feeling of inclusion).</p>	<p>Talent Acquisition Performance Management/Appraisal Employee Engagement Total Rewards (comp and benefits) Learning and Development Employee Alumni experiences</p>	<p>Talent Acquisition Performance Management/Appraisal Employee Engagement Total Rewards (comp and benefits) Learning and Development Employee Alumni experiences</p> <p>We also include how to source for more diverse vendors and brand to a more diverse clientele (considering the general population demographic trends and forecasts).</p>

Phase	Outcomes	HR Focus	Measures
Implementation	Once all efforts are designed, we develop strategic plan documents that include RASCI charts, timelines, milestones, investments, and ROIs.		
Measurement	See the last column. We build a framework related to each designed effort and aligned with organizational KPIs, if statistically viable.	We measure from the baseline in each functional area to show improvement over time.	

ADIM collects aggregated, open-and closed-source, and raw data to assess whether employees face barriers related to the foundational lens. Details from demographic data analysis and quantitative and qualitative examination of organizational practices, policies, and programs are carefully measured. The ADIM framework evaluates data and evidence gathered at all phases of the employment cycle from “sourcing, outreach, recruitment, hiring, development, advancement, work-life programming, benefits and retention.”

AIGS’ measurement framework helps the respective organization identify the success of any implemented change along a DEIA people analytics maturity curve. Using feedback and data to analyze the results of a change can determine whether it was effective. Many underserved communities remain under-represented in the federal workforce. It is not enough to have a policy in place. Bold steps must be taken to remove barriers to equal opportunity while recruiting, training, promoting, and retaining a diverse workforce.

A1GS's DEIA approach and ADIM methodology integrate industry expertise with advanced analytics to help organizations examine current workforce policies and organizational structure. This approach will help ensure compliance with statutory and regulatory requirements related to DEIA and upholds the Biden Administration's whole-of-government initiative to cultivate a workforce that draws from the full diversity of the Nation.

This whitepaper also underpins the need for unconscious bias training and cultural sensitivity to help meet the government-wide strategic plan to advance diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility in the federal workforce. In the federal workforce, it is essential to analyze how unconscious bias can manifest and address the link between unconscious bias and behavior.

A1GS' Unconscious Bias training considers the standardization of company policies, protocols, and procedures. A review of policies and procedures can identify biased policies and recommend modifications. Managers are uniformly coached, and their instruction is focused on objectives and quantifiable measures.

Once the training is implemented, structural measures are in place to assess incremental behavioral changes, overall workforce, and productivity progress. How will you know whether the training is successful if you do not know where you started? A1GS staff members are training experts that hold Society for Human Resource Management People Analytics Specialty Credentials. This specialized certification guarantees the expertise required to collect and measure data at every stage of the training process to ensure its effectiveness.

Unconscious bias is real. It subsists in mindless yet negative behavior that is often unintentional and unrecognized as destructive by the perpetrator. Although some behaviors can be intentional and conscious, research suggests that approximately 95 percent of our behaviors are unconscious, and five percent result from our conscious cognitive capabilities. As the Nation's largest employer, the federal government must promote a culture where all can thrive and ensure each employee is treated with dignity and respect in the workplace.

To aid our federal agencies in the mission to advance DEIA in the federal workplace, ActOne Government Solutions (A1GS) staff and affiliated companies will:

- Conduct a DEIA assessment utilizing our ADIM methodology.
- Help define a 'good-to-great' state for your organization.
- Design 'next-practice' solutions to bridge any evidenced-based gaps through the foundational lens noted above.
- Customize and deliver a category of DEIA curriculum to include Unconscious Bias Training.
- Provide Agency Leadership with the tools needed to consciously interact more humanly and positively with a diverse workforce.
- Set benchmarks to achieve the directives in the Executive Orders and advance DEIA policies and practices in alignment with defined strategies from the White House to your respective agency.
- Provide a people analytics framework to measure success as defined in the initial ADIM report.

03

The Importance of Continuity and Competence When Approaching DEIA

This A1GS Whitepaper accentuates two important themes: Continuity and competence.

1. Continuity

Approaching DEIA in a thoughtful, well-defined manner will ensure accountability and outcomes in alignment with the Executive Orders and related statutes. It is important to note our Bias Awareness Training is a vital component of this effort and can be a precursor to the more comprehensive approach. To be effective long term, DEIA efforts must be defined and executed in a strategic manner with accountability measurements at all levels.

The main criticism of most DEIA efforts is that it is reactive and short-term focused, i.e., conducting one-day training. Using this example, how can we expect a one-day training to eradicate the learned stereotypes and biases of individuals who have spent their lifetime thinking a certain way? For Bias Awareness training to be effective, it must be done frequently and be anchored on a more strategic and comprehensive approach.

The goal of all learning experiences is knowledge transfer, behavioral changes, and measurable and positive outcomes for the organization. To ensure continuity of soft-skills competencies for agency leadership, A1GS subject matter experts would assess, develop, design, implement, and provide a learning assessment for next-practice curriculum, ensuring in-house trainers are taught to deliver DEIA content for all. Using the Bias Awareness Training as an example, this training is designed for agency leadership to recognize their unconscious biases and related behaviors and provide tools that support better interaction with a population that is culturally and ethnically different.

2. Competence

A1GS is committed to providing quality service while advancing diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility in the federal workplace. With a 50-year history in recruitment, staffing, and talent solutions, our management and executive teams are highly knowledgeable and skilled in all the disciplines outlined in this whitepaper.

A1GS embodies the full range of expertise required to perform all suggestions herein and can deliver business solutions that meet the Administration's vision, mission, and long-term DEIA goals. A1GS' leadership has firsthand experience training multiple federal agencies on Human Resource (HR) matters, including professional HR certification preparation content.

Additionally, we have helped develop HR and DEIA content for the HR professional in partnership with the Society for Human Resources Management. One can trust A1GS is well-versed in all areas related to the life cycle of employees, especially in diversity, equity, inclusion, accessibility, and people analytics.

Deliverables

DEIA MEASUREMENT TOOL

A1GS' measurement framework helps federal agency leadership recognize the success of implemented change along a DEIA people analytics maturity curve using data to analyze the results.

A1GS will develop and deliver an analytic maturity curve and a framework for related reports, allowing agency leaders to quantify performance outcomes and better diagnose why those outcomes occurred. Using regression and other statistical models, we can predict future outcomes and better equip people managers and organizational leaders to co-design, implement and execute accountability efforts.

Benefits

Proactively addressing these issues with intent will drastically reduce the costs of ineffective workforce planning, attrition, employee engagement, and productivity. Additionally, this approach will allow your constituents to better understand and support the work of your agency and its mission.

Conclusion

Many underserved communities 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. This whitepaper suggests decision-makers have conversations with the leadership of A1GS to discuss noted solutions and/or alternatives.

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Company Information

As part of North America's largest privately held, Minority-Woman-Business-Enterprises, focused on human capital management and solutions, ActOne Government Solutions has access to a network of more than 2,700 employees, and 225 offices throughout North America dedicated to talent solutions, all of whom will be made available to support the concepts outlined in this whitepaper. We operate under the CAGE codes 7QG28 and 3V980, with NAICS codes 339112, 339113, 423450, 424990, 425120, 484210, 484220, 488510, 518210, 541611, 541614, 561110, 334510, 339940, 424120, 511210, 541214, 541519, 541612, 561311, 561312, 561320, 561510, and 561611. Federal clients that currently receive our services are: United States Army, United States Department of State, United States Department of Energy, United States Department of Veterans Affairs, United States Navy - Armed Forces, Asst. Secretary for Preparedness and Response (ASPR), and the General Services Administration (GSA).

Edited by:

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March 2023



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