



Minnesota Chamber Foundation
**Workforce Diversity,
Equity and Inclusion**



Your DEI journey starts here

Minnesota's workforce is becoming increasingly diverse, making the effective engagement of underrepresented demographics in the workforce an economic imperative. The Minnesota Chamber Foundation understands that in order to effectively engage a diverse workforce, businesses must create inclusive workplaces where diversity is valued and employees feel a sense of belonging. The Minnesota business community plays an important role in the statewide advancement of diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI), and our goal is to provide you with resources, as well as support and guide you through your progress.

DEI has become an organizational and strategic priority for many businesses. This DEI playbook is intended to provide Minnesota businesses with a simplified and attainable approach to diversity, equity, inclusion and workplace belonging through utilization of the online Minnesota Chamber DEI Resource Center. ■

**If you would like one-on-one
assistance with your business's
DEI strategy, please contact
Whitney Harvey, our Sr. Director
of Workforce Diversity
and Inclusion at
wharvey@mnchamber.com
or 612.618.6074.**



Diversity, equity and inclusion playbook



Lay the foundation

The first, and a crucial fundamental step in a business' DEI journey, is to lay the foundation by developing an understanding what diversity, equity and inclusion means to the organization, identifying where they are in their DEI journey, and outlining their opportunities.



ACTION STEP

Identify the opportunities

Data show that organizations that prioritize DEI have higher innovation, increased productivity, higher employee retention and higher financial performance. If you are looking for resources or need assistance with identifying opportunities and building your business case for DEI, please review the following.



Relevant resources available at
mnchamber.com/DEI/businesscase

ACTION STEP

Define your terminology

It is important to understand that there are multiple dimensions of diversity that can exist in the workplace. To ensure diversity is understood and used consistently throughout the organization, you must define both scope and terminology.

The Minnesota Chamber Foundation uses the following definitions of diversity, equity and inclusion and focuses on various dimensions.

Diversity: Diversity is any category, characteristic, or dimension that is used to differentiate individuals from one another. This includes, but is not limited to, age, gender identity, race, country of origin, religion, disability status, veteran status and sexual orientation.

Equity: Equity is the creation of a fair and just environment that is free from bias and favoritism and ensures that all individuals are given the resources and tools they need to succeed, taking into account individual needs. This includes, but is not limited, to access, status and structural inequities.

Inclusion: Inclusion is the creation of an environment in which all individuals feel a sense of belonging, are respected and are encouraged to present as their best authentic professional selves where unique perspectives, lived experiences, traditions, and cultures are seen as valuable characteristics that contribute to the richness of company culture.

ACTION STEP

Define your “why”

Defining your “why” is an opportunity to clearly articulate the organization’s DEI mission and vision, explain why you are embarking upon your DEI journey and outline what you hope to accomplish. Your “why” will serve as an anchor to organizational efforts and can help to ensure internal initiatives and actions are designed to help you achieve your goals.

ACTION STEP

Define your mission and vision

Mission: Your mission should provide the structure, direction, accountability actions and goals of your organization’s DEI actions and efforts; what you hope to accomplish.

Vision: Your vision is your long-term definition of success. If your mission is accomplished, what does this mean for your organization?



Gather key stakeholders

In order to implement a successful workplace diversity, equity and inclusion strategy, you must engage the individuals who will be impacted or have a direct impact on these initiatives. Failure to engage a cross-functional representation of the organization can minimize impact and overall success.

ACTION STEP

Gather buy-in from the top

Ensure the tone is set at the top by gathering executive-level leaders to champion the efforts. Ensure leaders are cascading initiatives and expectations down to managers, supervisors, and individual contributors and that these leaders are held accountable. This can be accomplished by incorporating DEI-related conversations into team meetings, one-on-ones and company-wide meetings.

ACTION STEP

Gather a cross-functional group of key stakeholders

Identify individuals within your organization who are interested in supporting this initiative. Build an internal group of DEI champions who represent multiple areas within your organization and are at various stages of their DEI journeys to assist with planning, strategy and execution. These individuals can also assist with confirming definitions, mission and vision.

Conduct a baseline assessment

DEI progress must be measured and monitored to ensure continued success. To create a strategy in which you can monitor progress and create measurable goals, it is important to first conduct a baseline assessment. This will give you a starting point for your DEI work and provides an opportunity to report year-over-year progress.

ACTION STEP

Identify where you are as an organization

Every organization begins its DEI journey at a different place and at a different time. Do not be fearful of admitting you are in the infant stages; we must all begin somewhere.

ACTION STEP

Identify your opportunities for improvement

Organizational culture, size, and industry can vary significantly. This means that the path towards better engaging diversity and creating an inclusive culture looks different. Identify the opportunities that make sense to your culture, your industry, and your community.

ACTION STEP

Review demographics

Demographic data is the easiest way to measure and track diversity. Capturing this information at the beginning of your journey allows you to fully monitor progress both internally and within your candidate pools.

ACTION STEP

Document what you've accomplished in the DEI space

DEI initiatives can and should be present in various forms. It is important to capture and track this information because it is all part of your journey.



Relevant resources available at mnchamber.com/DEI/designations



If you are a Minnesota Chamber member and are interested in participating in the internal DEI assessment pilot program, please contact **Whitney Harvey**, Sr. Director of Workforce Diversity and Inclusion at wharvey@mnchamber.com or 612.618.6074.



Build your strategy and implement

To effectively build a sustainable and intentional DEI strategy, business leaders must review business best practice categories, identify the opportunities within each, and establish an actionable plan that involves all employees and areas of the organization.

ACTION STEP

Identify opportunities within each best practice category

The Minnesota Chamber recommends reviewing the following best practice categories:

1. Overall strategy

Establishing a DEI strategy is one way to ensure that workplace culture, employment practices, policies and benefits all accurately support the DEI goals of the organization. Your strategy lays the framework for all anticipated outcomes, which should support the creation of a diverse and inclusive workplace.



Relevant resources available at mnchamber.com/DEI/journey

2. Recruitment/retention

Recruitment and retention efforts help to achieve the diversity component of DEI. Remember that you cannot expect to maintain a diverse workforce without a priority on workplace inclusion. Remember that there are multiple phases of the hiring process that can include bias and prevent a diverse candidate pool. Be sure you review the following:

- Job postings
 - Review where you are posting jobs
 - Review job minimum qualifications
 - Ensure you use inclusive language

- Resumes and review process
 - Assess what is required vs. what can be learned
 - Eliminate bias in your resume review process
 - Ensure recruiters are aware of unconscious bias and undergo bias training
- Interview process
 - Eliminate bias in your interview process
 - Ensure interviewers are aware of unconscious bias and undergo bias training
- Ensure you have a diverse interview panel



Relevant resources available at mnchamber.com/DEI/recruitment.

3. Community

Businesses should ensure that community engagement efforts are viewed from a DEI lens and that business and community partners align with the organization's DEI goals.



Relevant resources available at mnchamber.com/DEI/philanthropy.

4. Supplier diversity

Prioritizing business partnerships with a diverse range of suppliers and vendors ensure that companies are maximizing perspectives, innovative ideas and mindsets. Additionally, ensure that the businesses you partner with have positions on DEI that align with your organization.



Relevant resources available at mnchamber.com/DEI/suppliers.

5. Workplace programs

Consider the establishment of internal programs to support the organizational advancement of DEI. Examples of these programs include:

- Mentorships
- Internships
- Apprenticeships
- Employee development programs
- DEI Council
- Employee Resource Groups (ERGs)

6. Training/education

DEI training and education can help to strengthen workplace culture by highlighting the importance of diversity and offering actions for creating an inclusive and equitable workplace.



Relevant resources available at mnchamber.com/DEI/training.

ACTION STEP

Determine where you'd like to be

What are your short term and long term goals. What is feasible and possible within your organization?



Hold yourself accountable

Transparency is crucial to DEI success, and the journey toward progress is not always linear. Hold yourselves accountable by identifying your shortcomings as opportunities for improvement and committing to continued progress.

ACTION STEP

Set goals

Be intentional and set realistic and attainable goals for your organization. Year-over-year progress may be minor, but each accomplishment contributes to your long-term goals and outcomes.

ACTION STEP

Monitor progress

Be sure to continually check in with yourselves by monitoring progress towards your goals.

ACTION STEP

Regularly assess how you are doing

Rely on data and assessments to truly “show” how you’re doing. This can be accomplished in a number of ways:

- Employee engagement surveys
- Review employee demographics

ACTION STEP

Be transparent

- Consider publishing a transparency report that highlights all DEI initiatives and efforts for the year
- Outline opportunities for improvement or shortcomings
- Highlight future goals

ACTION STEP

Acknowledge your mistakes and use as an opportunity to learn and grow

Do not fear failure. Consider your set-backs and mistakes and opportunities to learn and grow.

ACTION STEP

Share opportunities for improvement

Openly communicating your opportunities for improvement can help to create a culture of trust and honesty.

Diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) playbook checklist

Lay the foundation

- ☐ Identify the opportunities
- ☐ Define your terminology
- ☐ Define your “why”
- ☐ Define your mission and vision

Gather key stakeholders

- ☐ Gather buy-in from the top
- ☐ Gather a cross-functional group of key stakeholders

Conduct an internal assessment

- ☐ Identify where you are as an organization
- ☐ Identify your opportunities for improvement
- ☐ Review demographics
- ☐ Document what you’ve accomplished in the DEI space

Build your strategy and implement

- ☐ Identify opportunities within each of the best practice categories
 - Overall Strategy
 - Recruitment/retention
 - Community
 - Supplier Diversity
 - Workplace programs
 - Training/education
- ☐ Determine where you’d like to be
 - Short term goals
 - Long term goals

Hold yourself accountable

- ☐ Set goals
- ☐ Monitor progress
- ☐ Regularly assess how you’re doing
- ☐ Be transparent
- ☐ Acknowledge your mistakes and use as an opportunity to learn and grow
- ☐ Share opportunities for improvement



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