

Wisconsin Department of Transportation
Supervisory Guidance on Diversity PEPED Expectations
February 2021

Background:

WisDOT is committed to creating and maintaining an inclusive work environment for all. All employees of WisDOT are expected to support and foster an inclusive work environment.

One of the current six (6) overall agency performance expectations is Diversity. All employees are measured annually on the following example diversity expectations in the performance evaluation process:

- Demonstrates respect for people regardless of race, creed, age, gender, sexual orientation, disability, religion, national origin, etc.
- Values differing viewpoints and opinions.
- Actively seeks out/incorporates diverse groups into decision making processes.
- Encourages and supports a diverse and inclusive working environment in the department.

In 2020, WisDOT updated the organization's values and created the WisDOT IDEA. The "D" in "IDEA" stands for Diversity and is defined as *Creating an environment, inclusive of all people and opinions, which cultivates opportunities to bring varied perspectives to the work being done and decisions being made.*

WisDOT published the 2021-23 Equity and Inclusion Plan in January 2021. This plan closely aligns with the agency's value on Diversity. There are many goals and strategies identified in the plan focused on recruitment, retention and agency culture.

Supervisory Responsibilities:

Supervisors are expected to actively engage in the following activities to support diversity:

- Create and maintain a work environment that is respectful and accepting of diversity and inclusion by setting clear expectations for behaviors and clear methods for reporting inappropriate behaviors.
- Model a positive attitude regarding inclusivity through actions and words (e.g., having conversations about the importance of leveraging diversity in staff meetings, having conversations about equity and inclusion, discussions about providing service to all WisDOT customers, etc.).
- Incorporate diverse perspectives into decision making (building an inclusive organization). Acknowledge and identify the skills and abilities staff have to contribute to the team.
- Provide opportunities for staff to participate in diversity, equity and inclusion training/events. This could include participating in AAAC events, EAP webinars, watching online training modules or talks in team meetings, etc.
- Hold staff accountable for behaviors that are exclusionary, offensive or illegal.
- Recruit, hire, promote and maintain a diverse workforce.
 - Supervisor works with Human Resources and other networks as appropriate to assist in the recruitment process that will expand the applicant pool.
 - Supervisor should follow Region 1 HR Policy#100 (Balanced Interview Panels) to allow for diverse perspectives when considering candidates.
 - Use available tools to educate the interview panel on cross-cultural issues in the interview process.

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Supervisory Tools in Measuring Diversity:

Below are examples of employee behaviors/activities to assist supervisors in measuring employee success in diversity expectations.

- Helps create a work environment that embraces and appreciates diversity.
- Sees the value of cultural, ethnic, gender and other individual differences in people. Creates an environment of learning about, valuing, encouraging and supporting differences.
- Seeks different points of view and leverages diverse perspectives in group processes and decision-making. Checks own views against the views of others.
- Supports fair treatment and equal opportunity for all. Listens to and objectively considers the ideas/input of others. Respects the talents and contributions of all individuals.
- Strives to eliminate barriers to exclusivity; ensures that new barriers to inclusion are not built.
- Diplomatically handles challenging or tense interpersonal situations.
- Strives to understand the data, the people and their views before making decisions and taking action.
- Works through difficult or awkward interpersonal situations in a positive manner. Broaches sensitive issues that allows for rational and open discussion.
- Focuses on issues and interests instead of people or positions, even when personally attacked.
- Delivers tough messages with sensitivity to minimize the negative impact on others; critiques constructively.
- Thoughtfully intervenes in conflicts to improve communication, diffuse tension and resolve problems. Seeks to find common ground and preserve relationships.
- Helps remove barriers to team productivity and success.

Performance Discussion on Diversity Efforts:

In addition to observing employee behavior, supervisors should discuss with their employees their involvement in building capacity around diversity and inclusion. The following are sample questions/statements to ask employees in their performance evaluations to learn about their activities, outcomes and actions related to diversity, equity and inclusion.

Question 1. Have you read through the WisDOT Equity and Inclusion Plan? What are your thoughts about the goals and strategies in the plan? What do you believe you could offer to ensure the efforts in the plan are successful?

Question 2. Please share any relevant involvement you've had this past year providing you with the opportunity to build capacity around diversity, equity and inclusion such as:

- training or workshop participation
- attending presentations focusing on topics enhancing intercultural understanding and appreciation
- conference attendance that enhancing inter-cultural skills
- pursuing or being active in community engagement opportunities
- program development impacting diverse communities
- developing or participating in multicultural networking opportunities

Question 3. Please share an experience that had a diversity, equity or inclusion....

- *...how did you react or feel about that experience?*
- *...how did it impact you?*
- *...how did it impact others in your life?*
- *...did you make any changes based on the experience?*

Question 4. What personal or professional goals do you have around diversity, equity and inclusion learning for the coming year? What ideas do you have where you could help foster a more inclusive workplace environment?