

IMPROVING DIVERSITY, EQUITY & INCLUSION THROUGH STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP

A diverse, equitable and inclusive public health laboratory (PHL) workforce is required to attract qualified talent, achieve lasting change and meet the needs of the communities we serve. Getting there can be challenging, but strong, strategic leadership can boost our organization's culture and build a stronger workforce and workplace environment using some of the strategies outlined below.



EDUCATION/TRAINING

Make diversity, equity and inclusion (DE&I) a team effort.

Use group training to get everyone on the same page. Check out the [University of Southern California Diversity Toolkit](#) or [Training for Change](#) for group training ideas.^{35, 36}

Be an inclusive leader.

Key traits of inclusive leadership include commitment, courage, cognizance of bias, curiosity, cultural intelligence and collaboration.⁴⁰

Evaluate your organization.

See how your organization scores for DE&I in five key workplace culture areas: transparency, awareness, inspiring and involving, building for the future and systematic positive inclusion.³⁷

Conduct anonymous surveys with current and former employees to understand issues of hidden bias and unfairness that might affect both employees and those they serve.¹⁸



ALLYSHIP/ADVOCACY

Empower underrepresented groups.

Promote leadership and growth opportunities via formal or informal mentorship and providing advice.³⁸

Ensure equitable access to opportunities, from taking on a new project to being considered for promotions.

Get others involved!

Implementing change can have a greater impact as a group. Training others to be allies can boost awareness.³⁸

Ask "Whose perspective are we missing?"

Involving a diverse set of colleagues in a project enriches its output. Tap into different educational, cultural and social viewpoints to boost collective intelligence, generate new and innovative ideas, and enhance group performance.³⁹



MENTORING

Build a mentoring program.

Mentorship is a key tool to support employee connections, promote a positive and inclusive culture, increase promotion of underrepresented groups and encourage diverse perspectives.⁴¹

Work with what you have. What resources does your PHL already have to build a mentoring program for diversity?

Do your research. Conduct surveys to identify workforce needs and interests the program can address.⁴²

Make diversity a goal.

Mentoring provides opportunities for skill development and networking that can help minimize challenges that underrepresented employees may face when it comes to inclusion and career progression.⁴¹

Set specific diversity goals for the program and define expectations and metrics for program evaluation.⁴²⁻⁴⁴

Seek out diverse mentors and mentees and design a matching strategy to enhance fit.⁴²⁻⁴⁶

Build a mentoring culture.⁴⁷⁻⁴⁹

Normalize participation by automatically enrolling new employees in the program.

Maintain participant involvement with regular communication to offer tips, highlight successes and build a community.⁴⁴



RECRUITMENT

Use inclusive job descriptions and diverse interview panels.

Use tools like [Gender Decoder](#) to find and remove subtle bias in job ads.⁵⁰

A balance of interviewers brings unique experiences to the discussion and helps candidates feel more comfortable.

Include DE&I-related questions in the application and interview.

Partner up with other organizations.

Work with local organizations to connect with diverse candidates in the community.

Explore platforms like [Professional Diversity Network](#) to reach underrepresented job hunters.⁵¹

Stay objective.⁵²

Collect only relevant data about your candidates' skills; obscure demographic and educational backgrounds on resumes to reduce bias.

Harness artificial intelligence to review resumes and ensure diverse candidates are not screened out because of unconscious bias.

Avoid social media pre-screening, consider anonymizing initial interviews, and ask all candidates the same questions.

Give new hires a reason to stay.⁵³

Devote an equal amount of time and effort to retaining new employees as you do to hiring.

Offer floating holidays to honor different religions and cultures.

Create inclusive infrastructure by providing day care, nursing rooms and gender-friendly restrooms.

Make and maintain robust anti-discriminatory policies.



Learn more and be the change.

www.aphl.org/DEI

(and find a full list of references at www.aphl.org/DEI-References)