



Strategies for achieving **work place diversity**

The Jacksonville Human Rights Commission's (JHRC) Employment Committee conducted a series of interviews with companies from across various employment sectors in Jacksonville in the summer of 2010. The purpose of the interviews was to understand the best practices used by local employers to ensure that their workforce reflects the demographics of the Jacksonville/ Duval County labor market. The questions also centered around identifying challenges to employing a diverse workforce and effective strategies for meeting these challenges. This project is complemented by surveys and

change happens Here other work to promote equity in employment in the city of Jacksonville.

PARTICIPATING COMPANIES

- Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Florida
- Community First of Jacksonville
- CSX
- Mayo Clinic at Jacksonville
- Winn – Dixie Stores, Inc.

PRIMARY OUTCOMES:

- 1 **Involvement of leadership at all levels of the company.** Visible and committed leadership is critical to the success of any organization's diversity initiatives. Leaders throughout the organization value and support diversity and promote efforts to meet the changing needs of the organization's customers, employees and suppliers.
- 2 **Integrate diversity efforts into the company's overall core business strategies.** Organizations that value diversity realize that it must be integrated and aligned with strategic business goals and operational decisions. It's important that diversity efforts be considered as essential to the organization's overall success.
- 3 **Establish employee "affinity," "resource" or "inclusion" groups.** These employee groups can be used to assist with recruiting, valuing diversity in the organization or recommending changes that enhance the work environment. Groups can be formed around race, national origin, abilities, single parents, military and veterans, etc.

- 4 Use effective techniques to recruit and retain employees. An organization's reputation or "brand" helps to attract new employees to the workplace; even when compensation is not the "best in class." Implement innovative work options and provide resources that address the specific needs of the workforce such as mentoring programs for mothers returning to work or tuition refund plans.
- 5 Establish and maintain a variety of methods to communicate with employees and listen to their concerns. Consistently, "best in class" organizations use periodic climate surveys; hotlines or affinity or employee resource groups to measure satisfaction in the work environment and to retain employees. Follow up with employees on what you learn, make connections between what you heard and what changes or new company policies, practices and/or programs exist.
- 6 Implement strategies that develop and enhance leadership skills. Succession planning, talent management reviews and mentoring programs are all effective ways of identifying and developing individuals within the organization so they can move into leadership roles. These strategies include rotation through all the business units of the organization, internal training opportunities as well as participation in external senior executive - level leadership programs.
- 7 Hold leaders accountable for achieving a more balanced and inclusive workforce. "Inspect what you expect." Organizations that expect to create a diverse and inclusive workforce include such objectives as part of a leader's performance goals.
- 8 Provide training opportunities to enhance skills in cultural competence and diversity. Training on how to build, maintain and retain a diverse workforce is vitally important. It provides an opportunity for the organization to clearly articulate the "business imperative" for doing this work.



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