

RETENTION SOLUTIONS

Employer Policies & Practices

Retention solutions based on findings from Partners in Diversity's Workforce Diversity Retention Project surveys and interviews conducted in 2019.

Ideas that employers can implement to improve or change internal policies including recruiting professionals of color or in responding to concerns or complaints from employees of color.

1. The role of human resources is be an advocate for culture.

As such HR professionals need to use a cultural lens to help employees of color feel more connected and able to bring their whole self to work. Build partnerships and help with connections to lessen feelings of isolation and loneliness.

2. Create a model for a safe, confidential and supportive process to resolve formal and informal incidents or complaints that create barriers to equity and fairness in the workplace.

Many existing structures place the employee who is raising the issue in a position of being retaliated against. An anti-retaliation policy is needed to convey policies to assure all employees know what they should and should not be doing. Complaints can be managed by a third party such as Allvoices.co, which provides a space for employees to submit complaints anonymously. Include policies on how to repair and move forward for employees.

3. Develop an equity lens policy as a tool to review all other policies.

This will assure a fair and equitable workplace environment. For example: see websites for equity policies at [Multnomah County](#) or the [Port of Portland](#).

4. Avoid tokenism in the workplace.

Tokenism is the practice of making only a perfunctory or symbolic effort, especially by recruiting a small number of people from underrepresented groups in order to give the appearance of equality. Do not burden employees of color through this practice.

5. Fund, support and empower employee resource groups (ERG) to create networks to connect within the organization and in the community, as well as with other employer ERGs and professional organizations.

6. Prioritize retention efforts.

Invest in diversity recruiting with adequate practices and efforts to retain and develop talent for the long term.

7. Adopt an equity certification for managers and leaders, provide resources and training for all employees.

Be active in an employee resource group in a significant way as part of the certification. Make diversity, equity, inclusion goals a part of performance reviews, interviews for advancement, etc.

8. Use employee resource groups to communicate the challenges and opportunities that employees of color might experience when relocating from a more diverse community to Oregon and southwest Washington.

Share the history of racism and “Portland nice” so it is not a surprise to newcomers.

9. Employee Assistance Programs (EAP) are generally provided as an employee benefit.

The Workforce Diversity Retention Project documented the need for more accessible, culturally-appropriate professional practitioners available to provide counseling, stress management, wellness support and resources for employees of color. Enhanced resources, in addition to the regular EAP model, could be a valuable resource.

10. Implement a more robust off-boarding (exit interview) process to learn why employee resigned to better improve internal culture to retain talented employees of color and other diverse backgrounds.

Engage employee resource groups to brainstorm retention strategies based upon the feedback of exit interviews. Consult a culturally appropriate professional practitioner.

11. Evaluate and replace HR hiring practices that unconsciously discriminate against employees of color.

For example, include methods to evaluate the qualifications in job descriptions and require all hiring panel members to take unconscious bias training.

12. Evaluate and replace HR operational practices using an equity policy lens that recognizes the differences in cultural perception of quality performance.

Examples of operational practices to review include: job evaluations, improvement plans, rewards and bonuses, pay equity and pay transparency, and opportunities to develop career paths, such as stretch assignments.

For more information about the Workforce Diversity Retention Project contact:

Partners in Diversity

503-224-8684 | PartnersinDiversity.org