

Inclusive Workplace Strategy

Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) and diversity and inclusion (D&I) are often considered to be one in the same. They are absolutely not. Without question, EEO programs have contributed significantly to eradicating employment discrimination in federal agencies. Agencies have a statutory obligation to maintain a legally compliant EEO program and the commitment must be communicated from the top down and vigorously enforced. There is a longstanding history of confusion regarding D&I and its relationship to EEO. A prevalent misperception by many managers and supervisors involves a lack of understanding about the distinction between EEO and diversity and inclusion; this inability to understand the differences has made it challenging for managers and supervisors to learn the craft of utilizing multiple cultural backgrounds as competitive tools to manage diversity to its fullest potential. Therefore, after thorough and careful consideration, TSA has separated the functions and developed an Inclusive Workplace Strategy.

TSA's Inclusive Workplace Strategy brings with it a paradigm shift, a new way of thinking about differences among people. It is geared towards educating employees to recognize that differences contribute to peoples' viewpoints and how these varied perspectives are key to creative thinking, problem solving, and decision-making. The inclusive workplace concept aims at creating a workplace in which everyone and every group is fully engaged. Additionally, the Strategy is focused on questioning and examining age-old hierarchies, traditions, and biases, then instituting behavioral changes that can create cultural shifts.

EEO and managing diversity go hand in hand, each reinforcing the gains of the other. While there is much overlap in philosophy and practice, perhaps a good way to look at differences is in the form of a few comparisons (see chart below). **Making the distinction is necessary to mitigate the tendency for people to equate D&I with EEO and affirmative action. This separation does not abandon or minimize the EEO program; the inclusive workplace strategy and the EEO program must complement and supplement one another.**

The standards of success associated with this strategy incorporate an understanding that TSA can better meet its goals and mandates by recruiting, hiring, and retaining people the best people from every background and every community our Nation has to offer.

Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) and Diversity & Inclusion

Federal Sector EEO Programs	Past Diversity Efforts	Inclusive Workplace Strategy
Compliance with the EEOC regulations	Compliance with the EEOC Regulations	Strategic Diversity & Inclusion Management
Laws, Regulations, and Executive Orders	Laws, Regulations, Executive Orders, and Agency Policy Statements	Inclusive Workplace Strategy and implementation plans
Focused on eradicating employment discrimination	Focused on eradicating employment discrimination	Focused on workforce and organizational development
Focused on uncovering, examining and removing barriers to equal participation at all levels of the workforce	Minimize exposure to employment litigation	Manage diversity to its fullest potential
One approach, workforce application	One approach, workforce application	One approach, multiple applications (e.g., workforce, partners, community organizations, and stakeholders)
Equip leaders to comply with EEOC Regulations	Equip leaders to comply with EEOC Regulations	Prepare and empower leaders to develop their own innovative solutions to diversity and inclusion challenges