



Best Practices for Fostering a Diverse and Inclusive Workplace in Congress

1. OUTREACH TO DIVERSE CANDIDATES

- a. Post hiring announcements publicly by utilizing the House Vacancy Announcement and Placement Service and the Senate Placement Office.
- b. Share hiring announcements with the director's of the House Office of Diversity and Inclusion and the Senate Democratic Diversity Initiative. As of this writing, we have not learned of a companionship effort on the Republican side of the Senate.
- c. Share hiring announcements with diverse Congressional Staff Organizations (CSOs). Many CSOs create and share to their membership a bulletin board made up of hiring announcements.

2. INTERNSHIP RECRUITMENT

- a. Recruit diverse fellows and interns from various national organizations that focus on diverse current and recent graduates.
- b. Collaborate and share internship opportunities with Minority-Serving Institutions that serve large numbers of diverse students, such as Historical Black Colleges and Universities, Hispanic-serving institutions, Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander-serving institutions and Tribal Colleges and Universities.
- c. Establish relationships with local organizations and colleges to ensure that constituents have greater access to internship notices.

3. THE HIRING PROCESS

- a. Establish a written diversity and inclusion plan that defines what diversity is, and establishes a process for the recruitment, interview, hiring, and retention of candidates and staff.
- b. Conduct blind candidate selection by redacting names from application materials prior to review.
- c. Engage more than one staff member in independently reviewing resumes and identifying candidates for interviews.
- d. Use a standardized set of questions and work assignment tests in interviews to ensure equal treatment of each candidate.
- e. Adopt a version of the National Football League's "Rooney Rule," which requires that an office interview at least one candidate of color for each vacant position.



4. CONDUCT PERFORMANCE EVALUATIONS

- a. Incorporate performance reviews at regular intervals, using standardized procedures and materials, which incorporate the views of and advice from both peers and supervisors. Consider starting each review with an employee's self-evaluation.
- b. Provide concrete examples of desired work products and outcomes to help set expectations, and reward good work with commendations, bonuses, or other benefits, using predetermined set of criteria.

5. INCREASING AND RETAIN DIVERSE CANDIDATES

- a. Encourage staff to attend various professional development trainings. Such as Staff Up Congress, a nonpartisan effort by NALEO Educational Fund and the Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies, that offers professional development opportunities to increase staff diversity.
- b. Obtain unconscious bias training for the Member, the chief of staff, and all managerial staff involved in recruitment, hiring, evaluation, and retention. This training is offered in the House and Senate.
- c. Encourage staff and hiring managers to engage with Representative Democracy, a coalition of think tanks, nonpartisan organizations, and civil rights groups that believe diversity strengthens institutions of government and civic engagement. Utilize Representative Democracy's guide, [Building and Maintaining a Diverse and Inclusive Congressional Office](#).
- d. Create and use a standard training and onboarding program, incorporating resources on inclusion and employees' rights from the Congressional Office of Compliance and outside advisors such as the Congressional Management Foundation.
- e. Develop an Inter-office Mentorship Program. The program would pair entry-level staff with senior-level staff in order to breakdown barriers and to provide professional guidance for young staffers starting their careers on Capitol Hill.

Last updated: March 1, 2021

Staff Up Congress is a joint effort by NALEO Educational Fund and Joint Center For Political and Economic Studies to promote a more inclusive congressional workforce.

Those interested in learning more, can visit <http://staffupcongress.com> or contact **Mario J. Beovides** at mbeovides@naleo.org.

