



Workforce Alliance Racial Equity and Accountability Integrated Plan Summary

Workforce Alliance has embarked on a comprehensive initiative to achieve racial equity and accountability. Using its June 19, 2020 public statement, “Workforce Alliance Affirms Commitment to Racial Equity,” as a starting point, the Integrated Plan provides high level strategies covering all aspects of Workforce Alliance. This document provides an executive summary of those commitments. The entire plan can be accessed at https://bit.ly/REAI_Plan2020.

A. Knowledge Building: Setting the foundation for transformation and on-going growth

The first element of this Integrated Plan is to ensure that the board, staff and partners of Workforce Alliance have an understanding of the history of inequity in our society AND the tools to confront and address inequity on the personal, group and organizational level.

B. Diversity - Equity – Inclusion (DEI): Establishing a DEI structure to ensure implementation and continual improvement to achieve lasting racial equity at Workforce Alliance

A formal DEI structure will ensure that all aspects of plan implementation will take place in an organizational culture that is both diverse and equitable. Staff resources will be dedicated to managing the DEI program, assisted by outside facilitator(s) as needed. The Internal Equity Group (including staff from all levels, inclusive of several Black and Brown employees) will serve as the advisory group for the DEI process.

C. Action: The board and staff of Workforce Alliance have made specific commitments for action and change which are outlined in detail in the Integrated Plan. The following summary provides a sense of the breadth and depth of these commitment.

III. Assess our operations as an organization both internally and externally to make changes and be accountable for them.

Staff will:

- a. Use data to inform needed modifications to programs to increase racial equity.
- b. Review procurement procedures and relevant regulations to address barriers to minority-owned vendors.
- c. Review the employer handbook with a racial equity lens.
- d. Ensure that REAI goals and recommendations are reflected in all strategic and planning documents going forward.
- e. Establish a staffing/talent plan that includes targeted recruitment, internally and externally, to access a diverse, qualified pool of candidates, internal talent development and succession planning.

The Board will:

- a. Establish a process to hold staff accountable for implementation of action items.
- b. Ensure Executive Director Succession plan will include a diverse, qualified pool of candidates both internally and externally.
- c. Work with Executive Director to ensure that appropriate staff will exist to support the implementation of the Racial Equity and Accountability Initiative and to support development of Workforce Alliance into an increasingly equitable organization.

II. Dedicate new outreach resources through our network of American Job Centers and increase our collaboration with our community partners to not only reach and serve more Black and Brown people with employment & training services, but also to provide us with input to ensure we are having meaningful impact in what we are doing.

Staff will: work with the One Stop Operator, the American Job Center Provider, the South Central CT Partner network, existing and new community partners (focusing on Black and Brown communities, faith based organizations and neighborhood groups) on a series of strategies to achieve this commitment (see full Integrated plan for details).

The Board will:

- a. Develop a “bench” of Black and Brown board candidates to fill vacancies, particularly for private sector seats. And, will revise training materials for new board members to reflect racial equity and accountability priorities.
- b. Identify opportunities where board member Ambassadors and partners can work to promote increased racial equity.

III. Urge the Governor’s Workforce Council to act on recommendations we made last year to remove barriers caused by poor transportation, lack of adequate childcare and benefit cliffs which disproportionately affect Black and Brown populations.

Staff will: engage and inform the Chief Elected Officials in South Central CT in advocacy on these issues.

The Board will: build on staff work, but expand the scope to include changes to state and local legislation that will address racial inequity in workforce development and related areas

IV. Staff will expand efforts to serve minority-owned businesses and entrepreneurs through our Business Services unit. In addition, continue to support employers in diversifying recruitment and hiring.

V. Staff will expand and build upon the impact of our Next Steps for Ex-Offenders program that has helped over 2,000 people since 2003 to find gainful employment after incarceration – a systemic plague that has for too long impacted Black and Brown lives and livelihoods in South Central CT.