



Diversity Council Charter

May 2009*

1. PURPOSE

This charter describes the duties and responsibilities of the Minnesota Department of Transportation (Mn/DOT) Diversity Council, the organization of its membership, and its operating procedures. This charter also explains the structure of the Diversity Council, its reporting relationship to the Mn/DOT Commissioner's Staff, the Commissioner of Mn/DOT, and the Director of the Affirmative Action Office.

The Diversity Council is designed to serve as a working advisory body to the Commissioner of Mn/DOT, the Commissioner's Staff, and the Director of the Affirmative Action Office. Its mission is to "make differences matter" by fostering an environment of inclusion, making Mn/DOT an employer of choice. Its purpose is to foster effective diversity management practices in the agency, promote workforce diversity initiatives, and integrate the principles of diversity throughout Mn/DOT, in accordance with the Mn/DOT Strategic Vision, Diversity Strategic Management Plan, and Mn/DOT's Policy on Equal Employment Opportunity and Diversity. The Council is a forum to discuss diversity issues, share ideas and information on diversity matters and events, collaborate on and implement diversity initiatives, and leverage organizational resources.

2. ROLES

The role of the Diversity Council includes developing and communicating a relevant business case with benchmarks to enhance the organization by creating and implementing diversity principles and inclusion initiatives, identifying and communicating top diversity issues to leadership and all Mn/DOT employees by providing recommendations regarding diversity and inclusion. The Council serves as a communication channel through which Mn/DOT can develop partnerships with community organizations that are already doing diversity work, which will build external credibility and cultivate trust with the public at large.

3. RESPONSIBILITIES

The following are the responsibilities of the Diversity Council:

- a. Review Mn/DOT's programs, policies, and initiatives as they relate to workforce diversity, including strategic action plans, reports, and policy statements, and make recommendations to the Commissioner's Staff and the Commissioner of the Mn/DOT in support of diversity in the workplace.
- b. Provide advice and consultation to the Commissioner, the Director of the Affirmative Action Office, and the Director of Human Resources on the development and implementation of Mn/DOT's diversity management initiatives, including: supporting equal access to employment, training, and educational opportunities; improving understanding of cultural characteristics and differences within the workforce; performing organizational assessments; serving as a change agent to improve the organizational culture; and supporting leadership development in the area of diversity management and conflict prevention and resolution.
- c. Ensure diversity is considered in strategic management initiatives and that strategic planning is aligned with diversity management objectives.
- d. Develop and support initiatives aimed at promoting diversity and inclusion in Mn/DOT.
- e. Serve as a communication channel through which all Mn/DOT employees will be able to express ideas as they relate to diversity issues, and as a link between employees and management.
- f. Support the Commissioner and Director of the Affirmative Action Office in other appropriate ways to foster an atmosphere of acceptance, inclusion, equity, and diversity in Mn/DOT.
- g. Support Mn/DOT managers and supervisors in their efforts to enhance and promote diversity in their respective divisions/offices.
- h. Provide an annual report of its goals and progress to the Commissioner, leadership, all employees and to the public.
- i. The Diversity Council and the Diversity Committees will work in concert to attain the Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Goals.

4. STRUCTURE

The Diversity Council operates under the auspices of an elected Chairperson and receives staff support from the Affirmative Action Office and Human Resources Office. The Diversity Council comprises voting and non-voting representatives from across the Agency. The Council Membership shall reflect an inclusive cross-section of Mn/DOT's workforce. Adequate resources will be provided to the Council to promote the Charter and Implementation Plan. Council Membership and its respective responsibilities are as follows:

Chair / Vice Chair

- a. A Chair and Vice Chair shall be elected annually by a simple majority of the Diversity Council members present at the time of election. Elections shall be held at the November Council meeting and the newly elected Chair and Vice Chair shall take office in January. The Chair and Vice Chair may serve no more than two consecutive terms in each position.
- b. It would be preferred if a Division Director is not the Diversity Council Chair or Vice Chair.
- c. The Chair shall preside at all meetings of the Council and have the authority and responsibility customarily conferred on presiding officers.
- d. The Chair shall be responsible for directing the activities of the Council and planning its work agendas. The Chair shall prepare and disseminate an agenda for each meeting at least seven days in advance of the meeting.
- e. The Chair shall be responsible for maintaining minutes for each meeting of the Council, and other record keeping duties as necessary.
- f. The Chair may appoint task groups to study, research, or report on issues related to the mission of the Council and to implement Council projects, as voted in by the Council. These assignments shall become part of the minutes of the Diversity Council.
- g. The Chair shall submit an annual report of the Council's activities to the Commissioner and Commissioner's Staff.
- h. In the absence of the Chair, the Vice Chair will assume responsibility for the operation of the Diversity Council.
- i. Member Criteria: Current Mn/DOT employee with the commitment to serve at least one year.
- j. New member on-boarding will be conducted by the membership committee.
- k. The Chair will request nominations for the Diversity Council membership. The chair may appoint a membership subcommittee.

Voting Members:

- a. Size: The Council shall be made up of 21 members.
- b. Council members will be representative of Mn/DOT by geography, level, functional group and diverse populations (including, but not limited to ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, disability and age).
- c. At least one District Engineer will be a member of the Council.
- d. At least one person from each District.
- e. Responsibilities for voting members shall be outlined in a Statement of Roles and responsibilities for Diversity Council Representatives.
- f. Initially one third of appointments shall be one year, two year, and three years each. No member shall have more than two consecutive three year terms.
- g. At least one Division Director will be a voting member.
- h. The Division Director(s) will be the Diversity Council champion(s) and liaison to the Division Directors and the Commissioner's Staff.

Non-Voting Members:

- a. Director of the Office of Human Resources, or designee.
- b. Director of the Office of Civil Rights, or designee.
- c. Director of the Affirmative Action Office, or designee.
- d. The Department's Tribal Liaison.

Other Officers and participants may be appointed /invited to the Council at the discretion of the Chairpersons. Unions will be consulted and informed through regular meet and confer meetings.

5. PROCEDURES

Diversity Council Meetings

- a. The Diversity Council will meet on the first Wednesday of every month. Three of the nine monthly meetings will be in person at Central office, Rochester and St. Cloud. Others will be via video conferencing.
- b. The Chairperson shall appoint a person to record meetings, prepare minutes, and distribute materials for review by the Council members prior to each meeting. The Affirmative Action Office shall provide staff support to the Council to the extent that its resources permit.

Method of Conducting Internal Business

- a. The Diversity Council shall take action by the adoption of resolutions. Resolutions shall be adopted by a simple majority vote of the members present at any given Council meeting.
- b. When resolutions are deemed unnecessary, the Council may take action by polling its members for consensus of opinions.
- c. Consensus is reached when, after discussion and without a vote, the majority of the members present agree that an action should or should not be taken.
- d. The Chairperson may appoint committees or working groups at his or her discretion. Such workgroups may be long-term/standing or short-term/task oriented. Committees and short-term working groups will be dissolved when their work has been completed.
- e. Amendments – This Charter may be altered, amended, or repealed and a new Charter adopted only upon action by a majority vote of all members present during a regular monthly meeting and with approval of the Management Council.

6. APPROVAL

Upon signature, this Charter will be valid until two years after the effective date, at which time the Charter will be certified as current or revised, as needed.