

For the Sake of Health & Hiring

Strategies for Hiring Men of Color in Healthcare

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For

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Disclaimer Page

This study has been prepared for the Insight Center for Community Economic Development, Oakland, CA. The author conducted this study in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Public Policy at Mills College. The judgments and conclusions are solely those of the author, and are not necessarily endorsed by the Mills College Public Policy Program, the sponsoring organization, or any other agency.

Executive Summary

Insight Center for Community Economic Development is currently working with an advisory board of representatives from major health care providers through out the Bay Area to come up with a plan to help increase hiring diversity in the health care field. Insight Center plans on addressing the problem through a focus on how health care providers can increase their hiring of men of color (MoC) in particular. Using best practices analysis of 3 types of Voluntary Employer Agreements (VEA) and 3 workforce development practices based upon case studies, this paper recommends that the Insight Center create a detailed agreement that includes a plan for implementation, specific indicators/goals for success, a reporting/evaluation structure for the implementation the following 2 strategies:

1. A review of current hiring policies to eliminate unnecessary barriers using the AHA Diversity Assessment to make plans for internal shifts to promote inclusion within the hiring process and the current job environment with the assistance of a consultant.
2. Work with a local organization that is already participating in workforce development training and work to build a pathway program partnership that ends with placement within skilled entry-level positions within the healthcare institution.

The Problem is Two-fold: Lack of Diversity in Health Care & Economic Instability For Men of Color

Local healthcare employers currently lack the workforce needed to sufficiently serve the diverse local community, while Black & Latino men, in particular,

have the highest rates of unemployment and are grossly underrepresented in the healthcare field. This lack of representation demonstrates a lack of equity within hiring and impairs healthcare providers' overall effectiveness in the improvement of patient outcomes. These issues are not specific to the Bay Area, but have been seen nationwide. The lack of diversity in healthcare is exacerbated by the distribution of PoC being heavily concentrated in entry-level low paying positions with generally little opportunity for promotion, such as security or clerical positions. Percentages of black and Latino men in management or leadership positions are extremely low in all fields, including healthcare. Unemployment of MoC has a large negative impact on individuals, families, communities, and the local and national economy. In the Bay Area, about a third of MoC are unable to meet their basic needs based upon their current incomes due to un- or underemployment.

The Most Important Factor in an Agreement is Knowing the Details

A Voluntary Employer Agreement (VEA) is a document that details the commitment of an employer to specific action steps or goals in regards to employment practices. After looking at 2 different VEA templates that have been used in various workforce development plans, it is determined in this paper that a highly detailed agreement including a clear plan for implementation and an evaluation system is the best way to ensure effective communication and understanding between Insight Center, health care providers, and partnership organizations. It was determined that the form VEA template was not the most effective means of communicating the details of an agreement, but would be productive as a functional document within the implementation stages of the agreement.

Create a Pathway into an Inclusive Job Environment – This Means Change

Case studies on high school-to-career pathways and pathways developed through organizational partnerships indicate that a discussion of the current climate of the local education system for young men of color is necessary to assess the potential reach of high school involved pathway programs. At the moment, schools are struggling to maintain connections to young men of color, and beginning a new workforce development pathway from scratch may not be the best starting point for a field that is relatively new to this type of workforce development work. This report determines that leveraging the relationships, expertise, and resources of partnership organizations would be a better strategy to successfully begin creating pathways into local health care institutions.

Bringing MoC into health care institutions as employees is a great step, but there still may be barriers to direct hires and a lack of inclusivity within internal policies and climate that bring challenges to hiring diversity and retention. This report determines that the best way to combat these barriers is for health care providers to agree to an assessment of their policies based upon the American Hospital Association's Diversity Assessment. The assessment was created particularly to determine the level of inclusivity and diversity within hospitals and other health care institutions, with questions phrased with actions in mind. From the outcomes of this assessment, health care institutions can create work plans to implement changes to make their institution a more inclusive workplace as diversity increases over time. This assessment should be performed by an outside consultant who can assist in covering work capacity and provide expertise in practices around diversity and inclusion.

Conclusion: Best Practices – Detailed Agreements, Leveraging Partnerships, & Self-Evaluation

This paper determines that a detailed agreement is the best means of producing a meaningful agreement, and organizational partnerships and internal policy shifts are the best methods of producing feasible, effective, long and short-term impacts on diversity and employment. Insight should draft an initial detailed agreement with the details the recommended practices to engage healthcare stakeholders in conversations around partnership and implementation.