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# PRESIDENT-ELECT JOE BIDEN'S FIRST 100 DAYS

## DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION CHECKLIST

In 2020, the United States experienced a series of reckonings, from continued racial injustice to the devastating but unequal impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. As the largest employer in the nation, encompassing agencies that affect every aspect of life in the U.S., the federal government has the opportunity to be a leader in the urgent and necessary work of diversity, equity and inclusion.

The center of government—the White House, the Office of Personnel Management, the Office of Management and Budget and the General Services Administration—is uniquely positioned to drive diversity, equity and inclusion across the federal enterprise. By setting goals and policy priorities, these federal entities can act as propagators and enablers in charting an ambitious course for stronger DEI across government. To catalyze this work and lay a foundation for the next four years, the Biden administration should implement the following diversity, equity and inclusion recommendations during its first 100 days:

- **Rescind Executive Order 13950 and all related guidance.**  
Issued in September 2020, this executive order significantly reduced the quantity and effectiveness of diversity and inclusion training across government precisely when current events underscored the need for cultural competence and racial sensitivity. Courts have already questioned this Trump administration policy, and in light of the negative impact of the executive order on the federal workforce, the new administration should move quickly to rescind it.
- **Restore the new inclusion quotient questions in the Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey.**  
The annual federal employee survey is one of the most powerful tools available to measure employee engagement, hold leaders accountable for the health of their organizations and shine the spotlight on agencies that are successfully engaging employees. Inclusion is a key part of an effective workforce, and until the 2020 survey, the NewIQ inclusion index was incorporated to help quantify workplace inclusivity. OPM should build these questions back into the survey starting this year.
- **Embed “equity” within the government’s diversity and inclusion framework.**  
The federal government has made diversity and inclusion a priority for years, but equity—recognizing and accommodating for the unique barriers that different groups face—is now understood to be essential in unlocking the full impact of a more diverse and inclusive workforce. This requires both a rhetorical change—from “diversity and inclusion” to “diversity, equity and inclusion”—and a deeper understanding of the distinct experiences and challenges different communities face.
- **Establish a new coordinated government-wide initiative to promote diversity, equity and inclusion.**  
In August 2011, Executive Order 13583 launched a wave of diversity and inclusion efforts, including a government-wide D&I strategic plan and department-specific plans, to guide initiatives during a four-year period. These strategic plans were to be updated every four years in preparation for the next stage of D&I maturity (2012-2016, 2017-2021). In 2021, the White House and the center of government agencies should revitalize this effort to meet the needs of today’s workforce. This initiative should include:
  - A review of progress stemming from Executive Order 13583, a re-emphasis on priorities that have not been achieved, and the addition of an equity-based goal to the original set of government-wide diversity, inclusion, and sustainability goals.

- A timeline for diversity, equity and inclusion action plans from all federal agencies, building off the themes of the government-wide strategic plan and including a unique mission case for DEI within each agency.
  - A timeline for the design and implementation of agency organizational assessments. A DEI-focused assessment would allow federal leaders to identify baseline data, highlight agency-specific strengths and development areas, benchmark levels of diversity, equity and inclusion across departments, and better inform each agency's DEI action plans. Topline scores from these studies should be made public to demonstrate transparency and a government-wide commitment to progress on DEI.
  - Priority areas that address DEI within the employee lifecycle, including recruitment and talent pipelines, development and advancement, retention and offboarding. It also should address issues across the federal enterprise such as program design, customer experience, community engagement and branding.
  - Priority areas focused on accessibility, particularly across ability status, language and geography. This can include a comprehensive review of compliance across digital offerings, increasing multilingual constituent services and solutions to reach those in rural communities.
- **Use disaggregated data to better understand how employee engagement varies across demographic groups.**  
Aggregated data can mask potential divergences in employee experiences, particularly for underrepresented groups. Federal employee survey data can be broken out by categories such as race or gender, but often agencies do not take advantage of this capability. Disaggregation, where possible, and while still ensuring the anonymity of individual employees, would allow agency leaders to identify inequitable conditions more easily within their workforce.
- **Strengthen the pipeline for talent for those without a four-year degree.**  
The federal government is in dire need of sustainable talent pipelines. In June 2019, there were seven times more federal employees older than 50 than under 30 (44.8% vs. 6.3%), and roughly one-third of employees onboard at the beginning of fiscal 2019 will be eligible to retire by the end of fiscal 2023. One potential talent pool is from individuals without a four-year college degree, who due to structural factors, are disproportionately Black, Latinx, Pacific Islander and Native American, according to the U.S. Census Bureau. Most federal jobs do not require a four-year degree. In fact, an OPM review of 400 federal occupations found that 350 of these positions do not, yet 60% of federal employees have attained at minimum a bachelor's degrees. Widening opportunities for individuals without a four-year degree will help address the federal talent gap and would bring in a new, more diverse generation of public servants.
- **Devise strategies to help agencies collaborate with each other and nongovernmental organizations.**  
Diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives are substantial and often challenging endeavors. A higher rate of inter-agency communication and best practice sharing will help scale effective policies and behaviors. Additionally, some nongovernmental organizations can contribute specialized expertise, outside perspectives, high-impact training sessions, and convening power to supplement intra-agency efforts.