

Diversity, Equal Employment Opportunity, and Affirmative Action

Embracing Diversity ¹

- inclusive of all groups
- focuses on developing an environment that maximizes the potential of all employees by valuing diversity interpersonally and institutionally
- business necessity given workforce trends
- broader than ethnicity, race, and gender
- not legally mandated

Equal Employment Opportunity ²

- eliminates discrimination in human resource policies and practices
- provides equal access and opportunity - no one excluded from participation
- legally mandated

Affirmative Action ³

- targets outreach to underutilized groups
- helps prevent discrimination
- legally mandated
- measures good faith efforts in making affirmative action progress for minorities, women, protected veterans, and individuals with disabilities

Equity in the Workplace

- diverse productive workforce
- more equitable and accessible work environment
- inclusive environment where all employees valued
- work environment free from discrimination
- level playing field for employee success

¹ **Embracing Diversity.** A comprehensive organizational and managerial process for developing an environment that maximizes the potential of all employees by valuing diversity. Diversity refers to human qualities that are different from our own and those of groups to which we belong, but are manifested in other individuals and groups. Dimensions of diversity include, but are not limited to: age, ethnicity, gender, physical abilities/qualities, race, sexual orientation, educational background, geographic location, income, marital or partner status, military experience, parental status, religious beliefs, work experience and job classification. (Adapted from *Workforce America! Managing Employee Diversity as a Vital Resource* by Marilyn Loden and Judy B. Rosener.)

² **Equal Opportunity Employment.** A term used by the federal government to refer to employment practices that ensure nondiscrimination based on race, color, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, physical or mental ability, religion, medical condition, ancestry, marital status or age. The principle behind EEO is that everyone should have the same access to opportunities.

³ **Affirmative Action.** Affirmative action is one aspect of the federal government's efforts to ensure equal employment opportunity. Executive Order 11246 prohibits federal contractors from discriminating against employees on the basis of race, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, color, or national origin, and requires contractors to implement affirmative action plans to increase the participation of minorities and women in the workplace.