

Government Agencies Launch Initiative to Address Hiring and Recruiting Challenges

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Practice Area: Labor and Employment

On January 12, 2022, the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) and the U.S. Department of Labor's Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs (OFCCP) announced the launch of a new initiative, Hiring Initiative to Reimagine Equity (HIRE), to reimagine hiring practices to advance equal employment opportunity. The goal of this initiative is to identify innovative and evidence-based practices that will help workers from underrepresented communities gain access to good jobs and help employers utilize their talent across America's workforce.

HIRE is a collaborative effort that will engage a broad array of stakeholders with the goal of expanding access to good jobs for workers from underrepresented communities and addressing key hiring and recruitment challenges these workers face. HIRE will also work to remove hiring barriers that limit opportunity along the lines of race, color, ethnicity, gender, LGBTQ+ status, religion, disability, age and veteran status by:

- Hosting convenings on organizational policy and practices to reimagine equity and expand opportunity in hiring;
- Identifying strategies to remove unnecessary barriers to hiring and to promote effective, job-related hiring and recruitment practices to cultivate a diverse pool of qualified workers;
- Promoting equity in the use of tech-based hiring systems; and
- Developing resources to promote adoption of innovative and evidence-based recruiting and hiring practices that advance equity.

As we wait for more information regarding this initiative, HIRE encourages employers, stakeholders, and the community to share resources, research and ideas at HIRE-initiative@eoc.gov and HIRE-initiative@dol.gov. HIRE is also hosting a series of roundtables focused on strategies for advancing equity by bringing together employers and worker organizations. More information is available at www.eoc.gov.

Proactive Steps for Employers

Many employers and worker organizations recognize that strengthening diversity, equity, inclusion and accessibility (DEIA) efforts in the workplace is a critical component in not only attracting and retaining talent but also compliance with equal employment opportunity (EEO) laws. Further, customers, investors, and shareholders increasingly want proof of workplace DEIA efforts.

In light of the EEOC's HIRE initiative and new focus, employers should consider taking the following steps to ensure they are compliant with the state and Federal law and to ensure they are providing an attractive work environment for the brightest and best talent:

- Examine hiring and recruitment practices such as degree and experience requirements, job descriptions and advertisements, interview questions and for potential bias.
 - Reach out to recruitment vendors who use artificial intelligence (AI) and other technologies to ensure they understand the employer's EEO obligations.
 - Utilize a third party to monitor equitable wages and benefits and employee opportunities for advancement.
 - Review employee handbooks and workplace policies for gaps of coverage.
 - Train all levels of employees regularly on EEO policies and the importance of DEIA in the workplace.
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