

ORANGE WATER AND SEWER AUTHORITY

DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

June 2017

PURPOSE: To provide information on OWASA's Diversity and Inclusion work.

BACKGROUND: The Board of Directors and staff recognize the value of establishing an Employee Diversity and Inclusion Program. Our updated Strategic Plan adopted by the Board on June 9, 2016 identified this as a high priority task for the organization.

The Board received and discussed staff's first draft Diversity and Inclusion Plan at its July 14, 2016 meeting. Following discussion, the Board agreed to hold a Special Work Session in the fall of 2016 to receive additional information and to continue its discussion of the draft.

The Board held a Special Work Session on November 3, 2016 and received excellent presentations on diversity and inclusion by Maria Hicks-Few, Camille Brooks, Jennifer Bynum, Faith Thompson and Michelle Johnson. Following discussion, the Board agreed that staff will update the draft Diversity and Inclusion Plan based on information learned since July 2016 for discussion at a future Board meeting.

An updated "working draft" Diversity and Inclusion Plan was provided to the Board by email on November 17, 2016, and it was provided to other peers for review and comment. Voluntary meetings with employees were also held to answer questions and receive feedback and suggestions on the updated "working draft."

The information gathered as noted above greatly assisted staff in preparing its proposed [Initial Implementation Plan](#) (Plan) for our Employee Diversity and Inclusion Program which was approved by the Board at their March 9, 2017, meeting. Board approval also included a directive that a consultant be hired within the next quarter.

CURRENT STATUS: Important progress has been made on the Plan since March 9, 2017, to include:

- Execution of a service contract with VISIONS, Inc. on May 30, 2017 and a progress report from Angela Bryant, Senior Consultant and Co-founder of VISIONS, Inc., and Thomas Griggs, Senior Consultant for VISIONS, Inc., at the Board's June 8, 2017, meeting
- Formation of a Diversity Resource Group of volunteer employees to assist VISIONS, Inc. with information sharing in diversity and inclusion initiatives
- Implementation of NeoGov, an on-demand HR software for the public sector, for applicant tracking and management reporting to provide greater functionality for applicants and provide statistical data for Team evaluation
- Establishing a "Welcome Team" of volunteer employees in June 2017 to help acclimate new employees and improve the onboarding process
- Staff attendance at local career fairs and engagement with local agencies to emphasize OWASA's interest and commitment to strengthening our diversity

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

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