

Army Diversity

What is it?

The Army Diversity mission is to develop and implement a strategy that contributes to mission readiness while transforming and sustaining the Army as a national leader in diversity. Through our success in equal employment opportunity (EEO) and military equal opportunity (EO), the Army has been a national leader in providing opportunities and work environments free of discrimination. However, in the coming years, this will not be enough. Army Diversity is an ambitious initiative supported by focus and action that will help the Army prepare for a changing America and the cultural differences that impact the Army's global responsibilities. The diversity effort includes a clear and concise direction that will better position the Army to recruit, develop, and retain the most talented people in America, regardless of fluctuating economic conditions and competition from the private sector and other government agencies. Included in this initiative will be training and education that supports the integration of diverse backgrounds and experiences into the mission in ways that enhance decision-making and inspire the high performance necessary to fight and win our Nation's wars.

What has the Army done?

In December 2010, Army leaders signed the Army Diversity Roadmap that outlines a unique approach to an enterprise-wide diversity initiative over the next five years. The Roadmap includes five goals that address the key areas that are essential to future success in diversity: leadership, people, structure and resources, training and education, and institutionalized practices that will sustain an inclusive environment. Following publication of the Roadmap, the Army completed diversity education and training for over 500 EEO and EO professionals at a week-long diversity & leadership symposium. Diversity education has also been completed for approximately 150 new general officers and senior civilian executives during each of the past two years.

The Army has created the Diversity and Leadership Directorate, headed by a deputy assistant secretary, under the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Manpower and Reserve Affairs. Thirty strategic objectives have been established to support the five Roadmap goals and six strategic outcomes. The Army has developed a plan for transforming the EO program to include the more proactive diversity and inclusion principles, which build on the foundation of fairness and opportunity achieved over the past 40 years. Other actions include establishment of a senior advisory council, coordination of Army-wide outreach to diverse organizations, and preparations for institutional training and education.

What continued efforts does the Army have planned for the future?

Through a comprehensive strategy, the Army is working to achieve the vision for diversity. This vision includes embracing the strengths of diverse people in an inclusive environment by investing in and managing talent, valuing individuals, and developing culturally astute Soldiers and Civilians who enhance our communities and are prepared for the human dimension of leadership and global engagements. These efforts, along with a properly resourced structure, will support our high performing Army of the future.

Specific actions include integrating diversity principles into leader development, implementing business intelligence systems to keep leaders informed of progress, establishing personnel and budget cycles, and executing diversity training and education across the Army.

Why is this important to the Army?

The diversity of our people is a source of strength for the Army. The Army is a vast organization with a global presence. Our Army status as an employer of choice in a diverse labor market will provide a competitive advantage in recruiting talent across ethnicity, gender, culture, generations, and many other attributes, experiences, and backgrounds. While the Army successfully draws its people from the most diverse nation on earth, further progress must be made as predicted demographic shifts and the shrinking pool of available talent can have consequences for sustaining our all-volunteer force.

The benefits of the Army's diversity efforts are many, including the opportunity to better understand our Nation's increasingly diverse population and attract the best available talent to fill our Soldier and Civilian ranks. Personnel who feel valued are inspired to serve at a higher level and want to remain in the Army. Our diversity education and training will enable leaders to create environments that are inclusive of all Soldiers, Civilians, and Family members—enhancing our ability to develop and retain those who join our ranks. Our many different attributes and experiences will enhance our ability to operate globally with a culturally astute force, bringing to the fight specific cultural, ethnic, language, and other backgrounds of our personnel.

Today's security environment demands more from our leaders than ever before. The unconventional, asymmetrical battlefields of the future mean that we must understand people and the environments where they live. A more culturally, ethnically, and linguistically diverse Army that facilitates understanding will provide a more effective Force. The Army offers opportunities to men and women who reflect all socio-economic classes of America. That inclusiveness must be a constant to ensure our ability to recruit and retain a diverse Army that can fight and win the battles of the 21st century. We must continue to improve our understanding of America's diverse population—how to attract our young people to the Army, how to include their knowledge and abilities in mission accomplishment, how to retain them, and how to inspire them to be champions of military service in the Army.

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Diversity & Leadership Directorate
(703) 696-4241
ArmyDiversity@conus.army.mil