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Inclusive Hiring Toolkit

Public Health Institute at Denver Health and Ambulatory Care Services

Racism is a public Health crisis. The Public Health Institute at Denver Health (PHIDH) and Ambulatory Care Services (ACS) continue to strive to understand and acknowledge systemic and structural barriers that perpetuate racial inequities in health outcomes. As a result, the inclusive hiring toolkit is designed to empower hiring managers to intentionally attract, and recruit racially and ethnically diverse groups.

This Toolkit was created by ACS and PHIDH in 2019 and revised in November 2022.^{1,2}

This [13-minute video](#) reviews the elements of the toolkit and how to use during the hiring process.

¹ Thank you to the PHIDH A3 Team: Mariana Del Hierro, Jessica Forsyth, Ashley Gallegos, Jesse Carlson, Alex Limas, Elizabeth Rumbel, Kaylynn Aiona, and Kathy Root

² Thank you to Mariana Del Hierro, Rahem Mulatu and Helen Burnside for their work editing and creating this guide.



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Frequently Asked Question (FAQ)

This Inclusive Hiring Toolkit provides best practices for eliminating bias and developing inclusive practices standards that empower and encourage hiring managers to intentionally and thoughtfully consider how to recruit, interview, and hire diverse racial and ethnic candidates by utilizing a uniform process, templates, and evaluation.

Q: What is the inclusive Hiring Process?

A: The inclusive Hiring Process is created by the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion work group to help address the need for a standard inclusive hiring process at the Public Health Institute at Denver Health (PHIDH) and Ambulatory Care Services (ACS) to provide support to hiring managers in recruiting and hiring qualified diverse candidates.

Q: Who is the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion work group?

A: The Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) work group are made up of DEI Committee, ACS, and PHIDH staff from multiple programs/divisions, representing various race/ethnicities/seniority levels/genders/sexual orientations that began in 2019. The DEI work group came together to intentionally respond to internal diversity, equity, and inclusion needs at PHIDH and ACS. The DEI work group and its projects are a part of [PHIDH](#) and [ACS](#) health equity strategy.

Q: Why should it matter to my team and me?

A: PHIDH and ACS are working towards creating a department that reflects the community we serve and wants to partner with at all levels of our work to provide the highest quality, culturally humble, and identity-affirming services, and care at Denver Health. While shifts in the demographics of our department will not be seen overnight, we do want to create and encourage the use of a process that promotes inclusive hiring with rich diversity and start moving the needle towards our goal.

Q: How does this impact me and my team?

A: Change, such as shifting the racial and ethnic demographics of an organization is slow and will not happen quickly. What this Toolkit will do is empower and encourage the use of inclusive hiring processes that promotes diversity, equity, and inclusion.



Q: What are the benefits?

A: Research suggests that “increasing underrepresented groups within the ... workforce supports the diversity of values and beliefs of the entire population and heightens cultural [humility] in ... service delivery.”³ PHIDH and ACS are working towards creating an institution that reflects the community we serve and partner with at all levels of our work to provide the highest quality, culturally humble, and identity-affirming services and care at Denver Health.

Q: Who do I contact for more information?

A: For ACS staff, please contact Kukurahem.Mulatu@dhha.org. For PHIDH staff, please contact Helen.Burnside@dhha.org.

Q: How do I know if I am successful at inclusive hiring?

A: It is important to work with your HR Department to analyze your department’s hiring and promotion data by race and ethnicity at baseline, when you start utilizing this toolkit and its practices, and then at least once per year. It is also critical that you view your reason for leaving data by race and ethnicity at least once per year. All of these data sources will help you understand where to focus your efforts (hiring versus promotion) and monitor the success or continuous process improvement needed throughout this process.

³ Jackson CS, Gracia JN. Addressing health and health-care disparities: the role of a diverse workforce and the social determinants of health. *Public Health Rep.* 2014;129 Suppl 2(Suppl 2):57–61. doi:10.1177/00333549141291S211

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Initiative

PHIDH and ACS are known for their commitment to working with community members and stakeholders to achieve health equity. Data continues to show people who are Black, Indigenous, Latinx, Asian, immigrants, refugees, people with disabilities, who identify as LGBTQ+, who are from low-income backgrounds, and any/all intersections of these identities experience significant disparities in health-related outcomes compared to people who are White, high income, and affluent backgrounds. Many of these disparities are caused by systemic and structural racism found in our society. Health equity cannot be achieved when we only focus on the downstream disparities. Instead, we must look at and address the upstream causes such as living wage, employment, quality education, and safe and affordable housing. By addressing the root causes we can address health long before our patients walk into our clinics and departments.

Using a racial equity framework, Denver Health, PHIDH and ACS intend to increase access to and professional growth within health care and public health careers for those most impacted by systemic and structural racism. We will utilize and implement a standardized practice for inclusive hiring to reduce unconscious biases during the hiring process such as recruiting, interviewing, job offers, and follow-up. By developing a clear strategy to recruit talent that reflects the communities we work with and by transparently measuring and reporting on our progress, we can continue to contribute towards creating a fair and just community to ensure everyone can thrive.

Inclusive Hiring

Hiring for Culture Add, not Culture Fit

Hiring for culture fit contributes to hiring more people that fit into the current dominant race or culture in organizations. In other words, hiring more people that look and think like the current team. Hiring for cultural add recognizes the need to hire different perspectives than currently represented on the team for innovation. Culture add includes gender, age, race, ethnicity, ability, and educational background to that teams include diverse ideas and perspectives.

To achieve this goal, it is important for hiring managers to switch the widespread and exclusionary practices that can happen when we seek to hire for culture fit. Decades of research from organizational scientists, psychologists, sociologists, and economists tell us that when we have diverse teams, we achieve more innovative solutions, better decision-making, and problem-solving. In addition, diversity enhances creativity.⁴ When hiring managers focus on culture add and bringing more diversity to their teams, they are more likely to benefit from innovative thinking and better outcomes.

The old culture fit paradigm resulted in the assessment if the hiring committee wanted to get stuck in an airport with the candidate or what they would bring to a desert island and addresses how much you “like” the candidate based on such questions. These questions and approaches include bias because we are more likely to choose a candidate that is like us rather than different. In addition, this approach does not measure the skills and abilities for the job.

Inclusive Hiring is the Responsibility of Everyone

To create a more inclusive organization to recruit, retain, and promote racially diverse staff, each of us has a role to play. As hiring managers, we must take personal responsibility to ensure our hiring practices are inclusive and seek to eliminate bias. Ruchika Tulshayan, in the book “Inclusion on Purpose,” defines three key areas of focus for more inclusive hiring:

- 1) Candidate search,
- 2) The interview,
- 3) The job offers, and follow-up after hiring.⁵

We will now use Ruchika Tulshayan’s work as a framework for how hiring managers can approach these three areas.

4 Rodriguez, E. (2014). How Diversity Makes Us Smarter. *Scientific American*, 311(4).

5 Tulshyan, R. (2022). *Inclusion on Purpose: An Intersectional Approach to Creating a Culture of Belonging at Work*. MIT Press.

Inclusive Candidate Searches

Job descriptions are a common source of bias in hiring practices. For example, educational or degree requirements are often required when in fact, many of the skills needed for positions can be learned and do not correlate with having a degree. In the United States, racial disparities exist in all levels of educational attainment, from college acceleration or prep programs to four-year degree attainment, advanced degrees, and in health care such as nursing, White graduates exceed Black and Latinx students in degree attainment and have less educational debt.^{6 7 8} Job descriptions need to focus on specific skills required to perform the job. Hiring managers should consider what skills are transferrable from a different field, rather than thinking of experience only related to current field of focus. Many necessary skills and abilities are transferrable.

In addition to the job description, hiring managers should make the application process as transparent as possible. This includes explaining to the candidate what every step will look like in the same way to each candidate. If hiring managers conduct initial phone screenings with candidates to explain the skills and responsibilities of the position, phone screens should be done in a consistent manner, and the next steps of the hiring process should be explained such as the interviewing process in the same way to all potential candidates.

Hiring managers at Denver Health should work with their HR recruiter to discuss how to promote their jobs on job boards or list serves that represent racial and ethnic minorities. Advertise jobs in a variety of places. And when promoting Denver Health positions through various job boards or list serves, add the Denver Health's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Committee's diversity statements onto these postings.

6 Xu, D., Solanki, S., & Fink, J. (2021). College acceleration for all? Mapping racial gaps in Advanced Placement and dual enrollment participation. *American Educational Research Journal*, 58(5), 954-992.

7 Coffman, J. M., Rosenoff, E., & Grumbach, K. (2001). Racial/ethnic disparities in nursing. *Health Affairs*, 20(3), 263-272.

8 Grinstein-Weiss, M., Perantie, D. C., Taylor, S. H., Guo, S., & Raghavan, R. (2016). Racial disparities in education debt burden among low-and moderate-income households. *Children and youth services review*, 65, 166-174.



Be sure to include one of the following statements at the end of your job description as you promote and recruit through email or other methods. Depending upon the position, you may need to ensure your HR recruiter includes it.

ACS DEI Statement for Recruitment

Denver Health’s Ambulatory Care Services commitment to health and racial equity is inherent to the national health center model -- a model that built upon the civil rights movements to achieve health for all. The health center model “emerged to target the roots of poverty by combining the resources of local communities with federal funds to establish neighborhood clinics in both rural and urban areas around America.” As we achieve our ACS vision to promote health and reduce health disparities in Denver’s underserved populations through high quality patient care, advocacy, teaching and research, we are addressing the systemic and institutionalized racism that disproportionately affects the communities we serve. We are committed to attracting, developing, and retaining highly qualified individuals representing our diverse communities.

PHIDH DEI Statement for Recruitment

PHIDH actively strives to incorporate racial equity and social justice in our work. Our goal is to contribute to the creation of a fair and just community to ensure everyone has the opportunity to live the longest and highest quality of life possible. At PHIDH, we don’t just accept differences - we celebrate them and recognize that our differences are the backbone of public health innovation. We work to attract, develop, and retain highly qualified individuals representing the diverse communities where we live, work, and thrive.

Denver Health Statement

We strongly support diversity in the workforce and Denver Health is an equal opportunity employer (EOE). Denver Health is committed to provide equal treatment and equal employment opportunities to all applicants and employees. As an EOE, Denver Health does not discriminate against any employee or applicant for employment because of race, color, sex, age, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, status as a veteran, and basis of disability or any other federal, state or local protected class.

Inclusive Interviewing

Multiple studies have indicated that job applicants with a non-white sounding name are discriminated against during the interview process.⁹ To mitigate for discrimination in the interview process, hiring managers should ensure an interview panel that is diverse in gender, age, and racial/ethnic identities.

This toolkit will review how to create inclusive scoring criteria and interview questions found on in Appendix A. Best practices included in these examples are to clarify for panel members the essential skills needed for the position, what questions correspond to the skills needed, and numerically scoring candidates according to the skills needed. In this toolkit, we recommend a four-point scale. At PHIDH, we have found a five-point scale often results in many neutrals (a three) and can be another source of bias. Questions should be asked similarly during each interview for a structured interview process. Panel members should be asked to score candidates immediately after the interview and provide them to the hiring managers. Interview debriefs or reconvening of the panel members should happen as soon as possible after the interview concludes. It is more likely that panel members default to impressions of the candidates rather than skills as more time passes.

The Job Offer and Follow-up

At Denver Health, the HR recruiter, coordinates the job offer. However, there are a few inclusive practices hiring managers can do in communicating with the candidates. First, it is important after the hiring manager notifies the candidate they will move forward, that it is an active referral to the HR recruiter. The hiring manager can share what happens next in the process as described in the checklist below.

If additional questions, regarding the position, such as skills, role, and responsibility come up, the hiring manager is the point of contact. Finally, it is important to follow up with any final candidates from the final round of interviews, who were not selected for the job offer regarding the reasons they were not selected and to thank them for their time and interest in positions at Denver Health.

⁹ Purkiss, S. L. S., Perrewé, P. L., Gillespie, T. L., Mayes, B. T., & Ferris, G. R. (2006). Implicit sources of bias in employment interview judgments and decisions. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, 101(2), 152-167.

Inclusive Hiring Checklist

This Inclusive Hiring Checklist was adapted from Ruchika Tulshyan to promote inclusive practices and processes in the Denver Health system. Hiring managers can adapt to their departments as needed.

A. Candidate Search Checklist:

- a. Review the Inclusive Hiring Toolkit.
- b. Create a job description summary that is brief and clear. The job description should focus on the skills needed for the position, have a link to the Denver Health webpage and include the DEI statement from page 6 of this toolkit.
- c. Adapt or remove degree requirements and name of the school during recruitment, interview, and decision-making process for hiring. Include and value lived experience as a transferable skill and not only professional experience through a recognized institution for this position.
- d. Accommodate people with disabilities by referring them to the physical requirements listed on the job description.
- e. Meet with the HR recruiter and explain the skills, experiences, and qualifications needed. Ask the HR Business Partner recruiter to post the opening positions to several diverse racial and ethnic communities, organizations, Universities, and internal/external networks. Personally reach out to affinity professional groups and community partners you work with, for recruitment of positions and share job summaries.
- f. In the initial phone screen, communicate to candidates that Denver Health typically does not offer anything above the mid-point for the salary range posted and that pay equity amongst existing employees is also considered.
- g. Review resumes: if other people help review resumes, create a pre-interview hiring scorecard based on a list of the minimum and needed experiences and skills required for the position.
- h. While discussing hiring needs with your Talent Acquisition Partner, collaborate on recruitment strategies to ensure you attract a candidate pool diverse in areas like age, gender, race/ethnicity, educational and lived experience. This could include joint efforts such as inviting employee referrals, school outreach, affinity group networking, specific job boards, social media posts, and resume mining.

Demographic details are not visible during the recruitment process and selection decisions should be based on qualifications related to the job, so a recruitment plan that targets a candidate slate that is 50% diverse is best practice.

B. Interviews and Candidate Selection Checklist

- a. Select an interview panel with diversity in gender, age, race, ethnicity, and position.
- b. Create a structured interview guide with a candidate rating table that includes skills and experiences necessary for the position (consider managers and non-managers).
- c. Include at least one question regarding racial health equity, DEI, or social justice in all interview rounds.
- d. Explain the interview process to all candidates in the same way, so that candidates understand how many interviews will be conducted, types of interviews, length of the interviews, panel member composition, and answer any questions candidates might have.
- e. Meet with panel members prior to the candidate coming, explain the process, scoring, what skills/qualities/experience are essential, and how the structured interview will be conducted. Ensure panel members have the candidate's resume, job description, and structured interview guide prior to the interview.
 - a. During interview panel committee meeting, watch this two-minute video with your interview panel:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BFcjqmVah8>
- f. Omitting the name of each candidate for the interview/decision making processes.
- g. During the interview, ask the same questions the same way. Assign which committee member will ask what question during all interviews. If anyone on the interview committee asks an additional question unrelated to the candidate's background, ask that question to all potential candidates.

- h. Allow time and ask panel members to score candidates right away and submit their scoring sheets with notes and scores to the hiring manager. The hiring manager should file each panel members scored sheets.
- i. Schedule candidates debrief meeting as soon as possible after the final interview concludes. Consider asking the panel during candidate debriefs: “Where could there be bias in this decision?”
- j. During the candidate debriefs, use the interview scoring card, compare candidates one line item at a time. Everyone on the interview panel should provide honest and unbiased feedback. Upon discussion, the discussion is solely objective, related to the job position, and not subjective on personal preference.

C. Job Offer and Follow-up Checklist

- a. Communicate with the candidate should they be selected for a job offer. The HR recruiter will be their point of contact for this process and reach out directly to the candidate.
- b. Explain that any salary negotiations or negotiations around the date of hire will be done in communication with the HR recruiter. The start date will align with Denver Health pay periods, and the HR recruiter will provide that information during these discussions.
- c. Notify finalists that were not hired for the position and explain reasons for not being selected for the position.

Please refer to Appendix A for the Candidate Evaluation Form (Blank & Example), and the Interview Questions Bank.



Appendix A -
Candidate Evaluation