116. MANAGING DIVERSITY

SCOPE: This policy applies to all employees of the City of Vancouver, unless otherwise addressed by a current collective bargaining agreement or public safety policy.

POLICY: At the City of Vancouver we respect, support and value diversity with our actions, not just our words.

The primary goal of the City’s diversity strategy is for respect for diversity to become part of the fabric of the organization and provide meaning to, and recognition of, the value of individual differences.

DEFINITIONS:

Diversity: At the City of Vancouver, we understand that everyone views the world differently. Diversity is the uniqueness each individual brings to our organization and community based upon their background and identification with various groups, cultures and perspectives.

When people think about diversity, they usually think about race, ethnicity, gender, age, religion, sexual orientation—those groups that the discrimination laws have deemed protected classes. Those classes or differences are included in this definition. However, differences are not just based on color of skin or gender. This definition is intended to recognize individual differences, whether they are obvious or subtle—not to the point where it takes in every difference, but those differences that matter in the work environment.

Respect for diversity is:
- Seeing differences as an opportunity to learn about others, about the larger world and about ourselves.
- Having consideration and appreciation for others.
- Creating a positive atmosphere for an open exchange of ideas.

Support for diversity is:
- Integrating respect for diversity into the day-to-day business of the City and the programs that are developed.
- Enabling each employee to achieve his or her full potential.
- Creating a work environment that is inclusive, welcoming and comfortable—where employees feel that the ways in which they may be different are understood and accepted.
- Being a leader in addressing diversity issues that face our community.

Value for diversity is:
- Raising consciousness about and understanding of diversity issues within the community and within the workplace.
- Attaching importance to the diversity of ideas and styles within the working environment; and through collaboration, encouragement and assistance utilizing those ideas and styles to reach a common goal.
- Realizing that each individual’s needs are different and unique; learning about and exploring the differences and similarities, and taking the differences into consideration in all business decisions and actions.

Harassment and Discrimination:
Harassment and discrimination issues arise when diversity is not managed well and employees respond in an active and extremely negative manner to their diverse coworkers because of their differences. This policy is about managing diversity before serious problems like harassment and discrimination arise. It focuses on integrating individual differences into the workplace and providing a work environment that values, supports and respects those differences. The City has separate policies that define harassment and discrimination and provide mechanisms for dealing with those issues.
PROCEDURES AND GUIDELINES:

1. What are the expectations for employees relating to diversity?
   Employees are expected to show support, value and respect for diversity at the City of Vancouver as follows:
   - Support City, department and workgroup efforts in the area of diversity.
   - Contribute to a work environment that is respectful, supportive and productive.
   - Provide quality service for all internal and external customers. Recognize that customer needs and styles may be different and use creative strategies for providing quality service when necessary.
   - Hold themselves and others accountable for the guidelines outlined in this policy.

2. What are the expectations for managers and supervisors relating to diversity?
   Managers are expected to show support, value and respect for diversity at the City of Vancouver as follows:
   - Provide leadership for diversity efforts and the City’s diversity strategy in the workplace.
   - Use creative and innovative strategies to make diversity a high priority in the workplace.
   - Hold themselves and subordinates accountable for the guidelines outlined in this policy by ensure that policies relating to diversity are implemented and responding appropriately to behaviors that may violate the expectations outlined in this policy. (See also number 5 of the Managing Diversity policy.)
   - Integrate diversity issues into the strategic planning process, all aspects of day-to-day business and decision-making, and into customer service strategies.
   - Create a working environment that is inclusive, welcoming and comfortable – where employees feel that the ways in which they may be different are understood and respected.

3. What should an employee do if he or she observes or experiences behavior that may be a violation of the expectations outlined in this policy?
   Employees should SPEAK UP about concerns or problems that arise relating to diversity issues and/or violation of the guidelines outlined in this policy in one or more of the following ways:
   - Speaking directly to the individual(s) involved.
   - Obtaining support and assistance from coworkers in any action that you choose to take.
   - Speaking to a manager or supervisor about the concern or problem.
   - Calling a human resources manager or representative. The human resources staff can act as a liaison between employees and managers to help resolve issues.
   - Mediating the concern or problem through the use of City mediation services department or Shared Neutrals.
   - Contacting a member of an employee network.
   - Sending a message to the MANAGING DIVERSITY mailbox.
   - Filing a complaint under the City’s Complaint Resolution Policy.

4. What should an employee expect after speaking up about a possible violation of the expectations outlined in this policy?
   Employees, supervisors and manages who learn of concerns or problems will take them seriously by:
   - Listening to the concern or problem and honoring the employee’s point of view.
   - Providing answers to general requests for information, as appropriate.
   - Exploring possible courses of action for resolving the concern or problem.
   - Handling the concern or problem as discreetly as possible. However, the ability to respond depends on the amount of information that the employee is willing to provide.
   - Making efforts to assure that there is no retaliation for speaking up about the concern or problem.
5. Does the City Have Any Programs to Promote its Diversity Strategies?
Yes, the City and all departments within the City have formal and informal programs to promote the diversity strategies. For example:

- The Human Resources Department incorporates diversity issues into recruitment and other strategies and assists managers and supervisors to recruit a workforce able to respond to the diverse needs of the community the City serves. However, the city does not have quotas, does not mandate hiring of any specific diverse candidate or applicant from any particular minority group, and does not use diversity as a deciding factor in making hiring decisions. The goal is to hire the candidate who is best qualified for the job.
- The City promotes the retention of all employees, recognizing the different needs and styles of employees.
- The City sponsors Employee Networks. Employee networks are made up of groups of people who share a common characteristic such as race, sexual orientation, religion or disability. The groups meet to discuss work related needs and interests, and provide members a communication channel to senior management.
- The City sponsors regular events or projects relating to diversity issues or designed to recognize different diverse populations.
- The Training and Development program coordinates training on diversity and cultural awareness issues.

6. How will the City assure that the programs outlined in this policy are implemented and remain effective?
The City will regularly review and update diversity projects, policies and guidelines to adapt to the changes within the community and within the workplace, and to assure that the program continues to be effective. This review will be done through:

- A diversity advisory council who will oversee, advise, and assist department diversity committees in the implementation of the City’s diversity strategies. The advisory council will establish citywide performance expectations and objectives with annual reviews and updates.
- Individual departments will be responsible for implementation of the objectives established by the advisory council through strategies designed and tailored to fit the unique needs of each respective department.
- Audits will be conducted to assess success of diversity efforts and diversity issues in the workplace.