

City of Salem Public Works Department  
**Department Diversity Plan**

An Outline of Goals, Objectives, and Action Items

January 1, 2006

The Public Works Department is proud of its track record in hiring and promoting a diverse work force. Almost 30 percent of all Department employees and 40 percent of the Department's top management positions are either women or ethnic minorities.

In response to the City's efforts to address diversity issues within City government, the Public Works Department has developed this outline of goals, objectives, and action items. Department management anticipates that through these efforts we will further strengthen our staff's understanding of the nature of diversity in today's work force in particular and the Salem community in general. In doing so the Department will ultimately improve our overall service to the citizens while achieving staffing levels that more closely represent the community's. By addressing these issues forthrightly, the Department's management team also hopes that we will be able to move beyond the self-imposed limitations of political correctness to the broader sense of understanding and respecting each other.

### **Responsibility**

All Public Works Department staff will be exposed to diversity issues and will be provided with training on this issue. Furthermore, Department staff will also be expected to create an environment that understands, respects, and capitalizes on the diversity of our work force and our community to improve our public service. The Public Works Director shall be responsible for assuring that the goals and objectives of the Department's Diversity Plan are accomplished.



## **Department Goals and Objectives**

A series of goals and objectives were created to guide the Department's efforts of addressing diversity in the work place.

### **Diversity Training**

The Public Works Department will commit to training its staff in the area of cultural diversity. Training will take the form of both attendance at formal internal and external sessions as well as creating in-house opportunities for diversity awareness and competency.

- *Participate in formal training sessions.* Department staff will be required to attend formal training sessions on the issue of diversity in the work place and the community. By June 30, 2006, all Department staff will have attended at least one formal diversity training session.
- *Remove the stigma surrounding the issue of diversity.* Department management staff will strive to eliminate the discomfort and hesitancy surrounding the issue of diversity. This will be accomplished by having managers lead and encourage open dialogue on diversity issues with their staff. Department management will stress to their staff that diversity is not a code word for race or hiring "quotas" or for a slackening of qualifications. Managers will provide opportunities for staff to learn about differences in people through frank discussion and other activities. Line supervisors will incorporate diversity issues into their safety meetings at least once per quarter.
- *Take pride in and recognize the Department's distinguished cultural diversity efforts.* The Public Works Department is the City's most diverse organization especially in the management ranks. Management will periodically provide opportunities for staff to share insights and experiences. This may be accomplished through "ethnic" potluck lunches; brown bag sessions related to trips abroad; tailgate discussions of diversity questions during safety meetings; and other such opportunities. The Department management team will schedule at least two opportunities per year for informal cultural experiences by staff.

### **Career Development**

The Public Works Department is committed to assisting its employees in career advancement.

- *Improved English language skills.* Understanding that excellent written and oral skills in the English language are critical for good customer service and career advancement, the Department will encourage all of its staff to further their knowledge in these areas through formal training. Training levels will naturally vary by employee proficiency. Improved English language skills will be an allowable

training expense. A discussion of each employee's English proficiency and training opportunities will be part of all Department employees' annual reviews.

- *Succession planning.* Department executive management staff will make every effort to periodically discuss succession planning with staff. Discussions should include necessary skills, additional training, and other intangibles that are required for ultimate advancement to the executive management ranks. This will be accomplished through the usual annual review sessions, scheduled special sessions, and informal discussions between management and line staff.
- *Staff morale.* Department management staff will be vigilant of staff morale in general, and specifically as it relates to diversity issues. Once identified, management staff will act immediately to address the issues that may be causing morale problems.

## **Communications**

The Public Works Department will positively communicate diversity issues to its employees. Department staff will also actively reach out to the community to both understand and provide information to its citizens.

- *Customer service.* The Department provides important services to the community (many related to health and welfare). Department employees will be provided with tools to more easily communicate with citizens who have limited English proficiency. These will include, but not be limited to, subscriptions to translation services. Additionally, the Department will translate key health and safety information into Spanish and use Spanish-language media where possible. Other languages may be added as the need in the community increases.
- *Publish a diversity column in Department Newsletter.* A column dedicated to diversity will appear as a regular feature in the Department's employees' newsletter.
- *Outreach to the community.* Department staff will make an effort to understand the Public Works-related issues facing the community as a whole, and the minority communities in particular. This will be done through our established outreach programs as well as new avenues to reach all of the citizens of Salem.
- *Outreach and partnerships with local schools.* Department staff will commit to periodically attending school functions to discuss careers in Public Works and their educational requirements. The purpose of these programs will be to reach out to the community's children in general, and its minority children in particular, to stress the importance of a good education. The Department will also seek out more partnerships with

schools, such as the CECOP program, to provide on-the-job training and internship opportunities for students in the community.

## **Recruitment**

The Public Works Department staff will work with the Human Resources Department staff to increase the potential for minority and female hiring.

- *Hiring from the local population.* The Department will focus its recruitment efforts—especially when attempting to reach out to minority populations—on the local community. In order to be more representative of the local community, the Department will commit to focusing recruiting efforts from it. The Department will work with the Human Resources Department to identify more widespread channels of posting available jobs so that the entire community is aware of them.
- *No reduction in standards of performance and qualifications.* Most jobs in the Public Works Department are of either a highly technical nature or require specialized skills. The Department will not reduce job qualifications for the sole purpose of expanding the applicant pool. The Department will work diligently to recruit from throughout the community and explain to its citizens what these qualifications are and how to obtain them. The Department will also commit to working with the Human Resources Department to remove obsolete qualifications from job descriptions by June 30, 2006.
- *Word of mouth recruiting.* Department management staff will make available a listing of job openings to line staff for dissemination within their communities.
- *Community outreach.* With the assistance of Human Resources staff, Public Works Department staff will participate in job fairs and other similar community activities to inform the public of how to find employment with the Public Works Department. This is intended to be more than a listing of available jobs. Specifically, staff will explain the training required for jobs, when these are typically posted, and what are the overall expectations of job applicants.
- *Flexible work rules for parents.* Many of our technical jobs could be filled by women (or men) who would rather not work a rigid 40 hours per week schedule. Department management will identify barriers to allowing employees to work in job share situations so that more qualified applicants—particularly women—will apply for them.
- *Outreach opportunities.* Public Works Department staff will commit to participating in minority outreach opportunities. The Department will look to Human Resources staff to identify these and make us aware of them.