

The ABCs of ERGs (Employee Resource Groups)

Wednesday, April 4, 2018
10:00 a.m. – 10:50 a.m.

NIH Natcher Conference
Center
Bldg. 45 - Rooms C1&C2

Presented by
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What Is an Employee Resource Group?

An Employee Resource Group (ERG) is an organizationally supported group of employees drawn together by characteristics that the group has in common. ERGs may be based on either of the following characteristics:

- Race/Ethnicity
- Cultural/Multicultural
- Gender
- Sexual Orientation
- Generational
- Religious Beliefs
- Disability Status

What Is an Employee Resource Group? (cont'd.)

- Military Service
- Working Parents
- Adoptive Parents
- Eldercare Responsibilities
- Professional/Academic Interests
- Other

ERGs are also known as Affinity Groups, Business Network Groups and Special Interest Organizations.

Entities which typically have ERGs include federal sector, public and private sector agencies, contractors, consumer and community groups ranging in size from 1,000 to 100,000+.

What are the benefits of ERGs? To HHS as an agency? To employees?

- Improving corporate culture of the Agency by allowing members of ERGs and other employees to feel comfortable with differences within HHS,
- Contributing to the success of the agency through the presentation of diverse ideas,
- Assisting in the presentation of activities that support common goals of workplace diversity and inclusion,
- Organized and established platform to present employee concerns; promote change; obtain buy-in,

What are the benefits of ERGs? To HHS as an agency? To employees? (cont'd.)

- Aiding in agency recruitment efforts to diversify applicant pool,
- Creating a climate to enhance employee retention,
- Fostering employee connectivity and professional development through support groups, networking, mentoring and workshops,
- Effecting employee activism inside and outside of workplace,
- Encouraging employee engagement and collaborative working relationships [People who join and participate in ERGs are more engaged and better connected to organizational strategy] ,
- Enhanced employee satisfaction [Entities with ERGs are often rated some of the best places to work], and
- Ensuring ERGs have equal voice, access to information and opportunities to ensure success in the workplace.

The Business Case for ERGs at HHS

To provide HHS with employee support, knowledge and engagement around:

- Agency Mission and Brand
- Employee Recruitment
- Employee Retention
- Professional Development

To provide HHS employees with:

- Visibility
- A voice/liaison to management
- Support and recognition

Where Do ERGs Provide Value? (cont'd.)

- Providing cultural insight
 - In identifying issues and concerns that impact particular groups
 - In planning and presenting cultural observances
- Recruiting Activities
 - Serving as HHS' link to educational institutions and professional organizations;
 - Serving as role models and mentors

Where Do ERGs Provide Value? (cont'd.)

- Onboarding Activities
 - Informing new hires of the existence of the range of ERGs
 - Connecting ERG members with similar new employees to create relationships
- ERG Professional Development and Retention Activities
 - Mentoring Circles
 - Self-managed groups of employees who investigate topics together

Where Do ERGs Provide Value? (cont'd.)

and/or a group of employees that rotate through various senior managers.

- Internal Peer-to-Peer Interaction
- Networking Events
- Career Enhancement Events
- Outside Speakers
- Workshops

ERG Mission-Related Activities

- Providing diverse perspectives via input to program offices concerning impacting health issues, scientific techniques, data collection, etc.,
- Representing HHS at special interest conferences, conventions, observances, etc.,
- Partnering with community groups to address health disparities and strategies,
- Recommending candidates for various mission critical occupations,

ERG Mission-Related Activities (cont'd.)

- Participating in activities to ensure HHS' mission and presence are known throughout the community, and
- Identifying barriers to achieving diversity objectives and/or equal employment opportunity in the workplace and steps to eliminate such barriers.

Steps to Utilizing ERGs to Achieve Objectives

- Demonstrate appreciation for diverse ideas and perspectives.
- Encourage/support improved engagement of ERGs.
- Establish ground rules/operating principles, policies and procedures for ERGs.
- Identify specific measurable goals for utilizing ERGs to make a significant impact in focus areas such as professional development, outreach, recruitment and retention.
- Harness the culture climate potential of ERGs by engaging them in climate assessment, visioning the future and communicating to other employees.

Steps to Utilizing ERGs to Achieve Objectives (cont'd.)

- Develop toolkits and templates to help ERGs engage in mission-related activities.
- Recognize and acknowledge ERG leaders.
- Create means by which to enhance leadership skills and contributions of ERGs.
- Provide structures and forums through which ERGs and HHS program offices can interact around mission-related issues.
- Partner with HR and talent management leaders to leverage ERGs for talent.

HHS ERG Program Overview

- In a message to all employees on March 13, 2013, titled “Diversity at HHS”, then Secretary Kathleen Sebelius expressed her commitment to HHS having a workforce that reflects our nation’s rich diversity and leading the way in providing educational opportunities.
- The message outlined the goal of creating a climate of innovation, opportunity and success within the Department that would capitalize on the cultural, professional and ethnic diversity of the HHS workforce.
- During this period, the Department recommitted itself to strengthening recruitment, promotion and retention practices with a specific emphasis on workforce diversity and succession planning.

HHS ERG Program Overview (cont'd.)

- This effort also included improved engagement and partnerships with national diversity organizations and Employee Resource Groups (ERGs), such as the Hispanic Employee Organization (HEO), Federally Employed Women (FEW) , Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender Employees of the Federal Government (GLOBE), Federal Asian Pacific American Council (FAPAC), Society of American Indian Government Employees (SAGE), Blacks In Government (BIG), other ERGs, as well as Employee Unions.

HHS ERG Program Overview (cont'd.)

- The HHS Employee Resource Group Program stood up in March 2013, under the Office of Human Resources, Strategic Programs Directorate, as a vehicle to facilitate HHS' improved engagement with the aforementioned groups and to work in conjunction with the Diversity and Inclusion Division to enhance HHS recruitment, retention and representation efforts.
- In November 2014, the HHS ERG Program was placed under the auspices of the Diversity & Inclusion Division, which now reports directly to the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Human Resources.

HHS ERG Program Overview (cont'd.)

- Following activities to identify and register HHS ERGs and points of contact, a launch meeting of the ERG Program was held on Wednesday, June 26, 2013, with 32 representatives from HHS/OPDIV ERGs and staff from the Office of Human Resources, Office of General Counsel, Commissioned Corps and OPDIV EEO Offices.
- This facilitated meeting was designed to help create an infrastructure and formulate the ERG Program Work Plan with buy-in and equality that will influence policy and accountability.

HHS ERG Program Overview (cont'd.)

Selected Accomplishments/Action Items for the HHS ERG Program have included:

- 1) Development and vetting of draft ERG policies and procedures which address ERG official recognition criteria, extension of official time for ERG activities, use of HHS resources and facilities, etc.;
- 2) Development of ERG Charters;
- 3) Establishing a vehicle for virtual information and best practice sharing between ERGs via D&I Division's max.gov page;
- 4) Creation of a video providing an overview of HHS ERGs to be shown at HHS New Employee Orientation;

HHS ERG Program Overview (cont'd.)

- 5) Participation in the HHS Diversity and Inclusion Council;
- 6) Hosting ERG Forums annually from 2013 -2017, which have been attended by employees government-wide;
- 7) Partnership with the Office of Personnel Management in the presentation of the OPM ERG Summit in May 2015;
- 8) Conducting periodic ERG Check-Ins & Assessments;

HHS ERG Program Overview (cont'd.)

- 9) Collaborating with HHS Chief Recruitment Officer through quarterly HR-ERG meetings;
- 10) Leveraging ERG talent and expertise by coordinating their participation in the HHS Volunteer Recruiter Program:
- 11) Hosting HHS ERG Engagement/Leading Practices Roundtables to connect ERGs with the same purpose/mission across HHS Operating Divisions in information-sharing, networking, mentoring, barrier analysis, strategic planning and other activities in order to enhance engagement and exchange best/leading practices related to their constituencies.

HHS ERG Program Overview (cont'd.)

- 12) Facilitating liaison between ERGs and the D&I Division to ensure participation and representation in the execution of various HHS cultural awareness events and activities;
- 13) Networking with federal, non-profit and private industry organizations to obtain ERG best practices for implementation across HHS;
- 14) Coordinating ERG-specific “State of the Agency” briefings and Town Hall Meetings with senior level officials; and
- 15) Participation and support of HHS Affinity Group Pre-Conference Agency Forums.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

At the conclusion of this session, participants should know:

- What an Employee Resource Group (ERG) is.
- How ERGs benefit employees and the agency.
- The variety of ERGs at HHS.

RESOURCES

For additional information about the HHS Employee Resource Group Program, ERG Roundtables and a listing of HHS ERGs, please visit the HHS Diversity & Inclusion Division max.gov page:

<https://community.max.gov/pages/viewpage.action?pageId=686952946>

Contact Information



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EVALUATION SURVEY

- Your feedback is important to us. Therefore, we ask you to take a few minutes to complete the online evaluation for this session:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/HR-Clinic-ERGs>

- Your feedback is voluntary and completely anonymous and will be used to help plan upcoming sessions, compile priorities, action items, and/or next steps.