

VEIC Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Services RFP
Q&A

Posted November 5, 2021

Question 1: What has the DEI working group accomplished to date? How is it structured? What kind of decision-making authority/budget/mandate does it have? (Page 1, Background)

VEIC Answer: The DEI working group is currently structured as a subgroup of the VEIC Culture Committee (VCC), comprised of VEIC staff who have been selected to serve on the VCC, and that have expressed a desire to participate in VEIC's DEI work. To date, the working group has facilitated real-talk sessions on the topic of DEI with staff and presented a DEI "North Star" statement to the Senior Leadership Team, which will lead our DEI work company-wide. VEIC anticipates that the DEI working group will transition from the VCC to a separate DEI Committee in 2022 - bringing on staff from across the organization (not simply those from the VCC). The structure, authority and budget for the DEI Committee are still undergoing internal review and approval however VEIC anticipates all work being performed under an annual budget and under the supervision and management of VEIC's Chief People Officer and in coordination with VEIC's Chief Executive Officer, Senior Leadership Team, and VCC's Co-Chairs.

Question 2: What DEI and non-DEI related training has been completed by the VEIC Board of Directors and Staff to date? How would you describe the learning culture of each population? (Page 1, Background)

VEIC Answer: VEIC has been working with an external consultant on strengthening our organizational culture since 2019 and that work began to include DEI in 2020. In 2021, the staff has taken mandatory anti-harassment and anti-discrimination training and has had the opportunity to participate in voluntary training on racial equity and implicit bias. The Senior Leadership Team has taken both of those trainings, as well as had monthly facilitated dialogues on DEI. A subset of the Board of Directors involved in a CEO search process in 2020 and 2021 participated in implicit bias training.

Question 3: What impacts has becoming a Just-Labeled Organization and adopting the Social Vulnerability Index had on VEIC's culture, programs, and operations? (Page 2, Background)

VEIC Answer: Both of these actions have sent a strong signal to staff, the Board of Directors, and external stakeholders that VEIC is serious about walking the talk on DEI and that we are holding ourselves accountable for its work in this area.

Question 4: Has VEIC partnered with external consultants/organizations around other organizational initiatives or operations? If so, what has made those partnerships successful or less so? (Page 2, Scope of Work)

VEIC Answer: VEIC has partnered with other external consultants in the past and has found the most success when there is leadership and staff level buy-in for the work, when there is agreement on the

project aims and scope, when the consultant's work is based on a solid understanding of VEIC's situation and recommendations are tailored to our needs, not generic, and when time and budget are set aside for implementation and follow up.

Question 5: Can you describe VEIC's culture around feedback? How open are senior leaders to challenging conversations? (Page 3, Assessment)

VEIC Answer: VEIC's senior leaders are very open to feedback and challenging conversations. VEIC is a learning organization that is approaching this DEI work with humility and an appetite for having the conversations needed to make genuine progress.

Question 6: Do members of the Board/SLT sit on the DEIC? What is the DEIC's current make-up? (Page 3, DEI Committee Support)

VEIC Answer: The DEI working group is currently structured as a subgroup of the VEIC Culture Committee (VCC), comprised of VEIC staff who have been selected to serve on the VCC, and that have expressed a desire to participate in VEIC's DEI work. VEIC anticipates that the DEI working group will transition from the VCC to a separate DEI Committee in 2022 - bringing on staff from across the organization (not simply those from the VCC). The structure, authority and budget for the DEI Committee are still undergoing internal review and approval however VEIC anticipates all work being performed under an annual budget and under the supervision and management of VEIC's Chief People Officer and in coordination with VEIC's Chief Executive Officer, Senior Leadership Team, and VCC's Co-Chairs.

Question 7: Can you please elaborate on the structural relationship between VEIC and Efficiency Vermont? Is there any overlap in staff or are we correct in understanding that this RFP effectively has two, parallel processes (one for VEIC and one for Efficiency Vermont) included in this request? If they are distinct, how many people work for Efficiency Vermont? Do you have any additional background information on their DEI efforts to date? How do you envision these efforts interacting, if at all? (Page 4, Scope of Work 2)

VEIC Answer: VEIC is the parent organization and Efficiency Vermont is one of the divisions within the company. All staff working on Efficiency Vermont are VEIC employees. The VEIC scope of work is intended to be cross-cutting in nature and to impact VEIC corporate operations, processes, decision-making, and culture across the company (including within Efficiency Vermont). The Efficiency Vermont scope is intended to focus on increasing the DEI focus of the clean energy programs that are designed and delivered through that division.