

Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs
Cultivating Culture Committee (Equity and Inclusion Advisory Committee)
Bylaws
Draft dated 6/28/21

Article I - Purpose

The purpose of the Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs Cultivating Culture Committee is as follows:

1. Advise the agency appointing authority on issues that affect agency policy, practices and services related to equity and inclusion, affirmative action and equal employment opportunities pursuant to Wis. Stat. § 230.06(1)(j) and [Governor Evers' Executive Order, No. 59](#).
2. Communicate concerns and recommend positive solutions to ensure equitable and inclusive opportunities for current and future staff to the agency Equity and Inclusion officer.
3. Develop committee guiding principles to ensure cohesive and effective committee operations in alignment with agency Equity and Inclusion Plan
4. Recommend, develop, and implement a Plan of Work that values diversity, encourages personal growth, and supports an inclusive environment for diversity.
5. Collaborate with the agency Equity and Inclusion Officer and act as a liaison between department staff and the Secretary's office.
6. Assist in development of the Equity and Inclusion Plan. Recommend strategies to address identified goals and define and monitor measures to ensure effectiveness.
7. Serve as role models within the agency promoting self-education and to champion the importance of diversity and inclusive behavior.
8. Communicates and promotes the Equity and Inclusion Plan, goals, and activities to department staff. Collaborates in ongoing and upcoming initiatives that support the agency goals for advancing equity, diversity, and inclusion.
9. Annually evaluate and report the effectiveness of the Equity and Inclusion Plan and activities to the appointing authority.

Article II - Membership

Section 1. Representation

The committee will consist of the department equity and inclusion officer (a non-voting member) and a broad spectrum of department representation, which includes the following:

- a) each division
- b) management
- c) racial/ethnic minorities, women, veterans, and people with disabilities
- d) non-management

Section 2. Number of Members

At least one and not more than three voting members will be nominated to the Committee by Division Administrator. The committee will consist of no more than twenty (20) members.

Section 3. Terms of Appointment

Committee members will be appointed to three-year terms. New voting members will be appointed to a three-year term by the appointing authority in May of each year, or as needed to replace a vacancy.

Article III - Meeting Schedule

Committee meetings will be held at least six times annually with times and location to be determined by the committee. Special meetings may be called by the chair with a minimum of two weeks notice.

Article IV - Distribution of Minutes

The minutes will be made available electronically to all committee members prior to the next scheduled meeting once approved. They will be made available to the agency staff.

Article V - Conduct of Meetings

Section 1. Quorum

In order to conduct a meeting, a quorum must be present. A quorum will be at least one-third of the total voting membership. Decisions for the committee may be made by a simple majority vote of the voting members present.

Note: The committee can determine the level of quorum, but it must be at least one-third.

Section 2. Absences

Members shall notify the chair or co-chair of absences at least 24 hours prior to the scheduled meeting. Members absent for more than one-half of the annual meetings may be replaced by Executive Committee and the appointing Division Administrator.

Section 3. Voting

1. The Equity and Inclusion Officer is a non-voting member of the committee.
2. All other members of the committee shall be voting members.
3. Quorum shall be required to perform any duties that requires a vote by the committee.
4. A vote by a simple majority of quorum shall be necessary to pass any motion requiring a vote with the exception of business identified as requiring full voting membership.
 - a. Full voting membership is required when voting on motions which affect the structure or purpose of the committee.

Article VI - Officers

Section 1. Titles and Terms

The officer positions shall consist of a Chair and/or Co-Chairs, and a Secretary. Officers will be elected at the June meeting for a one-year term. Elected officers may be re-elected for an additional term.

Section 2. Responsibilities of Chair/Co Chair

1. Coordinate the agenda for committee meetings.
2. Call and conduct committee meetings.
3. Appoint members to subcommittees. At various times, the committee may request other department employees to serve on subcommittees to offer expertise and guidance.
4. Delegate various responsibilities to committee members but retain overall responsibility.
5. Notify the equity and inclusion officer of vacancies on the committee and recommend new appointments.
6. Maintain committee records.
7. Prepare and submit to the agency head, an annual summary of committee work.
8. Work with the Office of the Secretary and Office of Legal Counsel to ensure compliance with Wisconsin Open Meetings laws under [Wis. Stat. § 19.85](#).

Section 3. Responsibilities of Secretary/Co-Secretary

1. With the assistance of the Executive Committee, draft and maintain Committee records including the minutes of meetings, the annual summary of Committee work and the Committee Guiding Principles.
2. Distribute agenda and minutes to all Committee members.
3. Assist the Chair as requested to prepare documents, summaries, and correspondence.
4. Maintain the records of all subcommittee work products.

5. Monitor member attendance status and performance of ongoing responsibilities, report any concerns to the Chair.

Section 4. Responsibilities of Committee Members

1. Attend all scheduled committee meetings. If unable to attend, notify committee chair or co-chair as stated in Article V. When more than three unexcused absences occur in one year, evaluate time commitments and discuss with Chair.
2. Provide service to the committee by participating in subcommittee activities. Be a responsible participant in committee discussions.

Section 5. Executive Committee

The executive committee, which includes the elected officers and at-large member, shall conduct business between regular meetings. In addition, the department Equity and Inclusion Officer will serve as a member of this leadership team.

Section 6. Fulfillment of Officer Responsibilities

A committee member who is elected to an officer position must be willing to fulfill this responsibility and attend meetings during their term. If any situation arises where this obligation cannot be fulfilled or if an officer misses more than two consecutive meetings, the officer should evaluate time commitments and discuss options with chair. If the chair resigns from office during their term, a special election will be held at the next scheduled meeting conducted by the co-chair(s).

Article VII – Subcommittees

Section 1. Creating Subcommittees

Subcommittees (“Subcommittees”) may be formed by Majority Vote in order to formally delegate tasks to a smaller group of Members. Subcommittees will be dissolved at the conclusion of their project or task without the need for further action by the Committee, unless designated as a standing Subcommittee (“Standing Subcommittee”) at the time of formation.

The Executive Committee shall assign members of the Committee to Subcommittees to ensure that each member is on at least one subcommittee and that all Subcommittees have sufficient members to perform its designated functions.

At the Annual Meeting, members of the Committee shall discuss and identify potential Subcommittees and Standing Subcommittees to implement the Committee’s plans.

Section 2. Attendance

Each member may serve on any Subcommittee, and all members are required to serve on at least one Subcommittee. Each Subcommittee shall be chaired by a chair or pair of co-chairs designated by the Executive Committee.

Section 3. Subcommittee Meetings

Subcommittee meetings will follow all rules of regular committee meetings, as indicated in this document.

Section 4. Work Groups

Members may also volunteer to perform tasks on behalf of the Committee informally in a work group (“Work Group”) comprised of one or more Members. All actions and recommendations of Work Groups will be subject to review and ratification by the Committee.

Section 5. Reporting

The chair of each Subcommittee and the member(s) of each Work Group shall regularly report its progress to the Committee Liaison and promptly respond to requests for information from the Committee Liaison and the Committee.

Article VIII - Amendments

Section 1. Proposed amendments to these bylaws may be introduced by any committee member.

Section 2. Proposed amendments shall be in writing and submitted to the chair.

Section 3. Proposed amendments shall not exceed the authority of the committee.

Section 4. Proposed amendments shall not be voted upon during the same meeting at which they are introduced.

Section 5. Proposed amendments shall require a majority vote of the full voting membership of the committee.

Section 6. Amendments shall become effective upon approval of the minutes.

Article IX - Ratification

Ratification of these bylaws shall be by a majority vote of the full voting membership of the committee.