

West Virginia National Guard
Inclusion and Diversity Strategic Plan



West Virginia National Guard

15 June 2022



We are “One Guard” – sworn to protect and defend the greatest nation in the world, our United States of America. We are committed to our great state of West Virginia and be the epitome of a citizen-Soldier. As our state and nation’s demographics change and we compete for the best they have to offer, it is imperative that we focus on our recruitment and retention programs and deliberately strategize for building and sustaining a workforce that truly represents the nation it defends. I am pleased to present the West Virginia National Guard’s Fiscal Year 2022-2026 Inclusion and Diversity Strategic Plan. This plan remains consistent with our goals and provides the framework for effective collaboration amongst a diverse workforce.

Additionally, this strategic plan serves as a comprehensive path towards making the West Virginia National Guard the leader in creating and sustaining a high-performing workforce that intentionally promotes diversity of backgrounds and experiences and empowers all members to achieve the highest level of responsibility afforded. I initiated the Joint Diversity Executive Council to promote inclusion and diversity in the workforce and charged them to create a strategic plan to ensure we promote an inclusive environment and allow the members of our “One Guard” to contribute where their diverse talents can benefit all aspects of our “One Guard”. We are committed to fostering a workplace culture where diversity of thought is valued; thus, leveraging creative ideas that enhance readiness and sound decision making that produces superior results in an environment showing dignity and respect for all.

Our plan provides unified strategies to attract, recruit, acquire, develop, employ, retain, promote, and reward highly skilled mission-ready individuals who will overcome the challenges of the 21st century. Maximizing the strength of our forces requires WVNG to commit to integrating diverse skillsets, experiences, and complementary talents into our daily operations. Furthermore, developing sustainable solutions that inspire an inclusive culture is hinged upon our commitment to the goals and objectives within our strategic plan. Our command is strengthened when every Soldier and Civilian experiences a sense of belonging where equal opportunities for greater responsibilities and advancements are available for all.

We encourage you to join us in supporting WVNG’s inclusion and diversity efforts. Our “One Guard” is strong because of the diversity of the men and women who protect and serve our state and nation. Mountaineers are always free!

William E. Crane
Major General, WVNG
The Adjutant General

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1. Background

a. On August 18, 2011, the President issued an Executive Order 13583 establishing a coordinated government-wide initiative to promote Diversity and Inclusion (D&I) in the Federal workforce. Additionally, the FY20 National Defense Authorization Act Section 529 required the Secretary of Defense to update and implement strategic five-year plans, and this included the National Guard. This plan identifies actions to acquire and retain the best and brightest while creating a more inclusive work environment in which all Airmen, Soldiers, and Civilians feel welcomed, respected, and afforded equal opportunities to rise to their highest levels of responsibility. This action plan is nested with the Department of Defense, the Air Force, the Army, and the National Guard Bureau. We have chosen to highlight inclusion ahead of diversity, so that all members of our “One Guard” recognize that each member must feel inclusive of this organization.

b. This plan also establishes a foundation for addressing our workforce challenges and is a companion document to the Joint Diversity Executive Council Charter. The ultimate goal of this plan is to establish WVNG as an employer of choice and to maximize the potential of all members. We will maintain total mission readiness through the collaboration of the following programs:

Inclusion & Diversity

- Focuses on developing an environment that measures potential
- Values diversity interpersonally and institutionally broader than EEO and EO categories

Equal Opportunity

- Legally protects against discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, age, national origin and disability
- Affirmative Employment Discrimination Complaint Processing and Special Emphasis Programs

Talent Management

- Recruit, assess, retain, promote, and employ the right person in the right position to win the war for talent
- Develop individual professionally and personally; inclusive of all groups



Equity in the Workplace

- Diverse, engaged workforce
- More equitable and accessible work environment
- Inclusive environment where all employees are valued
- Effective career/talent management
- Professional and leadership development for all
- Culture that values creativity and innovation
- Work environment free from discrimination
- Environment that maximizes success for all

2. West Virginia National Guard's Inclusion and Diversity Mission

To develop and implement an inclusive and diverse culture that contributes to mission readiness while transforming and sustaining the West Virginia National Guard as an organization that values inclusion and diversity.

3. Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plan Guidance

- a. Executive Order 13583, "Establishing a Coordinated Government-wide Initiative to Promote Diversity and Inclusion in the Federal Workforce," August 18, 2011
- b. DoDI 1020.05, "DoD Diversity and Inclusion Management Program," September 9, 2020
- c. Chief of the National Guard Bureau Instruction 9651.01, "National Guard Diversity and Inclusion," August 20, 2018
- d. State of West Virginia Office of the Adjutant General Memorandum, Subject: "Appointment of West Virginia National Guard Joint Diversity Executive Council," November 19, 2021
- e. State of West Virginia Office of the Adjutant General Memorandum, Subject: "West Virginia National Guard Joint Diversity Executive Council Charter," January 21, 2022

4. Benefits of the West Virginia National Guard's Diversity Efforts:

- a. The opportunity to better understand our state and nation's increasingly diverse population and attract the best available talent to fill our Airmen, Soldier, and civilian ranks.
- b. Personnel who feel valued are inspired to serve at a higher level and want to remain in our "One Guard".
- c. Diversity education and training will enable leaders to create environments that are inclusive of our Airmen, Soldiers, Civilians, and Family Members, enhancing our ability to develop those who join our ranks and integrate individual talents into mission accomplishment.
- d. A diverse organization does not determine success by a one's preferences, ideas, or beliefs, but rather by what's inside... one's abilities, determination, and courage. Bringing everyone's different attributes and experiences together will enhance our ability to operate locally, nationally, and globally with a culturally astute force.

5. West Virginia's National Guard Inclusion & Diversity Strategic Plan

- a. This Inclusion and Diversity Plan articulates WVNG's vision to embrace the strengths of diverse people in an inclusive environment. This plan is intended to be a living document and fully supports the DoD, Army, Air Force, the National Guard's strategic plan and identifies actions that emphasize leadership, people, structure, training and education, and the work environment to meet our goals.

b. This plan provides an overarching construct which encourages commitment and creates alignment across our “One Guard” and will enable the WVNG to harness the competitive advantages that inclusion and diversity offer.

6. Roles and Responsibilities:

a. The WVNG Joint Diversity Executive Council: As the proponent for this plan, is responsible for overseeing the planning and implementation of this plan to the Adjutant General. The JDEC is also responsible for assessing program effectiveness through surveys, and metrics.

b. Commanders: Ensuring Inclusion & Diversity is a priority, and all employees have access to a safe work environment including dignity and respect for all. Ensuring continual education and training to support WVNG diversity initiatives. Committing to inclusion and diversity as an investment in human capital, personnel readiness, and mission accomplishment. Commanders are also responsible for assessing and evaluating talent management processes to enhance and improve readiness and ensuring cases of individuals not living up to our values are handled quickly and appropriately.

c. Supervisors and Managers: Complying with the objectives of this plan by fostering employee engagement, effectively managing human capital, the administrative aspects of the work unit and providing equal employment opportunity for all staff to promote workforce diversity and inclusion.

d. Airmen, Soldiers and Civilians: Displaying positive, constructive work habits in the workplace, working cooperatively with other staff members, recognizing and respecting others and their individualities, and working towards a more inclusive and diverse work culture by eliminating stereotypes and generalizations.

7. Goals and Objectives

a. Goal 1: Leader Commitment

Demonstrate leader commitment, engagement, and support to I&D practices at all levels of the WVNG. Leader commitment, trust, engagement, and accountability at all levels are critical factors in the success of this strategic plan.

End State: Leaders at all levels value diversity, treat diverse talent equitably, and create shared understanding among unit and organization members regarding the unique contributions of team members and how they contribute to accomplishing the mission.

OBJECTIVES:

1. Establish JDEC to develop policy, assign resources, and provide strategic direction on I&D issues. This establishes an executive level leader group that focuses on identifying challenges and concerns and will ensure appropriate resources are made available.
2. Integrate I&D principles into leader development. This will identify the touch points of leader development and ensure I&D messaging and may occur during the Commander’s Course, First Sergeant Course, during initial counseling, development of mentorship programs, or as simple as a training disclaimer.
3. Develop tools and procedures for leader awareness of I&D issues (Improve Organizational Climate/Retention) – Review current command climate survey policies for efficacy, implement the

commander's feedback line, incorporate sensing sessions for first-line leaders, command visits, etc.

4. Establish strategic communication talking points for leaders at all levels (Internal/External) – Develop talking points for leaders to give during formations similar to safety briefings on what I&D is for the WVNG.
5. Participate in External I&D Groups – Establish memberships and partnerships and provide review of actions/participation to JDEC and/or TAG. Develop I&D Command Policy – Similar to EO/Open Door, etc., implemented at the lowest command levels within WVNG.

b. Goal 2: Institutionalize Talent Management

Institutionalize talent management processes to acquire, develop, employ, and retain high-performing Soldiers/Airmen/Civilians to address diversity. Competition for talent requires that the WVNG embrace and leverage an increasingly diverse Nation/State as it acquires talent and maintains an equitable and inclusive environment to attract and retain Soldiers/Airmen/Civilians as part of the One Guard Family.

End State: The WVNG performed a decisive review of its people processes, policies, programs, and procedures and implements a program that acquire, develop, employ, and retain the best, most diverse talent available.

OBJECTIVES:

1. Establish I&D metrics/goals for WVNG Army & Air Recruiting/Accession/Retention/ Promotion (RARP)). The JDEC provides a target of diversity based on metrics and goals approved by the TAG, that is achievable and representative of the diversity of the State.
2. WVNG Army & Air Develop Strategic Plan to reach I&D Goals. The WVNG Army and Air develop a plan to reach I&D goals established within the WVNG strategic plan to reach their leaders, codify I&D values, and is long-standing.
3. Identify HR policies (RARP) and conduct a review to incorporate I&D into policies and procedures. The WVNG and its subordinate elements conduct a policy review of processes that hire or select personnel in order to ensure equity and fairness in hiring and/or the selection processes, while ensuring it is in keeping with a merit-based system.
4. WVNG Army & Air Develop Mentorship Programs to ensure professional development opportunities. Mentorship is the cornerstone that encourages personnel to reach their potential while ensuring the mentee has a resource that can guide, direct, and ensure awareness of opportunities. Without effective mentorship, personnel must overcome challenges or navigate growth on their own without being made aware of all the options that may exist to help them reach their goals and remain competitive.
5. WVNG Army & Air Develop Talent Management Procedures for RARP (Officer/Enlisted). Policies may already exist within each subordinate organization on how an individual can expect to progress within an organization. A review should be conducted on existing policies and if none exist, one should be developed.

c. Goal 3: Identify and Establish I&D Resources/Policies/Procedures

Establish and resource a process and a governance structure to support WVNG I&D efforts as a standing program. The WVNG requires personnel who can provide I&D guidance to assist leaders in developing I&D

policy, institutionalize training and education, facilitate leader oversight, document and analyze trends, institutionalize talent management, and support other aspects and initiatives of I&D. Staffing requirements, policy, and resources must be directed at a desirable end state and/or goal.

End State: WVNG is staffed at levels that allow continuous monitoring, assessing, and updating of I&D policies, programs, and procedures which seek to prevent biases against Soldiers/Airmen/Civilians of the WVNG.

OBJECTIVES:

1. Review current I&D staffing at JFHQ, Army & Air to determine appropriate staffing & training requirements. Identify regulatory requirements at the HQ, and unit-level and match, recruit and retain I&D personnel to enable the I&D policies and initiatives.
2. Establish and/or revise governing regulations and policies for I&D staff and functions down to unit level. Review current I&D policy for the WVNG and update as necessary to incorporate standing requirements.
3. Establish strategic marketing/communication, strategies, and processes to synchronize I&D message to WVNG. Develop a strategic communications plan for I&D at the JFHQ level that focuses on observations, messaging, and events that promote I&D.
4. Review WVNG Army & Air I&D strategic plans and provide a feedback loop.

8. Way Ahead – Action Items

This plan outlines a multi-faceted approach of adopting and communicating a clear and practical working definition of inclusion and diversity, demonstrating Senior Leader commitment – in deeds and in words, institutionalizing talent management as we recruit, acquire, develop, employ, retain, and mentor top talent and cultivate an inclusive culture. This plan also strives to institutionalize I&D as a standing program and effort to eventually stand on its own merit with a continual feedback process to improve our “One Guard”.

The immediate actions in sequence the JDEC must complete within the first quarter of this strategic plan being codified to enable the Goals and Objectives are:

- Identify Actions/Metrics to enable the Goals and Objectives of this plan.
- Identify I&D and obtain WVNG-TAG approval for performance metrics to provide guidance to the WVNG Army, Air, and JFHQ in development of their tasks and actions in reaching the goals and objectives of this plan.
- Develop I&D strategic messaging to enable training and leadership inclusion in policy efforts.
- Develop a comprehensive plan with targeted milestones to reach the goals and objectives by 2025.

9. Conclusion

The goals and objectives within this plan are ambitious and challenging, however this plan will continue to guide and shift the WVNG in the right direction to creating a true inclusive and diverse workforce in the long-term. Achieving the goals requires continued strategic communication and command commitment. It is imperative leaders, managers, and employees view inclusivity as a normal business case for sustaining a workplace culture that thrives because of the talents of our WVNG workforce possesses.