

City of Gainesville Diversity Work Plan

This work plan should be completed by Directors and who do not report directly to a Charter Officer.

Name: Michael Cowart Department: Fire
 Title: Assistant Fire Chief Date Completed: 11/17/15

I. Introductory statement describing your department/division.

*GFR is committed to a diverse and dynamic workforce that embraces the nuances of people from all backgrounds. Diversity allows GFR to benefit from the talents, abilities, ideas, and viewpoints of a workforce drawn from the richness of our society, including men, women, minority groups, people with disabilities, and veterans. We can achieve this only by providing employment opportunities to all qualified citizens equally; **and** creating and sustaining an organizational climate in which people of diverse backgrounds, cultures, races, religions, ethnicities, and experiences are fully included, valued, and respected.*

Attracting and employing a diverse and talented team of sworn and civilian members ultimately enables us to better perform our challenging fire service mission. Our diversity goals can be simply stated:

- Workforce Diversity
 - Attract, recruit and hire qualified and diverse applicants
- Workplace Inclusion
 - Develop an organizational culture that inspires individuals to contribute by encouraging collaboration with and acceptance of diverse thought and opinion.
- Sustainability
 - Develop organizational structure and human processes to help manage diversity by involving and making everyone responsible and accountable.

	Caucasian	Women (Caucasian)	African American	Asian Pacific	Hispanic	AIANA	Other	Total
Firefighter	48	2	6		6	1	1	64
Driver/Operator	23	6	4	1	3		2	39
Lieutenant	21	2	8	1	1			33
Captain	2							2
Fire Inspector	1		2					3
Fire Investigator		1						1
District Chief	5		1					6
Assistant Chief	1							1
Deputy Chief		1						1
Fire Chief	1							1
Totals	102	12	21	2	10		3	151
Percentage in Dept	68%	8%	14%	1.32%	7%		1.99%	
National Average		3.80%	7.20%		9.40%			

A. Based on the demographics of your department, list any diversity issues specific or unique to the areas in your span of control.

When fully staffed Gainesville Fire Rescue has 172 employees, though currently we are staffed with 151 sworn personnel and 9 civilian members. As identified in the above table GFR's workforce is comprised of 8% female, 14% African American and 7% Hispanic. Comparatively on the national level, female firefighters comprise 3.8% of the workforce, African Americans 7.2 % and Hispanics 9.4 %.

Though minorities and females are dispersed throughout all the ranks in the department it is imperative for us to continue to conduct targeted recruiting to bring in a diverse workforce at the lowest level, as promotions for driver operator, lieutenant and district chiefs come from the rank and file of the department. These internal promotional processes are governed by the IAFF labor agreements. Though we have several qualified female lieutenant candidates at the driver operator level we did not see any enter the applicant pool for lieutenant.

B. List any barriers or other concerns you have for your entire span of control.

While Firefighting has traditionally been identified as a white male dominated profession, it has slowly been changing over the past 40 years. However we continue to struggle with recruiting minorities and females as do many other fire departments across the country. Minorities and females typically do not identify firefighting as a viable career path early in their life. Additionally, females are not typically as drawn to this type of profession as their male counterparts due in part to physical nature of the job. The candidate pool of minorities and women certified as firefighters and EMT's or paramedic is small. The 24/48 schedule can be a barrier to family oriented applicants.

II. What were your efforts to address diversity issues in the area(s) under your span of control in the last (evaluation) year?

A. List recruitment efforts/strategies employed for issues identified above.

We continued to promote and emphasize the benefits of a diverse work force through all levels of the organizations especially during our company officer development and district chief meetings.

We extended our outreach efforts to minority and female to broaden pool of applicants by recruiting and posting recruitment flyers in non-traditional locations such as churches, community centers, health clubs, athletic organizations and high schools.

We hosted two Recruitment Days to attract local minorities and females for our firefighter applicant pool as well as our mentorship program. During these events we reached over 50 local candidates.

We Actively participated in the Annual City of Gainesville Job Fair reaching over 40 candidates.

Through the above mentioned activities and continued individual outreach efforts by our personnel we have built our mentorship and cadet program to include over 17 candidates. We saw our first cadet hired this year through this development program.

Additionally during hiring and promotional selection processed we utilized diverse panels and assessor.

We incorporated slogans on the back of our business cards that foster support for a diverse workforce. We incorporated and advertised support of diverse workforce on our department website

B. List Retention and Personnel Development Strategies you employed.

We continue to support and provide access to internal and external training that will either help employees advance in their current positions, or prepare them for other positions within GFR that provide other avenues and opportunities for advancement.

We provided scholarships for female and minority employees to attend professional conference such as the Women in Fire and Emergency Services Conference and the International Association of Black Professional Firefighters Conference. The Fire Chief attended these conferences as well to increase communication and foster open and honest dialogue.

We encourage employees who wish to pursue promotional opportunities to act in vacant positions.

III. Were those efforts successful?

A. Why/Why Not?

We have seen a significant increase in the number of Hispanic applicants over the past couple of years with very little change in the African American and female group. We lost 1 tenured female firefighter to pursue a career as a nurse.

B. How did you measure your efforts?

In 2015 we hired 1 female, 2 African Americans and 2 Hispanics firefighters out of a class of 9. We promoted several minorities and females to a higher rank classification; two African Americans and one female promoted to the rank of lieutenant, one African American and one Hispanic promoted to driver operator and one female promoted to deputy chief.

IV. What were your efforts to make employees aware of the benefits of diversity?

A. List your efforts here.

- *All Managers received training on preparing the Affirmative Action Diversity Workplan.*
- *All Employees completed city wide Diversity Training.*
- *We provided for an on-going discussion at all levels of the organization as to the benefits of recruiting and maintaining a diverse workforce to meet the challenges we are faced with by:*
 - *Infusion of fresh ideas and perspectives that can lead to previously unrecognized opportunities.*
 - *Improve perception in the eyes of our customers.*
 - *Improve our reputation in the community.*
 - *Be more attractive to talented candidates for hire.*
- *The Deputy Chief is a member of the Equal Opportunity Diversity Action Committee, and the Affirmative Action subcommittee and actively promotes practices that encourage Diversity and Affirmative Action.*

V. What were your Women/Minority-Owned Small Business efforts last year?

A. List your efforts here?

GFR staff continues to utilize locally-owned women and minority owned business for purchasing supplies and materials. Requests for bids and proposals on large and small projects are developed with consideration to avoid potential barriers for these businesses and to encourage WMOB to make proposals. We currently utilize Lloyd Clark Sports and M&C Surplus for various uniform supplies.

B. What can you do differently next year to improve?

Continue to work with City staff to learn about any new MBE and Local Small businesses that we may not be aware of and evaluate potential for using their services. Review Purchasing Policy section 41-411 "Locating Potential Vendors" with staff who need to develop bid lists.

VI. Your Component of the Overall Departmental Strategic Plan

Your Department Head will work with his or her direct reports to develop a Departmental Strategic Plan to address diversity issues this evaluation year. In this section you will outline your assignment for the department's overall Strategic Plan. You will use this component as the basis for the Diversity objective on your Performance Evaluation Plan.

List one or more components of the overall Departmental Plan outlined by your Department Head in the appropriate sections below. You might not have an element in each of the areas.

VII.

A. Recruitment Strategies

Develop a Recruitment Team comprised of a representative group of GFR employees to actively participate in career fairs, community events, conduct presentations and actively recruit at local high schools, colleges, churches, athletic organizations and other appropriate locations.

Continue to work with OD/HR to develop diverse hiring pools. Post vacant positions that may be advertised to the general public on the City of Gainesville website which is a part of the Governmentjobs.com network which is nationwide.

Work with OD/HR to post vacant firefighting positions with Ergo metrics to reach a broad and diverse population. Partner with local agencies such as Florida Works Institute for Workforce Innovation and Career Source of North Central Florida to assist with scholarships for local residents to attain fire and EMS training to increase the local qualified applicant pool.

Continue to foster a positive relationship with the Lofton professional Academy Fire and EMS program to encourage future participation of these young Fire and EMS professionals in the GFR Mentorship and Cadet program.

Continue to build the GFR Mentorship and Cadet program to ensure candidates are prepared to participate successfully in hiring processes.

B. Retention Strategies

(1) Professional Development for all Employees

- *Ensure all employees have equal access to training & promotional opportunities.*

- *Review training programs, promotional opportunities, and seniority systems to ensure that they are nondiscriminatory.*
- *Take affirmative steps to provide promotional and career advancement opportunities, including compensable training to identified members.*
- *Assist employees with utilizing GFR's Professional Development Model career development strategy.*

(2) Strategies to Foster an Environment of Diversity and Inclusion

- *Publish GFR's Diversity Initiative so that it may be shared with both internal employees and external customers.*
- *Continue to stress to Staff that a diverse workforce is best able to serve diverse customers and that diversity is larger than race and gender..*
- *Ensure that majority groups aren't marginalized.*
- *Address any parts of the corporate culture that may create an environment that would stifle the inclusion of diversity.*
- *Provide a department wide program called "Courageous Conversations". This program is an innovative and successful approach to building teams by encouraging members to embrace diversity and resolving conflict. This program will be facilitated by a diverse group of department members and will address these wicked issues head on.*
- *Conduct minority and female focus groups to discuss concerns and issues related to retention, promotion and inclusion. The input and recommendations from these groups will be incorporated into the Courageous Conversations program.*

C. Women/Minority-Owned Small Business Strategies

- *Continue to use local women- and minority-owned vendors when possible. Ensure that any requests for bids or proposals are evaluated to eliminate potential barriers for these businesses.*
- *Participate in SBE/MBE/WBE business fairs held within the community*
- *Train GFR personnel in SBE/MBE/WBE policies and procedures*

D. How will you measure your department's success?

- *Track hiring and retention demographics of who is joining and leaving the organization. Look for disparity among traditionally discriminated and under-represented designated groups.*
- *Analyze the make-up of potential hiring and promotional pools.*
- *Track contracts issued to SBE/WBE/MBE businesses.*