

City of Gainesville Diversity Work Plan

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

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Department: Energy Delivery/Field Services

Title: Utility Field Services Manager

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I. Introductory statement describing your department/division.

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

Field Services consists of four major work areas: Meter Operations, Meter Services, Revenue Protection and Utility Line Locators. The Meter Operations division is mainly made up of Meter Readers, which is an entry-level position that requires a high school education, a good driving record and basic math skills. Remaining job functions may be learned through training after being hired. It is a position that typically facilitates opportunities for employees to promote into other areas of the city. Meter Operations has a large quantity of applicants from diverse ethnicities, education levels and backgrounds. The testing and hiring processes are closely monitored with the assistance of Human Resources staff.

Meter Services is responsible for the connection and disconnection of services for the utility. This portion of the Division has a unique opportunity to teach candidates a professional trade, even with limited previous experience. It is helpful to have a fundamental understanding of the utility and the geographical layout of Gainesville. This is typically why a majority of the applicant pool is drawn from Meter Readers.

Utility Line Locators are responsible for the protection of infrastructure and underground utilities owned and maintained by GRU. In this area of operation, there are numerous opportunities to build working relationships with contractors within the construction trade, property owners, state agencies and other city employees. This position generally requires employees to have a comprehensive understanding of how underground utilities are installed as well as the ability to interpret utility maps. A basic knowledge of utility line locating and construction techniques is preferred. We will have a vacancy for a Utility Line Locator this year and currently the Utility Line Locator position has a (Minority and Female) goal. We anticipate attracting a diverse pool of applicants.

Revenue Protection has the responsibility of protecting the utility's coffers by investigating potential utility theft and fraud activities. This is a relatively small work force with a broad understanding of the utility and specializing in revenue recovery activities.

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

As a whole, Field Services has a diverse workforce. Having participated in job fairs, female and minority candidates are often successfully recruited. Because of the diverse work exposure, Field Service staff are often promoted to other areas of the City. The physically demanding nature of certain jobs combined with the possible adverse weather conditions has been a deterrent in general to applicant interest in the past.

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.

Field Services participates in the annual city-wide job fair to promote its Division, as well as to provide job descriptions to potential candidates. The job fair also allows our staff to participate in one-on-one conversations with citizens of the community who are interested in a career opportunity with GRU. The Meter Reader position, which tends to be the first “stepping stone” into the Division, are advertised via the City of Gainesville’s website, through Alachua County Ministerial Alliance, through Big Brothers and Big Sisters, The Reichert House, Pace Center for Girls, Diversity E-mail Distribution (group of 60+ local minority organizations and establishments) as well as the annual job fair. The Division also conducts various testing opportunities when advertising for a position, giving candidates multiple areas in which to excel and demonstrate individual knowledge, skills and abilities. Word of mouth via current employees also tends to be a successful conduit for recruitment as well.

B. List Retention and Personnel Development Strategies you employed.

Field Services provides employees the opportunity to shadow other employees in various positions and Divisions as permitted by operational needs, both within and outside the Division. Other Divisions are welcomed and encouraged to send employees to Field Services to learn more about what we do. Field Services also administers several Progression Through Training Programs (PTTP) for the Field Service Technician, Line Location Technician, Supervisor, and the Meter Reader positions. The PTTP programs encourage employees to increase their knowledge, skills and abilities along with commensurate salary level increases. In addition, the Managers and Supervisors of Field Services practice an “open door policy” where all employees feel welcome to discuss any problems or concerns they may have.

III. Were those efforts successful?

A. Why/Why Not?

Yes, the Diversity initiatives were successful. For example, at the yearly job fair, potential applicants are instructed to monitor the City of Gainesville’s website for any upcoming jobs which may become available. This promotes awareness of current and future job opening opportunities. Implementing this strategy, as well as advertising to the general public, the applicant pool has increased from 75-100 applicants several years ago in excess of 600 applicants in recent years for Meter Reader positions. The most recent ad resulted in two hundred eighty nine total applications; twenty-seven are scheduled for interviews.

In addition, a minority was promoted from a Field Service Technician to the role of Meter Services Supervisor.

B. How did you measure your efforts?

The results of recruitment efforts are realized by the quantity of applicants for job openings. Field Services has processed applicant pools in triple digit territory over the past several years. The Managers/Supervisors work very closely with GRU’s HR/OD department to ensure all criteria are met for advertising, testing and interviewing for a position(s). Our efforts are reflected by the vast number of diverse applicants we receive for any open position, and demonstrated by the diversity of employees in Field Services. Employees in PTTP programs are monitored for progress and provided coaching and/or counseling as warranted.

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

A. List your efforts here.

Employees participate in City sponsored diversity awareness training classes, and diversity awareness is continuously promoted and discussed throughout the year at staff meetings and Division events. Message boards are also posted throughout the Division notifying employees of upcoming events and programs promoting culture/diversity. Although not all employees are able to attend cultural events, the programs are recorded facilitating opportunities for employees to view at a later time. Diverse interview panels are developed to ensure diversity and promote an atmosphere of impartiality.

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

A. List your efforts here?

During the past year, Field Services has continued to support the small/minority (SBE) owned businesses through continued patronage, while also making a conscious effort to seek out businesses in the area that qualify. Last fiscal year, we supported thirteen SBE businesses for the sum of \$29,062.

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

In the upcoming year, Divisional awareness of the SBE Program will continue to be considered for opportunity. Discretionary spending will be reviewed and when an opportunity is presented, the SBE vendor list will be considered for competitive bidding.

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.

The Department's objective is to develop a highly qualified, talented, diverse and inclusive workforce. We will accomplish this objective by a) ensuring that the Progression Through Training Program participants are progressing satisfactorily and in a timely manner, and b) that our hiring processes that have an AA Goal are focused to yield a qualified and diverse pool of candidates. Our targets are that a) 100% of the PTPP participants will progress within 30 days of their program schedule and b) that 75% of our focused hiring processes yield the desired results. We will hold monthly meetings to review participant progress, inclusion and to address issues in a timely manner.

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.

A. Recruitment Strategies

We have not experienced a problem with diversity and candidate recruitment. The real challenge is managing large applicant pools competing for a position(s). We have worked closely with HR/OD to develop eligibility lists in order to capitalize on the large quantity of applicants and reduce administrative costs associated with advertising, testing, and interviewing large candidate pools.

B. Retention Strategies

(1) Professional Development for all Employees

Field Services has four PTPP programs for the Meter Operations, Supervisor, Meter Services and Line Location areas. The programs are updated according to technology advancements to maintain relevant training materials. The programs are shared with other city employees who express an interest in learning details about Field Services.

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

We foster an atmosphere of openness and encourage shadowing for employees interested in working in or learning more about Field Services. We also encourage Field Service employees to shadow with other Departments/ Divisions in the City to gain knowledge and foster professional relationships. We encourage open discussion during staff meetings to share differing employee perspectives. Listening to others is a key component to fostering an environment of diversity and inclusion.

C. Women/Minority-Owned Small Business Strategies

We work with GRU's purchasing department to obtain the current list of small and minority owned businesses. As discretionary spending permits, we reach out to SBE businesses and provide opportunity for competitive bidding. As previously mentioned, thirteen small or minority businesses were solicited and subsequently supported through the purchase of products or services.

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

Success will be measured by a culmination of variables. Not all employees will remain in Meter Operations. The promotion of employees to other parts of the city is encouraged and does not indicate a negative implication. Field Services enjoys a large pool of diverse candidates when job postings are advertised. The high quantity of candidates is indicative of the advertisement reaching a broad spectrum of potential candidates.

With regard to supporting small and minority businesses, success will be measured by the quantity of businesses and dollars invested in those businesses. It should be noted there may be more attempts to reach out to small and minority businesses than what is reflected in actual expenditures.