



WICHITA STATE  
UNIVERSITY

# Working with Staff, Diversity and Conflict Resolution

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# Learning Objectives

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At the end of this module, you will:

- understand the importance of diversity, equity inclusion and conflict resolution to strategic human resources management
- understand what conflict resolution is
- learn new tools to handle conflict in the workplace

# Why is Diversity Important?

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- African Americans, Asian Americans, Hispanics, and women are underrepresented among people who work in utilities
- African Americans and Hispanics are underrepresented among managers and professionals, and women are underrepresented among local government chief administrative officers, such as city managers
- Among state and local employers, 52% expect the largest percentage of retirees will be leaving their workforce in the next few years
- With office productivity, software improvements and other workforce changes, state and local government secretarial employment is projected to decline by at least 18%
- 17% of state and local governments' recruitment efforts include demographic or neighborhood-specific outreach

# Diversity Data (Water Technicians)

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Male, 66.5%  
Female, 33.5%



White, 59.9%  
Hispanic or Latino, 18.7%  
Black or African American, 11.4%  
Asian, 4.6%  
Unknown, 4.3%  
American Indian and Alaska Native, 1.1%

# Data- Water Treatment Operators

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- There are over 20,715 water treatment operators currently employed in the United States.
- 9.0% of all water treatment operators are women, while 91.0% are men.
- The average age of an employed water treatment operator is 47 years old.
- The most common ethnicity of water treatment operators is White (70.5%), followed by Hispanic or Latino (12.7%), Black or African American (7.8%) and Unknown (4.6%).
- 5% of all water treatment operators are LGBT.

# DEI

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- “How does your city/county define diversity?”
- Pause and reflect on each word, DEI.
- At an individual level, think about this question.

# What is Diversity

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Diversity is the “representation of differences relating to social identity categories including, but not limited to, race, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, socioeconomic class, nationality, religion, sexual orientation, disability, age, and socioeconomic background” (NASPAA Standards, 2019)

# Managing a Diverse Workforce

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- **race**
- **ethnicity**
- **age**
- **gender (identity and expression)**
- **sexual orientation**
- **veteran status**
- **religion**
- **disability**
- **language**
- **nationality**
- **genetic information**
- **socio-economic background**



# What is Equity

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Equity is reflected in fair treatment, access, opportunity, and advancement for all people, while at the same time striving to identify and eliminate barriers that have prevented the full participation of some groups.

Improving equity involves increasing justice and fairness within the procedures and processes of institutions or systems, as well as in their distribution of resources.

# What is Inclusion

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To create an environment where all affiliated stakeholders have an opportunity to contribute and participate, and where all individuals are invited and welcome. To intentionally include multiple and potentially divergent perspectives into a shared community of inquiry and engagement.

# Why DEI?

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- effectiveness/efficiency/productivity
- build trust
- creative alternatives/team problem solving
- recruitment/retention of diverse populations

# Challenges to DEI

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- ✓ underrepresentation
- ✓ lack of diversity in management positions
- ✓ waves of retirement/succession planning
- ✓ discrimination in the workplace
- ✓ retention issues
- ✓ finding talented staff/targeted outreach
- ✓ technological changes and the impact on certain jobs

# Next Steps To Consider

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- designate a DEI officer/ DEI plan
- evaluate the diversity at your workplace
- think creatively
- reach out
- establish a regular engagement process
- build an inclusion program
- add an equity lens
- don't wait

# Conflict Resolution

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# What is Conflict?

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- when people do not agree on the same thing
- when one party is frustrated by the other
- requires interactions

# Views of Conflict

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- interactionist view (conflict is good)
- human relations view (conflict is natural)
- traditional view (conflict is bad)
- conflict must be managed



# Sources of Conflict

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- Resource scarcity
- Incompatible goals
- Structural factors (size, routinization, specialization, reward systems)
- Conflicting perceptions, ideas, or beliefs
- Differences between people
- Conflicting thoughts/needs within an individual
- Lack of communication (maybe)

# Types of Conflict

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- task content conflict (differing opinions related to the task)
- emotional or relationship conflict (interpersonal conflict -- dislike, negative emotions)
- administrative or process conflict (disagreement on how to get the task completed — e.g., duties, decision-making technique)

# Why Conflict Resolution?

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- inevitable in dynamic environments
- can lead to feelings of powerlessness
- can cause anyone, especially subordinates, to view administrators as adversaries and creates conflict and divided loyalties in the workplace
- impact morale at the workplace

# Strategies for Conflict Resolution

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- withdrawal—Little or no significance to either party (lose-lose)
- forcing—Force outcome regardless of the desire of one party (win-lose)
- conciliation—Giving in to preserve relationship with other party (lose-win)
- compromise—Concerned with both outcome and relationship (?-?)
- **CONFRONTATION**—Meet the problem head on (win-win)

# How do we Resolve Workplace Conflict?

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- confront problems, communicate openly and respectfully with someone of opposing opinion

# LEEN- A Model for Conflict Resolution

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- L- Listen
- E- Empathize
- E- Explain
- N- Negotiate

# Questions

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