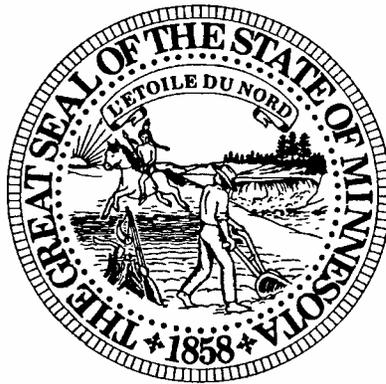


# **Minnesota State Agency Affirmative Action 2005 Biennial Report**



Department of Employee Relations  
March, 2005

# Biennial Report 2005

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## **Statement of Commitment**

### **From the Commissioner of the Department of Employee Relations**

The Department of Employee Relations (DOER) is pleased to present the 2005 Minnesota State Agency Affirmative Action Biennial Report. This report details agency efforts and progress in affirmative action, equal employment opportunity and diversity initiatives during the past two years.

We offer sincere thanks to each agency who worked diligently to develop and implement their plan, and their commitment to promote equal opportunity. The Executive Branch agencies developed excellent Affirmative Action Plans for 2004 -2006. The response from the agencies has been exceptional. Plans were submitted in a timely manner and demonstrated many creative ways that agencies are promoting their program objectives and diversity efforts.

The Department of Employee Relations supports the State of Minnesota's Equal Employment Opportunity Policies and Statewide Affirmative Action efforts to provide equal opportunity in employment to current and prospective employees without regard to race, religion, creed, color, age, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, disability, status with regard to public assistance, membership or activity in a local human rights commission. To ensure a diverse workforce representative of all protected groups, the Department of Employee Relations will ensure that positions are accessible to all qualified persons and will make every effort to recruit, hire, retain, and support qualified protected group members.

Cal R. Ludeman, Commissioner  
Department of Employee Relations

Ann M. Schluter, Deputy Commissioner  
Department of Employee Relations

## **Introduction**

The Commissioner is directed to submit a report on affirmative action progress of each agency and the state as a whole to the Governor and to legislative groups as listed in Minnesota Statute.

<http://www.revisor.leg.state.mn.us/stats/43A/191.html>

This year's Biennial Report is provided electronically and a link to it is available on the Extranet at: <https://extranet.doer.state.mn.us/AffAct/aareporting.htm>

### **Affirmative Action, ADA and Diversity**

The three programs addressed in the report are Affirmative Action, ADA and Reasonable Accommodation, and Diversity. The programs are administered by Affirmative Action Officers/Designees, ADA Coordinators and Human Resources staff in the Executive Branch agencies and by staff in the Department of Employee Relations under the management of the Deputy Commissioner of DOER.

Agencies in the Executive Branch are required to submit an Affirmative Action Plan (AAP) to the Commissioner of DOER in July of the even-numbered years. The Biennial Report summarizes information in the plans that were submitted for 2004-2006 and includes the agencies' efforts in the three program areas – Affirmative Action, ADA and Reasonable Accommodation, and Diversity.

The programs operate under the authority of:

### **Statutes**

- 43A.19 Affirmative action  
<http://www.revisor.leg.state.mn.us/stats/43A/19.html>
- 43A.191 Agency affirmative action programs  
<http://www.revisor.leg.state.mn.us/stats/43A/191.html>

**Rules - Chapter 3905** <http://www.revisor.leg.state.mn.us/arule/3905/>

### **Administrative Procedures**

- 19.1 Affirmative Action Plan Requirements (pdf)  
<http://www.doer.state.mn.us/cmr-adpr/images/pdf-file/19-1.pdf>
- 19.2 Affirmative Action Audit Process (pdf)  
<http://www.doer.state.mn.us/cmr-adpr/images/pdf-file/19-2.pdf>
- 19.3 Retention (pdf)  
<http://www.doer.state.mn.us/cmr-adpr/images/pdf-file/19-3.pdf>

## **Updating the current processes and programs**

The most significant change in state employment has been the transition of the State's traditional selection process of upfront written exams and multiple paper application forms to a multi-source recruitment and selection process. The process allows for electronic application and includes the addition of web based, self-service tools in many transactions. The new process began in March, 2002, and continues to be updated to meet customer needs.

The three programs addressed in this report have also been updated and streamlined. Where ever possible we have moved to web based, electronic or self-service methods of doing business. This shift has encouraged everyone to think differently about how programs are designed and implemented. The change has allowed the three programs to operate more efficiently. For example; communication and training can be developed and provided without the cost of printing, mailing and travel. In addition, the new methods provide data that can be compiled, analyzed, summarized and distributed so that it can be used quickly.

Affirmative Action programs, the Reasonable Accommodation process and diversity programs have all been affected by the reduction of resources and staff available to implement them. However, as a group, the Affirmative Action Officers/Designees and ADA Coordinators have found creative ways to capture efficiencies while improving customer service.

## I. Affirmative Action

43A.19, Subd. 1. states:

“To assure that positions in the executive branch of the civil service are equally accessible to all qualified persons, and to eliminate the underutilization of qualified members of protected groups, the commissioner shall adopt and periodically revise, if necessary, a statewide affirmative action program.” <http://www.revisor.leg.state.mn.us/stats/43A/19.html>

### What is affirmative action?

Affirmative Action is defined as a set of management principles developed to remedy past discrimination and to achieve equal employment opportunity. It also involves taking positive measures to create a more diverse workforce. State agencies in the Executive Branch develop an Affirmative Action Plan (AAP) that guides the agency’s efforts to eliminate underutilization of qualified members of three protected groups – women, minorities and people with disabilities - and illegal discrimination in State employment.

The Executive Branch agencies developed excellent Affirmative Action Plans for 2004-2006. The response from the agencies has been exceptional. Plans were submitted in a timely manner and demonstrated many creative ways that agencies are implementing their plans and diversity programs.

### Affirmative action plan requirements

Agencies that have fewer than 25 employees are required to submit a plan that has three sections: a statement of commitment, a reasonable accommodation policy and procedure and a non-discrimination policy with an internal complaint procedure. Agencies that have more than 25 employees must submit a plan that includes those three components plus additional information including a utilization analysis of the agency’s workforce with goals and timetables and program objectives.

In the past, all agencies submitted a hard copy of the Affirmative Action Plan. To begin the transition to electronic business, agencies that have more than 25 employees submitted two sections of the 2004-2006 plans online. The transmittal form and the recruitment plan in the AAP were entered online and data was compiled and summarized with the goal of sharing the statewide information to make the best use of budget and time.

The following plans were submitted in July, 2004:

<b>Executive Branch Agency Affirmative Action Plans 2004-2006</b>	
Size of agency	Total number submitted and approved
Under 25 employees	32
Over 25 employees	70
<b>Total</b>	<b>102</b>

## **Affirmative action training resources**

Training resources for the development of Affirmative Action Plans and other programs are provided by DOER through various methods including the toolboxes on the DOER Extranet in the Workforce Diversity section:

- Affirmative Action <https://extranet.doer.state.mn.us/AffAct/toolbox.htm>
- ADA and Reasonable Accommodation <http://www.doer.state.mn.us/odeo-ada/ad-tools/ad-tool.htm>
- Diversity <https://extranet.doer.state.mn.us/AffAct/diversity.htm#top>
- “Affirmative Action and Equal Employment Opportunities” <http://www.admin.state.mn.us/mad/JDSupvDevCoreAgenda.htm>
- Affirmative Action Power Point <https://extranet.doer.state.mn.us/ACCESS/linkkkkk.htm>

### **NOTE:**

Applicants have the option of submitting their EEO information online, in paper form or via the job information phone line using a PIN. Employees complete an EEO survey during their new employee orientation when they start work. In both cases, the completion of the form is **VOLUNTARY**, and it is by **self-identification**. The data is **confidential** and kept separate from other personnel information. Many applicants and employees do not choose to complete this information, particularly identifying if they have a disability.

## **A. Recruitment**

### **Efforts to recruit protected group members**

The transition to the multi-source recruitment and selection process has changed the way the State and each agency recruit for all employees, including protected class applicants. Applicants submit one comprehensive resume and the individual’s qualifications and skills are stored in the resume database. When an agency has a vacancy, the Human Resources staff searches the database for individuals whose skills match the knowledge, skills and abilities required for the vacancy. Human Resource staff also review the resumes of applicants who expressed interest in the vacancy, and resumes obtained from other sources. DOER (with input from agency personnel) has provided many tools to assist the agency through the entire process.

- State Hiring Toolbox <https://extranet.doer.state.mn.us/Recruit/toolbox/toolbox.htm>

## **Underutilization**

The agency Affirmative Action Officer is particularly interested in the selection process for job groups where it has been determined that there is an underutilization for a protected group. Underutilization or disparity is determined by analyzing an agency's workforce and comparing the agency's workforce to the availability of women, minorities or people with disabilities with the requisite skills in the relevant recruitment area. The availability percentages for women and minorities are determined using the U.S. Census EEO Data Tool as the basis for comparison by the agency.

- U. S. Census EEO Data Tool <http://www.census.gov/hhes/www/eeoindex.html>

When there is a vacancy in a job group where there is an underutilization, the Affirmative Action Officer/Designee works with agency staff to increase advertising of the job opening to recruitment sources that will reach members of the protected class (women, minorities or people with a disability) for which the agency is underutilized.

## **U.S. Census training resources**

DOER provided the Agency Affirmative Action Officers/Designees with two self-service training resources and an instructor led training class for using the EEO Data Tool in the U.S. Census. A recorded WebEx session and a guidebook for Navigating the U.S. Census Website are available on the DOER Extranet.

- Navigating the U.S. Census Website <https://extranet.doer.state.mn.us/AffAct/training.htm>.

## **Goals and Timetables Training Resources**

When the agency determines that there is an underutilization or disparity, the agency is required to establish goals and timetables for the correction of the underutilization. Affirmative Action Officers have been trained to develop goals and timetables in the AAP's using the training manual for Goals and Timetables that is found in the Affirmative Action Toolbox on the DOER Extranet.

- Goals and Timetables <https://extranet.doer.state.mn.us/AffAct/training.htm>

## **Benefits of the new selection process in recruiting**

Based on input from agencies, general public and employees, the updated selection process maximizes the new technology and the application process has been simplified. The following changes were made to make the process more inclusive for all applicants:

- upfront written exams were eliminated
- an applicant only needs to submit one comprehensive resume
- new job announcement information is available on the Internet or job information phone line
- an applicant can create, submit and update their resume via the Internet or send in a paper copy

- an applicant can receive e-mail notification when a vacancy opens matching their selection criteria
- all applicants meeting the minimum job qualifications may be considered, rather than being limited to the top 10 or 20

We feel these changes will result in a more diverse recruitment pool. This process has been so successful that over 90% of the resume applications are submitted online. DOER staff spent many months promoting and presenting the new and improved selection process to agencies, the general public at various community organizations, Workforce Centers, and campuses. Both agency HR personnel and DOER staff are available to assist applicants with the new process. Do we have any data to support our assumption that the pool is more diverse?

The current system is faster and more streamlined. The focus in the selection process is on knowledge, skills and abilities which, in turn, promotes non-discrimination and equal opportunity.

### **Database demographics**

The demographics of the applicant database in the multi-source recruitment and selection process are available at the following link:

[The State of Minnesota Applicant Database, State of Minnesota Employee Workforce and 2000 Census Minnesota Labor Force for Women, Minorities and People with a Disability \[07/04\] \(pdf\)](#)

<https://extranet.doer.state.mn.us/AffAct/pdf/Protected%20Groups%20in%20Database%20July%202004.pdf>

### **Recruitment plan summary**

An agency that has more than 25 employees is required to have a Recruitment Plan in their Affirmative Action Plan. The agency reports recruitment activity during the previous 12 months in the AAP. This section was reported online for the 2004 plan. A summary of the agency recruitment activity is in the Affirmative Action Toolbox/Reporting.

- Recruitment plan summary: <https://extranet.doer.state.mn.us/AffAct/pdf/2004-2006AAPRecruitmentResults.pdf>

The benefit of having the recruitment information entered online is that it can be analyzed and summarized for use by all of the agencies. Efforts are in motion to reduce the expenses that individual agencies spend on recruitment. This may lead to combining ads and thereby reducing costs, reducing fees for job fairs and eliminating methods that have had a cost but have not produced results, that is, qualified applicants in the multi-source system.

### **Recruiting people with a disability**

In addition to recruiting for women and minorities, agencies cite recruitment efforts in their plan to correct the underutilization of people with a disability. These efforts include but are not limited to:

- Websites
- Minnesota Work Force Centers
- Professional Organizations
- Publications
- Minnesota State Council on Disability
- ADA Minnesota
- Non-Profit Organizations
- Vocational Rehabilitation
- State Services for the Blind
- Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services

### **Recruitment calendar**

A newly developed Recruitment Calendar will help agencies share recruitment resources. It is posted on the DOER Extranet. An agency is able to enter their interest or participation in a recruitment event using an online form and other agencies can use the calendar to contact that agency to share the cost and staffing of a booth at a job fair or to avoid having two agencies pay fees for the same participation.

- Recruitment Calendar <https://extranet.doer.state.mn.us/Recruit/Calendar.asp>

## **B. Retention Plan**

### **Strategies**

Agencies have developed strategies to increase the retention of employees, especially women, minorities and people with disabilities. These include but are not limited to:

- Special orientation programs
- Employee satisfaction surveys
- Early conflict resolution
- Employee network and diversity council
- Employee recognition
- Mentorship programs or events
- Professional development and continuing education
- Respectful working environment
- Exit interviews
- Diversity training programs
- Career development and mobility opportunities
- Using the Employee Assistance Program (EAP)
- Conduct separation analysis to identify problem areas

## **Conducting a separation analysis**

One element of the retention plan is the separation analysis. Ideally, this analysis compares the termination rate of women to men, minorities to non-minorities and people with disabilities to people who do not identify as having a disability in order to determine if there is any adverse impact to the protected group in termination. If there is adverse impact in the analysis, then the agency can assess further to see if there are barriers (and/or discrimination) in the employment process that have led to the adverse impact. Agencies have developed internal methods of reporting termination data and have included the information in the AAP's.

A self-service, separation analysis tool is being developed that will provide agencies with an "on demand" standardized method to compare termination rates.

## **C. Complaint Resolution**

An agency's Affirmative Action Plan includes their non-discrimination policies and procedures. An integral part of an employer's non-discrimination policies is an internal procedure that employees can use to file a complaint when they believe they have been discriminated against on the basis of their protected class. In the Minnesota Human Rights Act, there are 12 protected classes that are the basis for a complaint in the area of employment.

- Minnesota Department of Human Rights  
[http://www.humanrights.state.mn.us/rights\\_prochart.html](http://www.humanrights.state.mn.us/rights_prochart.html)

All agency Affirmative Action Plans have an internal complaint procedure for filing internal reports of discrimination on the basis of the 12 protected classes. The complaint procedure is developed according to the following Rule:

<http://www.revisor.leg.state.mn.us/arule/3905/0500.html>

## **Training resources**

Supervisor Development CORE training includes a session titled: "Preventing Harassment Discrimination in the Workplace"

- CORE <http://www.admin.state.mn.us/mad/JDSupvDevCoreAgenda.htm>

A self-service, on-demand recorded WebEx session is also available for managers and supervisors on the Extranet. Over 500 employees viewed this training session within the first few weeks of availability.

- WebEx <https://extranet.doer.state.mn.us/AffAct/training.htm>

## Number of agency complaints reported

Using the criteria cited in the Rule, all AAP's that were submitted included an Internal Complaint policy and procedure. The policy and procedure includes the agency's statement that it will submit to the Commissioner of DOER, within 30 days of a complaint being completed, the disposition of the complaint. This data can now be entered online.

- Internal Complaint Report 2004 <https://extranet.doer.state.mn.us/AffAct/aareporting.htm>

Basis of Reported Complaint	Total Number With Basis
Sex	29
Race	14
Sexual orientation	7
National origin	5
Disability	4
Age	4
Marital status	1
Membership human rights commission	0
Color	0
Religion	0
Creed	0
Status with regard to public assistance	0
Retaliation	2
Unknown	2
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>68</b>

## Summary of affirmative action program

The Executive branch agencies submitted Affirmative Action Plans that have met the requirements for Affirmative Action Plans as outlined by Statute, Rules and Administrative Procedures. The agencies included the required parts of the plans which included a statement of commitment, internal complaint policy and procedure and a reasonable accommodation policy and procedure that complies with state and federal requirements. In addition, agencies and MNSCU sites which have more than 25 employees have met the additional requirements for their plans.

The agencies have implemented policies and procedures that affect the protected groups in the plan – women, minorities and people with disabilities – and ultimately affect all employees in the agency. Through the increased use of technology, writing and submitting an Affirmative Action Plan has been streamlined. But beyond that, technology has provided the agencies with tools to share information and resources. Agency Affirmative Action Officers can inform their agency's employees about the plan, about diversity events and programs and about policies and procedures that have a direct effect on their employment setting.

## **II. ADA and Reasonable Accommodation**

### **43A.191 Subd. 2.(b) states:**

“The agency plan must include a plan for the provision of reasonable accommodation in the hiring and promotion of qualified disabled persons.”

Minnesota Statute: <http://www.revisor.leg.state.mn.us/stats/43A/191.html>

### **Definition of individual with a disability**

An individual with a disability is a person who has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities; has a record of such an impairment; or is regarded as having such an impairment.

### **Definition of a qualified employee or applicant with a disability**

A qualified employee or applicant with a disability is an individual who, with or without reasonable accommodation, can perform the essential functions of the job in question.

Reasonable accommodation may include, but is not limited to:

- Making existing facilities used by employees readily accessible to and usable by persons with disabilities;
- Job restructuring, modifying work schedules, reassignment to a vacant position;
- Acquiring or modifying equipment or devices, adjusting or modifying examinations, training materials, or policies, and providing qualified readers or interpreters.

### **Disability discrimination and undue hardship**

An employer is required to make a reasonable accommodation to the known disability of a qualified applicant or employee if it would not impose an ‘undue hardship’ on the operation of the employer's business. Undue hardship is defined as an action requiring significant difficulty or expense when considered in light of factors such as an employer's size, financial resources, and the nature and structure of its operation.”

- Disability Discrimination <http://www.eeoc.gov/types/ada.html>

### **Reasonable accommodation policy and procedure**

The agency Affirmative Action Plans must include a reasonable accommodation policy and procedure in accordance with the provisions of the Statute, the ADA and Executive order 96-9. A sample Reasonable Accommodation Policy and Procedure is provided in the

- ADA Toolbox <http://www.doer.state.mn.us/odeo-ada/ada-pol/ad-pol05.htm>

**Executive Order 96-9** requires State agencies to document compliance with Titles I and II of the Americans with Disabilities Act, and submit a report to the agency head and the state ADA Coordinator. The agencies are required to submit annually the number of requests that the agency has had for reasonable accommodation and the agency's response to the request and additional data. The results of the ADA Annual Report that have been entered online for the past two years are as follows:

- ADA Report Summary 2003  
<http://www.doer.state.mn.us/odeo-ada/ad-tools/2003%20ADA%20Annual%20Report%20Totals.pdf>
- ADA Report Summary 2004  
<http://www.doer.state.mn.us/odeo-ada/ad-tools/2004%20Annual%20Report%20ADA%20Totals.pdf>

### **ADA and reasonable accommodation resources**

DOER has created a webpage on both the Internet and Extranet which provides applicants and employees with the information to request a reasonable accommodation. The agency can respond and enter into the interactive dialogue about the reasonable accommodation that can be provided. DOER also provides consultation services to agency staff. The ADA Toolbox on the Extranet includes links to the EEOC, the U. S. Department of Justice and the MN Department of Human Rights which can provide additional support to the agencies.

- Internet ADA Links <http://www.doer.state.mn.us/odeo-ada/ada.htm>
- Extranet ADA Resources <http://www.doer.state.mn.us/odeo-ada/ad-tools/ad-tool.htm>

### **ADA and reasonable accommodation events**

Events such as the Disability Awareness Month programs provided by the ACCESS group and the Minnesota Council on Disability add to the knowledge base and provide additional direction for Affirmative Action Officers/Designees, ADA Coordinators and Human Resource staff. These include:

A presentation by Robin Jones, director of the Great Lakes ADA and Accessible Information Technology Center, in July, 2003, <http://www.adagreatlakes.org/>

- Evacuation Procedures for People with a Disability (October, 2003),
- Changes in Building Code Requirements for People with a Disability (Oct 2004)
- Disability Etiquette (October, 2004)
- 14<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration of the ADA, guest speaker Kevin Kling, July, 2004

### **III. Diversity**

#### **43A.191, Subd 3 (e) states:**

“An agency is encouraged to develop other innovative ways to promote awareness, acceptance, and appreciation for diversity and affirmative action.”

Minnesota Statute: <http://www.revisor.leg.state.mn.us/stats/43A/191.html>

The face of Minnesota is changing; we are becoming a more diversity rich state. Building a diverse workforce requires a plan that values and integrates diversity within the agencies. An agency Affirmative Action Plan includes strategies for increasing the diversity of their workforce.

#### **Value of diversity**

State employees have identified the value of diversity in the following ways:

- A diversity of perspectives, experiences and thoughts encourages creative problem solving and decision making
- A broader pool of candidates to choose from
- A broader range of knowledge and experience
- Good Business- build a diverse workforce to serve our diverse customers
- Reflects the people in the community
- Appreciating other cultures; their traditions, foods, family life, experiences

#### **Innovations to promote diversity awareness**

Agencies have organized and participated in many programs and events. These include but are not limited to:

- Limited English Proficiency (LEP) programs sponsored by state agency
- Several state agencies participated in the 3rd Annual Hmong Resource Fair
- 14<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the ADA – July 26, 2004, sponsored by several agencies and organizations
- Slice of Summer which was co-sponsored by three agencies and included a segment on the Hmong Resettlement in Minnesota, presented by a state employee
- Winter Traditions which was organized by an agency and included programs and displays on a variety of cultural traditions, events, festivals and customs that are celebrated in that season
- AgrAbility program sponsored by an agency for Disability Awareness Month
- Cultural events sponsored by Asian employees at a state agency
- A Valuing Diversity Steering Committee
- Celebration of African Heritage Month
- Sexual harassment training co-sponsored by two state agencies

## **ACCESS programs have included speakers and programs such as:**

- Tom Gillaspay, State Demographer, who discussed the demographics of the changing Minnesota population, trends and how this information relates to our agency Affirmative Action Plans.
- Ghfar Lakanwal, Director of the MN Cultural Diversity Center (MCDC), discussed diversity services and resources available to state government
- Disability Awareness Month, October, 2003 “Emergency Evacuation for People with Disabilities” for ACCESS members and safety and evacuation specialists from State agencies

## **Diversity resources**

DOER has maintained a Diversity Resources section on the Extranet that includes resources that agencies can use to promote diversity awareness within each agency.

<https://extranet.doer.state.mn.us/AffAct/diversity.htm>

In addition, a section “Featured months” was added to the DOER Internet Website. It provides information to the agencies about monthly diversity recognition such as Black History Month and Disability Awareness Month:

<http://www.doer.state.mn.us/odeo-ada/history%20months/MLK.htm>

Additional featured months are available in an archive.

<http://www.doer.state.mn.us/odeo/aff-act/featuredmonths.htm>

## **Internet and extranet communication**

The ACCESS and Workforce Diversity email lists provide a large network of communication about diversity events and programs. Members of the list serve include state employees from both the metro area and greater Minnesota involved in Affirmative Action, ADA and Diversity. The email notices can be sent to DOER for posting on the Extranet or can be sent as an FYI between agencies. The goal is to inform Affirmative Action Officers/designees, ADA Coordinators and diversity staff about events that they are interested in participating in and to provide an information base from which to develop diversity programs and promote diversity awareness within their own agency.

Examples of information include but are not limited to:

- National Museum of the American Indian <http://www.nmai.si.edu/>
- “Who Will I Become” about the resettlement of Hmong people in St. Paul
- Hispanic Heritage Month at Metropolitan State University
- North Star: Minnesota’s Black Pioneers <http://tpt.org/northstar/>
- ADA Advanced Workshop “Beyond the Basics”

## Biennial Report Summary

Many achievements by Affirmative Action Officers, ADA Coordinators, the ACCESS Partnership and the HRMD of DOER have contributed to the success of the Affirmative Action, ADA and Diversity programs:

- Continuing compliance by Executive branch agencies, as shown by 2004-2006 Affirmative Action Plans
- Updated web toolboxes for Affirmative Action and ADA resources
- Development of electronic self-service Recruitment Calendar and Workforce Diversity Calendar
- Continuing participation by agencies in the ACCESS Partnership
- Conversion to electronic delivery of service, Web-based self-service
- Workforce Diversity Resources (web toolbox, email group, WebEx training, reports, reports and data, statute requirements, procedures and checklists) on the web
- Development of on-demand reports that agencies can use to analyze the diversity of the current workforce
- Development of e-mail list of all state employees throughout Minnesota involved in Workforce Diversity (AAO, ADA Coordinators and Diversity Coordinators). This email lists allows for timely, consistent communication.
- Creation of diversity focused web pages which highlight the protected groups in agency Affirmative Action Plans (Disability Awareness Month, Black History Month, Native American Indian Month, etc.)
- Development of on-demand recorded training, manuals and guidebooks on the Extranet
- Development of methods for compiling data to share with agencies so that agencies can share resources

Affirmative Action Officers, ADA Coordinators, the ACCESS Partnership and the HRMD of DOER will creatively continue to implement the Affirmative Action, ADA and reasonable accommodation, and diversity programs in light of declining budgetary resources. They will also continue to analyze all phases of the State's selection system in order to eliminate barriers to employment of underutilized groups, and to provide equal opportunity to all applicants and employees.

The Executive Branch State agencies have met and exceeded their responsibilities in the area of Affirmative Action, ADA and reasonable accommodation, and diversity. The Affirmative Action Officers/Designees and ADA Coordinators continue to provide services to their agencies "to assure that positions in the executive branch of the civil service are equally accessible to all qualified persons, and to eliminate the underutilization of qualified members of protected groups."

The intent of the civil rights laws has been to prohibit discrimination on the basis of one's protected class. Affirmative Action provided for employers to take an additional or affirmative step to ensure that the employer's workforce reflected the availability of protected class individuals in the recruitment area. The diversity programs in employment go a step further and promote ideas and actions that make good business sense. A diverse state government workforce will be more responsive to clients and customers, it will have a broader range of knowledge and experience which encourages creative problem solving and decision making in order to better serve the diverse needs of the citizens of the State of Minnesota.