

## **Hiring Initiative to Reimagine Equity (HIRE)**

**A Joint Initiative of the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) and the U.S. Department of Labor's Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs (OFCCP)**

### **What is HIRE?**

HIRE is a multi-year collaborative effort chaired by EEOC Chair Charlotte A. Burrows and OFCCP Director Jenny R. Yang, which will engage a broad array of stakeholders to expand access to good jobs for workers from underrepresented communities and help address key hiring and recruiting challenges.

We are inviting employer, civil rights, and worker communities to reimagine hiring practices in ways that advance equal employment opportunity and help provide workers access to good jobs. As our nation makes major investments in our infrastructure and recovery, HIRE will:

- Host convenings on organizational policy and practices to reimagine equity and expand opportunity in hiring.
- Identify strategies to remove unnecessary barriers to hiring and to promote effective, job-related hiring and recruitment practices to cultivate a diverse pool of qualified workers.
- Promote equity in the use of tech-based hiring systems.
- Develop resources to promote adoption of innovative and evidence-based, recruiting and hiring practices that advance equity.

### **Why did we launch HIRE?**

America works best when we expand opportunity to allow all of us to realize our full potential and contribute to the country's economic success. COVID-19's disproportionate impact on underserved communities, the growing recognition of systemic inequality, and calls for racial justice have brought national attention to the unfinished business of equal opportunity. Many employers have recognized that they have an important role to play by strengthening diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility (DEIA) efforts in their workplaces.

Even before the pandemic, workers from underrepresented communities faced barriers to employment opportunity. For example, studies show that hiring officials are significantly less likely to call back applicants with Black, Hispanic and Asian-sounding names than applicants with White-sounding names—even when they have comparable resumes.<sup>1</sup> Studies have also shown that artificial intelligence and algorithmic systems modeled on past practices can replicate biases that screen out diverse populations—as was the case with one artificial intelligence system that preferred male candidates over women based on past hiring practices.<sup>2</sup>

The pandemic's devastating impact on employment has hit some people of color, women, individuals with disabilities, LGBTQ+ individuals, older workers, and others particularly hard,

compounding the impact of systemic barriers to hiring and advancement, including discrimination, longstanding occupational segregation, and other drivers of inequality that existed before the pandemic.

- In [April 2020](#), the pandemic caused nearly 16 million people to lose their jobs.
- Today, our economy is rebounding and continuing to add jobs, but many communities still face high levels of unemployment. For example, in December 2021, the [jobless rate](#) for Blacks was 7.1%, Hispanics 4.9%, and Asians 3.8%, compared to the jobless rate of 3.2% for Whites. Alaska Natives and American Indians have also experienced high rates of [unemployment](#), including during the pandemic.<sup>3</sup>
- The job recovery for women, who typically shoulder caregiving responsibilities, has been slower compared to the rate of job recovery for men. For example, in December 2021, the [jobless rate](#) for Black women was 6.2%, Hispanic women 4.9% and White women 3.1% as compared to 3.0% for White men.
- In 2020, the [unemployment rate](#) for people with disabilities rose to 12.6%, increasing more than 5% from the year before.
- A larger share of LGBT adults compared to non-LGBT adults report that they or someone in their household has experienced COVID-era job loss (56% v. 44%), according to a recent study.<sup>4</sup>
- In October 2021, the percentage of long-term unemployed jobseekers ages 55 and older was 41.2% (compared to 32.2% for ages 16 to 54).<sup>5</sup>

In addition, recent data indicate that many employers are not including disability and age<sup>6</sup> as part of their diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts.

### **How will this initiative expand opportunity?**

HIRE will work to inform workplace DEIA initiatives by developing a better understanding among employers of the needs and challenges faced by various underrepresented communities. Especially now, as employers confront changing labor market dynamics, many are searching for strategies to recruit and hire from new and diverse talent sources. We are committed to helping ensure that as our nation recovers from the pandemic, we build an inclusive economy that works for everyone.

### **What can we expect to see from HIRE?**

HIRE will engage a broad array of stakeholders in pursuit of a common goal – to expand access to good jobs for workers from underrepresented communities and help address key hiring and recruiting challenges.

Many employers and worker organizations are seeking actionable strategies to ensure DEIA programs promote meaningful progress while ensuring compliance with equal opportunity laws. EEOC and OFCCP will convene a series of roundtables and meetings, as well as public forums to identify actionable strategies to promote organizational policies and practices that advance equity. EEOC and OFCCP will develop resources such as guidance documents or promising practice resources. These resources will promote the adoption of evidence-based research and innovative initiatives that help embed equity in recruitment and hiring practices.

## How can I get involved?

We look forward to engaging a broad array of employers, federal contractors, worker and civil rights organizations, social scientists, and others working to develop innovative recruiting and hiring initiatives. Please share resources, research and ideas at [HIRE-initiative@eeoc.gov](mailto:HIRE-initiative@eeoc.gov) and [HIRE-initiative@dol.gov](mailto:HIRE-initiative@dol.gov).

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<sup>1</sup> Research Article, *Meta-Analysis of Field Experiments Shows No Change in Racial Discrimination in Hiring Over Time*, PROC. OF THE NAT'L ACAD. OF SCI. OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA (Oct. 10, 2017), <https://www.pnas.org/content/114/41/10870>.

<sup>2</sup> Miranda Bogen & Aaron Reike, *Help Wanted: An Examination of Hiring Algorithms, Equity, and Bias*, UPTURN, n. 197 (Dec. 2018), <https://www.upturn.org/static/reports/2018/hiring-algorithms/files/Upturn%20--%20Help%20Wanted%20-%20An%20Exploration%20of%20Hiring%20Algorithms,%20Equity%20and%20Bias.pdf>.

<sup>3</sup> D.L. Feir & Charles Golding, *Native Employment During COVID-19: Hit Hard in April but Starting to Rebound?*, FED. RES. BANK OF MINNEAPOLIS (Aug. 5, 2020), <https://www.minneapolisfed.org/article/2020/native-employment-during-covid-19-hit-hard-in-april-but-starting-to-rebound>.

<sup>4</sup> Lindsey Dawson, Ashley Kirzinger & Jennifer Kates, *The Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on LGBT People*, KAISER FAM. FOUND. (Mar. 11, 2021), <https://www.kff.org/coronavirus-covid-19/poll-finding/the-impact-of-the-covid-19-pandemic-on-lgbt-people/>.

<sup>5</sup> Employment Data Digest, AARP PUB. POL'Y INST. (Nov. 2021), <https://www.aarp.org/content/dam/aarp/ppi/2021/12/november-employment-data-digest.pdf>.

<sup>6</sup> “Although over 90% of employers claimed to prioritize disability, only 4% included workers with disability in [DEIA] initiatives.” Caroline Casey, *Do Your D&I Efforts Include People With Disabilities?*, HARV. BUS. REV. (Mar. 19, 2020), [https://www.aarp.org/work/employers/info-2021/age-diversity-inclusion-guide.html](https://hbr.org/2020/03/do-your-di-efforts-include-people-with-disabilities#:~:text=Although%2090%25%20of%20companies%20claim,the%20Return%20On%20Disability%20Group.&text=As%20workers%2C%20they%20can%20ease,better%20decision%2Dmaking%20and%20innovation; More than half of the 6,000 global employers surveyed by AARP in 2020 revealed that they do not include age in diversity and inclusion policies.” Heather Tinsley-Fix, <i>6 Ways to Add Age in Your Diversity and Inclusion Guide</i>, AARP (Mar. 15, 2021), <a href=).