



Board Report

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**EXECUTIVE MANAGEMENT
NOVEMBER 18, 2021**

SUBJECT: NEW FOSTERING AN INCLUSIVE CULTURE POLICY

ACTION: RECEIVE AND FILE

RECOMMENDATION

RECEIVE AND FILE status report on the new Fostering an Inclusive Culture Policy (Attachment A).

ISSUE

Metro seeks to recognize, observe, and celebrate holidays, diversity heritage months, cultural days, awareness days, and religious observances that reflect the diversity of its employees and customers and help foster an environment of inclusion and belonging. The CEO has developed a new administrative policy - Fostering an Inclusive Culture -to guide Metro staff in commemorating cultural heritage months and scheduling major events and public meetings around religious and cultural holidays.

BACKGROUND

Metro is committed to fostering an environment that values diversity, equity, and inclusion, and reflects the community it serves. Diversity is all the ways in which people differ and encompasses all the different characteristics that make one individual or group different from another. It recognizes everyone and every group as part of the diversity that should be valued. This includes race, ethnicity, gender, age, national origin, religion, ability, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, education, marital status, language, veteran status, and physical appearance. It also recognizes the varying ideas, perspectives and values regarding them.

Metro has policies that establish guidelines for paid holidays and religious accommodations. However, there are holidays, cultural days, cultural heritage months, awareness days, and religious observances that are significant to our diverse employees and customers, and for which Metro seeks to observe and celebrate in other ways. To ensure this is applied in a consistent, equitable, and inclusive manner, the CEO has directed developed the Fostering an Inclusive Culture Policy ("Policy").

Metro staff, with consideration to the agency's workforce and customer demographics, evaluated culturally significant, religious and other awareness dates and months to determine how Metro can

be more inclusive in the scheduling of major events and public meetings and foster a sense of belonging. Metro historically has also partnered with community organizations and other partners on recognizing cultural heritage months and other major events on Metro's limited edition commemorative TAP cards.

Holidays and heritage months were considered based on a combination of the following*:

- Federal or state holidays already observed at Metro
- Federal or state holidays that are in the process of being observed at Metro
- Demographics of the customers Metro serves
- Demographics of Metro's workforce
- Feedback received from employees at CEO listening sessions

As noted in the policy, requests for consideration of additional cultural days or religious observances may be submitted to the Director of Civil Rights Programs, Diversity & Inclusion for review.

DISCUSSION

The Fostering an Inclusive Culture Policy provides Metro staff with processes and guidelines for acknowledging holidays, diversity heritage months, cultural days, awareness days, and religious observances in internal and external communications efforts. The Policy also established a Diversity & Inclusion Meeting Exemption Calendar ("Attachment B") to guide staff in scheduling considerations, commemorative TAP card production, and related communications. This information will be available online internally so that all Metro staff can access the information about the policy and calendar and will be updated periodically by the Office of Civil Rights, Racial Equity, and Inclusion - Diversity and Inclusion Unit. The calendar attached is a simplified and printable version.

Scheduling Major Events and Public Meetings

Beyond Metro's observed holidays, there are significant holidays, cultural days, and religious observances that are celebrated by our staff and the communities we serve. Under this Policy, Metro staff will be advised to avoid scheduling major events and/or public meetings during those holidays, cultural days, and religious observances, as identified in the Diversity & Inclusion Meeting Exemption Calendar. The calendar will be updated and easily accessible for Metro staff to use during planning efforts. It will also be considered when determining the number of days/deadlines for public comment periods. Metro staff will review and consider these recognized observances in their planning processes and will make scheduling adjustments as needed.

Commemorative TAP Card Production

Metro designs and distributes commemorative TAP cards to recognize diversity heritage months and cultural days based on Metro's TAP card guidelines. This Policy provides guidance for the annual determination of which diversity heritage months and cultural days to commemorate with TAP cards. It also provides guidelines to ensure the designs are inclusive and in line with the Metro's diversity, equity, and inclusion goals.

Diversity Heritage Months, Cultural Days, and Religious Observance Communications

Lastly, the Policy formalizes and expands Metro's practice of preparing communications highlighting diversity heritage months, awareness days and cultural days in internal and external communications, as appropriate. The goal of these communications is to recognize, celebrate, and educate the Metro community to foster a sense of belonging. Metro staff will seek input from the represented groups in developing relevant communications.

The implementation of this policy will help to make Metro more consistent in its practice as an inclusive workplace and service provider. This policy is just one of a number of initiatives aimed at ensuring Metro's decision-making is culturally informed, inclusive and reflects the diverse needs of the communities in Los Angeles county.

EQUITY PLATFORM

The Fostering an Inclusive Culture Policy helps Metro recognize the rich diversity of the broader Metro community and its various culturally significant practices and observances. It encourages staff to consider these significant practices and observances to reduce barriers to participation in our internal and public processes. It also creates clearer avenues for Metro to recognize, celebrate, and educate our workforce and community, supporting the cultural change needed to help advance equitable outcomes.

IMPLEMENTATION OF STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS

This recommendation supports strategic plan goals 3.3 and 5.7 by signaling that Metro recognizes and embraces diversity of the Los Angeles Community and aims to support a diverse, inspired, and high performing workforce.

NEXT STEPS

The policy will be disseminated agency-wide. The Diversity & Inclusion Unit will maintain and update the Diversity & Inclusion Meeting Exemption Calendar and heritage months, which is accessible via the link included in the policy. A manual form of the meeting exemption calendar will be disseminated to divisions for posting. The TAP department will develop a budget and prepare designs for the established heritage months.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A - Fostering an Inclusive Policy
Attachment B - Diversity & Inclusion Meeting Exemption Calendar
Attachment C - TAP Card Commemorative Heritage Months

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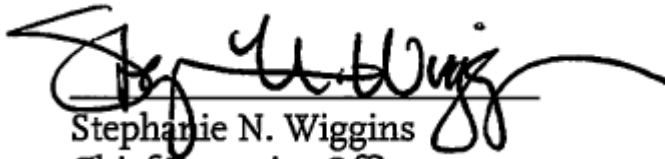
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