



# BRIEFLY

The Seventh Judicial District Newsletter  
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## SPECIAL EDITION

*Why Diversity?*

ANSWERS TO YOUR QUESTIONS

### **Why is workforce diversity so important in the courts?**

Dr. Steven Covey author of “7 Habits of Highly Effective People” put it best “Strength lies in difference, not similarities”. The Courts focus is on customer service, efficiency, policy and procedures, and justice (the law). In order to create best practices for the courts, input is needed from a variety of sources and stakeholders. Stakeholders may include law clerks, judges, clerks, other courts, information technology, law enforcement agencies, litigants, attorneys, the district attorney and so on. Without input from all stakeholders the odds of someone’s needs not being met increases exponentially. For example, if the goal is to improve relations with the community, would it not be critical to the courts success to include community leaders, members of the community and those that come in contact and serve the community, in the discussion. This in my opinion would constitute a diverse group of stakeholders each providing a unique perspective to the task at hand. I believe that it is safe to assume that if those being served are a diverse group then the group providing the service or creating the policy should be diverse as well. In fact, there have been several studies that suggest that having a diverse workforce increases success and innovation.

### **Don’t we already do enough?**

The short answer is no. There is a misconception that diversity is solely about race when in fact it is more about the need for representation for the underrepresented. An under-represented group can consist of people of color, the LGBT community, the disabled, the hearing impaired, senior citizens, etc. Many improvements have been made throughout the last few years, but I can confidently say that much more needs to be done.

In both the public and private sector, you may be asked a diversity related question during an interview. The questions could be some variation of the following:

*How do you celebrate diversity in the workplace? How do you promote diversity at work?*

*Why is diversity in the workplace important?*

First of all, do not panic! The questions are not asked to determine whether or not you are a racist. They are a tool to gauge the level of customer service you are providing to underrepresented groups and to determine your understanding of diversity and its importance in the workplace. Secondly, as with all questions listen closely and assure that you are answering the question being posed. As far as answering the questions, be honest and be genuine. An example answer to the first question might be, "I participate in diversity events held in the community or at work when possible" or, "I love to learn about new cultures and share what I have learned." An acceptable answer for the second question might be "I have attended training related to diversity in the workforce" and "I encouraged co-workers to participate as well." The third question might be answered this way: "To assure that everyone is being treated fairly and so that everyone who visits our business or place of employment receives the best possible customer service."

Remember that knowledge is power and committing yourself to attending diversity events, diversity training, and reading about diversity is the best way to become proficient on the topic.

**Why should I get involved?** I like to say that the employees are the companies greatest asset and should be given the tools necessary to do the best job possible. That being said, employees have a responsibility to offer the best customer service possible and should engage in activities that strengthen their abilities.

**How can I get involved?** Participate in events. Join a diversity committee. Read. Make suggestions!

Finally, Ekatrina Walter, a contributor for Forbes Magazine, tells us that "Diversity is critical for an organization's ability to innovate and adapt in a fast-changing environment. Some of the most successful entrepreneurs and most admired leaders will tell you the same thing. Diversity is essential to growth and prosperity of any company; diversity of perspectives, experiences, cultures, genders, and age." Please take the time to review Forbes' Global Diversity and Inclusion report [www.forbes.com/forbesinsights/innovation\\_diversity/index.html](http://www.forbes.com/forbesinsights/innovation_diversity/index.html). As always, the 7<sup>th</sup> Judicial District's Workforce Diversity Committee encourages you to get involved and at minimum attend the events and training being held throughout the year. May is **Asian Pacific American Heritage Month**. Please visit <http://asianpacificheritage.gov/about/> to learn more.

[Look for upcoming diversity events taking place in the 7th Judicial District](#)