STAFF UP CONGRESS

National Initiative for a Representative Congressional Workforce

Inclusion Means Success: Why every Congressional office should cultivate staff diversity

> *"If I pick my team from a diverse group of gender, ethnicity, nationality and age, I guarantee I will win every time."*
>
> **- JPMorgan Chase Chairman and CEO Jamie Dimon**

Experts in human resources have long known that the most profitable businesses hire inclusively. Research now shows that diversity in the workforce also fosters legislative success.

To have a meaningful influence, policymakers need staff members who are creative, experienced, and work well together and with constituents. Working alongside colleagues whose personal backgrounds and professional perspectives are diverse inspires staff members to perform at a high level.

Staff Matter

Congressional staff provide indispensable assistance and irreplaceable institutional knowledge that legislators need to meet their policymaking, oversight, and constituent service responsibilities. As the Congressional Management Foundation notes, "talented and experienced employees are the most valuable assets in any knowledge-based workplace, and Congress is one of the most important, complex, and information-rich knowledge-based workplaces in the world."

Evidence of the overwhelming influence staff have on Members' accomplishments includes:

- Research that shows that Members who have shared senior staff (i.e., a senior staffer from one office moves to another office) are particularly likely to resemble each other in effectiveness and ideological alignment.[1]

- Studies that conclude that legislative staff prioritize constituent issues with which they personally identify, and can effectively impress upon Members the value of advancing policy positions that more broadly reflect their districts' concerns.[2]

- Analysis that indicates that offices that retain experienced, skilled staff are the most effective, and excel at providing constituent services. For example, the five House offices that were finalists for the Congressional Management Foundation's 2018 Constituent Services award had a lower average 2017 staff turnover rate than the House as a whole, by about seven percentage points.[3]

Staff Diversity Appears to Provide Valuable Benefits to Businesses and Institutions

Institutions that build teams with diverse personal characteristics thrive and succeed. Research has found that inclusive staffing is associated with many positive benefits, including:

- **CREATIVITY, INNOVATION, AND PROBLEM-SOLVING CAPACITY:** Work teams that include people with different backgrounds are best at recognizing a broad range of needs and opportunities, fostering new ways of thinking about emerging issues, and generating creative solutions to problems and obstacles.[4]

- **OBJECTIVITY:** According to the Harvard Business Review, "working with people who are different from you may challenge your brain to overcome its stale ways of thinking and sharpen its performance." Inclusive teams are better at identifying key facts, and process those facts more carefully because they must consider a variety of points of view.[5]

- **PRODUCTIVITY:** Organizations led by culturally diverse managers excel at leveraging employees' ability and facilitating cooperative relationships between subordinates.[6]

- **ATTRACTIVENESS TO POTENTIAL EMPLOYEES:** Institutions that earn reputations for attracting and retaining diverse workforces are the most successful at recruiting top talent.

- **POSITIVE WORKING ENVIRONMENTS:** Just as employee diversity enhances an employer's reputation, inclusiveness improves employees' morale. The inverse is also true: the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission has identified staff homogeneity as a significant risk factor associated with incidents of harassment in the workplace.[7]

- **WELL-CONNECTEDNESS:** Racial, ethnic, and other forms of diversity extend an organization's professional and social networks, and thereby improve its access to resources and stakeholders.[8]

Hiring Inclusively Enhances Members' Policymaking Success

New research provides conclusive proof that inclusive teams make Members more effective policymakers. For example, a 2018 study of Congressional committees' work determined that the more racially diverse the members of a committee were, the less likely it was that that committee's reports and other written products would include minority or dissenting views. According to this study's author, diverse perspectives help build legislative consensus, and therefore "efforts underway to further increase diversity in Congress are important in potentially contributing to a better functioning legislature."[9]

For more information about the value of inclusive Congressional hiring practices, please contact **Noel Perez** at **nperez@naleo.org** or **202-546-2536.**

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