



## STRATEGIES to build economic strength through inclusion

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### Introduction

**A**s a member of the Commission on Economic Inclusion, your organization has committed to strengthening Northeast Ohio's economy by systematically reducing barriers to economic inclusion.

A program of the Greater Cleveland Partnership (GCP), the Commission has committed to assisting its members in this organizational enhancement and capability-building effort by:

- **Facilitating** the establishment of benchmarks for improvement;
- **Assessing** the status of diversity and inclusion efforts
- **Measuring** and **reporting** progress
- **Helping** Commission members identify "best practices"
- **Providing** resource information to expedite progress

Chief Executive Officers are the catalyst for promoting economic inclusion at all levels within an organization and with suppliers. CEOs are uniquely positioned to identify and promote the core values of an organization. These values are developed with a clear understanding of customer needs, a commitment to providing high-quality products and services and the organization's commitment to finding, hiring and

leveraging the strengths of its employees to meet the needs of diverse customers and clients.

**Actionable strategies for promoting economic inclusion through workplace diversity begin with the CEO's public commitment to diversity and are furthered by demonstrating progress toward achieving specific goals.**

CEOs who take a leadership role to promote economic inclusion can:

- **Serve** as visionaries who champion diversity through corporate strategies
- **Lead** effort to determine and set short- and long-term organizational diversity goals
- **Oversee** the development of diversity policies and initiatives and ensure that the organization has a diversity statement/policy and metrics to measure changes in each of the four key focus areas
- **Ensure** that senior managers and board members are committed to diversity
- **Chair** and **support** diversity councils
- **Review** diversity reports and studies
- **Commit** to using vendors who are diverse and who support diversity
- **Ensure** that diversity is promoted in advertising and marketing strategies and campaigns

- **Enhance** national and regional diversity efforts through visibility at diversity and inclusion-related events and through speeches and other forms of communication
- **Incorporate** status reports on diversity and inclusion efforts into messages to various constituent groups (employees, other corporate executives, suppliers, shareholders, etc.)
- **Increase** philanthropic efforts that support diversity
- **Appoint** and **support** Chief Diversity Officers

All Commission members are moving through a strategic process of developing and/or implementing diversity and inclusion strategies. The Commission is able to report on this process through the *2005 Employers Survey on Diversity* as a result of your organization's participation and willingness to share data.

These strategies serve as a companion to your organization's progress report and to the survey analysis, which can be found behind the last tab in your actionable strategies binder. Additional information to help your company/organization further your goals will be provided periodically. Future supplements will include research findings, suggestions from Commission CEOs/senior staff and "best practice" models.

These strategies also provide suggestions that can be used by your senior administrators and others involved in board recruitment, staff hiring and promotions and supplier diversity to accelerate progress toward achieving your goals.

The following pages provide information and suggestions for four key improvement areas: (1) board diversity; (2) senior staff diversity; (3) workforce diversity; and (4) supplier diversity

Increasing *board diversity* is an important goal because diverse boards bring new perspectives into the way organizations are governed and managed. Board diversity also results in a better understanding of customers and responsiveness to their needs for products and services.

**“Expanding the diversity of our board and workforce increases our depth of talent, reflects the growing diversity of the clients and communities we serve, and helps us provide them with the right financial solutions.”**

**Henry L. Meyer III**  
Chairman and CEO, KeyCorp

*Senior staff diversity* provides greater depth of expertise and leadership and ensures that the mission and focus of the organization reflects community and national demographics. It also ensures a diverse candidate pool for future leaders of the organization.

A *diverse workforce* brings to an organization a variety of skills, talents, views, approaches and actions that result in better planning, problem solving, decision making and customer responsiveness. When companies and organizations recruit and retain an inclusive workforce—one that reflects its community and customer base—diversity becomes an organizational strength.

Increasing *supplier diversity* offers a number of business advantages, including access to product and service innovation, increased competition in the supply chain, stronger community relationships and greater insight into customer perspectives.