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HUMAN RESOURCES & PAYROLL

Companies Say DE&I Is Essential, But Few Dedicate Resources to It

New study from the Society for Human Resource Management and Boston College examines workplace equity.

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Nearly two-thirds of organizations (65%) say diversity, equity, and inclusion (DE&I) is important, yet 63% have allocated little to no resources to DE&I, according to the preliminary findings of a recent survey from the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) and Boston College.

“In today’s evolving world of work, fair policies and practices together with strong and deliberate DE&I strategies are integral to breaking the barriers of bias and inequity that can be present in the workplace,” SHRM Chief Knowledge Officer Alex Alonso, SHRM-SCP, said in a [written statement](#). “We must continue to address the root causes of bias, whether it be gender, age, racial, sexual orientation or disability, while building greater equity to lead workplaces into a better tomorrow.”

The *National Study of Workplace Equity* report, funded by the Center for Social Innovation at the Boston College School of Social Work, the SHRM, and WorkRise—a research-to-action network on jobs, workers and mobility hosted by the Urban Institute—provided a snapshot of the state of workplace equity in the United States. The full report will be released in the coming months.

The report found that 20% of HR professionals say their organization’s overall policies and practices are not at all fair or are only somewhat fair. What’s more, between 25% and 28% of organizations say their employees have experienced certain types of bias within the past two years:

- About 27% of organizations’ employees have experienced racial bias within the past two years.
- A quarter of organizations (25%) say their employees have experienced bias against older workers within the past two years.
- It was also found that over a quarter of U.S. organizations (28%) say their employees have experienced gender bias within the past two years.

The *National Study of Workplace Equity* focused on identifying the root causes of inequality in the workplace by investigating how inequities can be embedded within employment systems. The study assessed the equity of 10 different employment systems:

- Job structures;
- Recruitment and hiring;
- Compensation and benefits;
- Orientation and onboarding;
- Supervision and mentoring;

- Training and career development;
- Performance assessment and feedback;
- Employee resources and supports;
- Promotions; and
- Separations.

The researchers developed an index to determine which systems were more equitable and which were less equitable at the time of the study.

The employment systems with the highest mean equity scores were recruitment and hiring; compensation and benefits; and orientation and onboarding. The systems with the lowest mean equity scores were employee resources and supports; job structures; and supervision and mentoring.

The study also identified seven pathways that employers might pursue to strengthen equity in each of the employment systems. These pathways include:

- Policies;
- Practices;
- Planning and evaluation;
- Roles and accountabilities;
- Culture;
- Climate; and
- Communication.

The results reveal that across employment systems, roles and accountabilities is a pathway where equity could be stronger. The results suggest that organizations are not consistently holding leaders accountable for equity in different employment systems. According to survey respondents, the share of organizations with limited or no accountability from leaders on ensuring equity varies considerably across employment systems.

Here is a detailed breakdown of the results:

- Job structures (62%)
- Employee resources and supports (57%)
- Training and career development (55%)
- Supervision and mentoring (51%)
- Promotions (49%)
- Recruitment and hiring (43%)

- Separations (40%)
- Performance assessment and feedback (39%)
- Orientation and onboarding (39%)
- Compensation and benefits (37%)

A sample of 1,062 U.S. organizations were surveyed using the SHRM Voice of Work panel. The survey was fielded from Aug. 19, 2022, to Aug. 31, 2022. Data were weighted to reflect the population of U.S. organizations. The margin of error is approximately + 3.76 percentage points at the 95% confidence level.

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