

Project Diversity Frequently Asked Questions

Q. What is Project Diversity and who are the intended participants?

A. Started in 1989, Project Diversity is an 8-month training program for minority (people of color) professionals designed to facilitate their placement onto volunteer boards and committees in hopes of giving underrepresented populations a much needed voice in community leadership. To date, the program has completed 21 Cycles and boasts an impressive list of about 400 alumni who are currently or have previously served in leadership positions throughout Central Ohio. The profile of Project Diversity participants varies greatly but as a benchmark the program is normally completed by novice to mid-level professionals who have demonstrated leadership previously and who possess some skills that can be transferred to a not-for-profit board setting.

Q. Why Project Diversity?

A. As an organization focused on community impact, the United Way of Central Ohio recognizes the need to have a broad spectrum of individuals represented in decision making capacities within our community. As the number of minorities served by not-for-profit boards continues to increase, the need for representation from these groups in leadership and governance roles has become a factor in ensuring that decision making is inclusive and represents diverse perspectives.

In response to the changing dynamics of our community, the United Way of Central Ohio created the Cultural Competency Standards to help organizations serve an increasingly diverse Central Ohio community and work more effectively in cross cultural situations. Through Project Diversity individuals will have an opportunity to assist the United Way of Central Ohio and its' affiliate agencies in adhering to cultural competency standards within our community.

Q. Who sponsors Project Diversity?

A. The program is an initiative of the United Way of Central Ohio and is supported by a long time sponsor, Grange Insurance. The Diversity and Inclusion Committee, a board level committee of the United Way of Central Ohio currently oversees the program. The Committee consists of volunteers from corporations, donors, issue experts, organizations and community representatives.

Q. How much does Project Diversity cost?

A. The cost of participation is \$500 per participant and is paid by the participant's employer on some occasions. A limited number of scholarships are available if the employer cannot make the investment.

Q. How are participants selected?

A. Due to the success of Project Diversity, the application process is very competitive. Participants are selected by a volunteer committee consisting of representatives from non-profit agencies, sponsors, program alumni, the Diversity and Inclusion Committee at the United Way of Central Ohio and members of the community.

Q. How soon will participants be chosen and classes begin?

A. Selection and notification is expected to occur late- February. The cycle will kick-off with an orientation for participants and employer representatives in mid-March.

Q. How much time should I plan to commit to Project Diversity?

A. Project Diversity is a big investment in time and energy. On average sessions are held once or twice per month. Most sessions are at the end of the day to make it convenient for participants - 2:30pm to 4:30pm. Special events are held at other times. Details regarding exact dates of workshops and special events will be provided at the orientation in mid-March.

Q. Does Project Diversity guarantee me a board or leadership committee assignment once I graduate?

A. No, although many of the agencies that solicit Project Diversity graduates are funded by the United Way of Central Ohio, there is no automatic placement for graduates. Participants are given the skills to be successful at navigating the search and interview process for selecting boards or committees on which to serve. Several networking opportunities are provided to connect participants to potential opportunities.