

SOMERSET COUNTY TASK FORCE on DIVERSITY

Final Recommendations

A. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR STRUCTURAL REFORMS

1. **Establish a policy recognizing the value of diversity in government, and commit to make good faith efforts to achieve diversity.**
2. **Create an Independent EEO Oversight Committee** – composed of a cross section of the community, to oversee implementation of diversity efforts, using the Task Force Vision Statement as a guiding document.

Duties of the Committee to Include:

- a. Monitor progress to ensure that progress continues and goals are met;
 - b. Work with EEO Officer on recruitment and hiring efforts;
 - c. Work with County officials on improvements to the hiring process, through review of records application and interview records, and review of all appointments made;
 - d. Monitor establishment and implementation of conflict of interest/ethics policy, specifically including review for nepotism in hiring decisions; and
 - e. Give recognition to successful efforts to further diversity.
3. **Hire or have access to an Equal Employment Opportunities (EEO) Officer** to oversee County diversity and fair practices efforts. Provide specialized EEO training to this officer.

4. **Institute a Mandatory Diversity Training Program for all Employees, including County Officials,** and invite other interested members of the community to attend the diversity training as well;
5. **Explore the possibilities for Electoral Reform** to make the County election system fairer, more balanced and inclusive. First step: Seek advice from the Maryland Attorney General about the possibility of excluding the non-voting Eastern Correctional Institution prison population from the redistricting process during the next round of districting following the 2010 Census.

B. RECOMMENDATIONS ON HIRING PRACTICES

1. **Involve EEO Oversight Committee and EEO Officer in Hiring Process;**
2. **Create a transparent and uniform hiring process:**
 - ◆ Document all applications received;
 - ◆ Standardize job descriptions and qualifications, as appropriate to the position;
 - ◆ Evaluate all applications against written job requirements;
 - ◆ If a candidate is hired who does not meet the job qualifications, document the reason;
 - ◆ Document reasoning for rejection of applicants;
3. **Create a bank of qualified applicants,** to be retained on file for six months to one year, so that if new openings occur, these applicants could be invited to reapply;
4. **Establish an aggressive recruitment process to draw a diverse applicant pool:**

- ◆ Involve churches and other community groups in “getting the word out” about job openings and positions in County government;
- ◆ Educate families to encourage their children to consider job opportunities in Somerset County when they finish school;
- ◆ Advertise job openings internally and externally simultaneously: ALL position openings should be publicly announced and advertised;
- ◆ Actively recruit African Americans and other racial minorities;
- ◆ Partner with local colleges and Universities to:
 - Recruit there;
 - Set up internship programs for students;
 - Create incentives for students to work for the County;
 - Market Somerset jobs to students by highlighting the advantages of living and working in Somerset County;
- ◆ Advertise through diverse media, including internet advertising;
- ◆ Advertise for a minimum of two weeks for every position, and readvertise if initial pool of applicants lacks diversity;
- ◆ Require disclosure of familial relationships to County employees and officials;

5. Maintain an open and fair interview process

- ◆ Employ diverse interview panels wherever possible, making efforts to include minority members before resorting to use of all white interview panels;
- ◆ Standardize and record questions asked of interviewees, making these materials available to oversight committee for subsequent review.