



Alaska Organized Militia (AKOM)

Diversity & Inclusion Strategic Plan

2022-2024

3 January 2022

Prepared by the Alaska Joint Diversity Executive Council (JDEC)

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3 January 2022

MEMORANDUM FOR ALASKA ORGANIZED MILITIA (AKOM)

SUBJECT: Diversity & Inclusion Leadership Strategy

1. Diversity is a leadership strategy that enables our team to reach and maintain the highest standards. All leaders in our organization are expected to leverage the unique qualities of all personnel, both military and civilian, to achieve and maintain an inclusive culture that provides every member a path toward success and an opportunity to reach their full potential. Diversity & inclusion are fundamental to organizational readiness by enhancing our operational capability and informing decisions that strengthen our agility and mission effectiveness.
2. The AKOM exemplifies a unique blend of civilian and military skillsets that enables us to successfully engage in a wide-range of activities in response to the needs of the state and nation. The increasing complexity of the operational environment demands skills and attributes of a tested and integrated team of ethically driven and highly motivated professionals. Sustained relevance as the premier partner for operations and emergency response in our community requires us to fully leverage our center of gravity, our people, as a ready force reflective and aligned to the cultural values consistent with our core values and diversity of the Alaskan communities we serve.
3. The creation of the joint diversity executive council (JDEC) strategic plan institutionalizes the framework for sustaining a diverse and inclusive workforce with an organizational climate that harnesses an individual's holistic characteristics to advance the mission of the AKOM. Cultivating an inclusive culture requires us first to establish a common ground within which to communicate. Next, we must acknowledge, seek to understand, and value each other's differences. To effectively lead a diverse workforce, we must engage our teams with respect and acceptance, as well as the ability and willingness to capitalize on the attributes of each individual of varying cultures.
4. Finally, we should consider each other's experiences and unique background as a resource. Diversity of experience enriches our interactions, agility of thought, and the variety of perspectives or approaches that inspire innovation and complex problem-solving to amplify our operational capability. Integration of diversity & inclusion strategy within AKOM requires daily commitment across all ranks. Indicators of success is revealed in higher productivity, improved performance, creativity, lower absenteeism, higher retention and a sense of value, pride, and belonging. The primary ingredients of the socially cohesive culture we aspire requires mutual respect, communication, empathy, equal opportunity, and trust.
5. The point of contact for this policy is the Alaska JDEC. You may also contact the State Equal Employment Manager/State Diversity Initiatives Coordinator at (907) 428-6466, room E201.

Handwritten signature of Christopher F. Wilson in black ink.

CHRISTOPHER F. WILSON, CMSgt, AKNG
Command Senior Enlisted Leader

Handwritten signature of Torrence W. Saxe in black ink.

TORRENCE W. SAXE, Maj Gen, AKNG
The Adjutant General

OVERVIEW

The Alaska Organized Militia (AKOM) Diversity & Inclusion Strategic Plan outlines the implementation of Executive Order 13583 on the establishment of a coordinated government-wide initiative to attain a diverse, qualified workforce. It incorporates alignment of the National Guard Bureau Diversity Strategic Plan which includes a balanced strategy in pursuit of our global, theater, and state missions.

Informing decision makers how diversity & inclusion becomes a more vital element in our nation's security, the perspective of "operationalizing" diversity institutionalizes the process to attract, recruit, develop, and retain a quality workforce. In addition to the alignment of Executive Order 13583, this strategic plan includes four overarching goals that define an operational path for success:

- Enhance diversity & inclusion in the AKOM.
- Ensure leaders at all levels champion diversity program priorities and understand specifically what is required to achieve success
- Develop and increase diversity partnerships, both internal and external to AKOM.
- Develop, mentor, and retain top talent reflective of the communities our organization serves.

This plan includes alignment with the wider Department of Defense (DoD) and the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) goals and objectives which integrate multiple transformational efforts. It requires an honest assessment of the resources, support, commitment, and competencies senior leaders are willing to invest to provide a total force that is optimized and ready to defend the nation, both now and in the future, to meet the complex challenges of the dynamic environment of the 21st Century world.

The AKOM Diversity & Inclusion Strategic Plan is a roadmap to help leverage diversity to improve mission accomplishment. Figure 1 illustrates the building blocks needed to achieve this goal. EO/EEO compliance is the foundational building block for the diversity effort. It promotes fairness and focuses on demographics. When compliance is combined with proper diversity management, a culture of inclusion is possible. Once these building blocks are in place, our members feel valued, and their diverse talents can be fully leveraged to improve our organization's ability to accomplish the mission. Leadership involvement is critical at every stage of the effort. None of the building blocks can be achieved unless leaders at all levels commit to the effort. *(Note: Refer to appendix B for a table outlining the differences between Affirmative Action, EO, EEO, and Diversity.)*

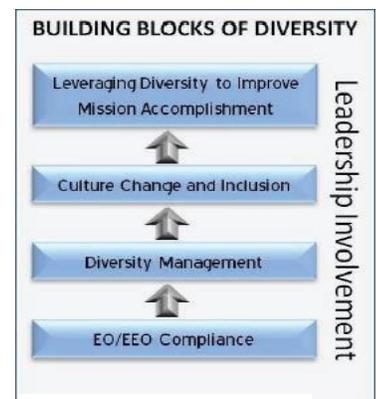


Figure 1: DoD Diversity & Inclusion Strategic Plan, 2017

MISSION, VISION, AND PRINCIPLES

MISSION STATEMENT:

Create and sustain an inclusive organization dedicated to activities and programs that institutionalize and leverage diversity & inclusion practices; attracting, recruiting, developing and retaining a diverse workforce where every individual has the opportunity, guidance, and information to reach their maximum potential and the organization as a whole is representative of the Alaskan communities we serve.

VISION STATEMENT:

To achieve an inclusive organizational culture that values diversity as a leadership strategy that is critical to mission effectiveness.

PRINCIPLES:

The AKOM...

- must be a diverse team, representative of the state it serves and defends.
- needs leaders and a workforce equipped with diverse cultural awareness and competencies to execute global, theater, and state operations.
- embraces a culture that values, measures, and promotes the fairness, dignity, and worth of every member as a measure of enhancing mission effectiveness.
- requires all Soldiers, Airmen, Sailors, and Civilians responsible for applying and adhering to these diversity and inclusion principles and compliance with all EO/EEO policies.

STRATEGIC IMPERATIVE

The strategic imperative of diversity capitalizes on the characteristics and attributes of individuals and varying cultures to enhance operational capability and inform decisions based on a broader base of knowledge and experiences – to strengthen our agility and effectiveness (see Figure 2). Diversity opens the door to innovative ideas and complex problem-solving and provides us with a competitive edge in our operational capability.

DIVERSITY TRAINING AND EDUCATION AREAS OF POSITIVE IMPACT

CHARACTER – COMPETENCE – COMMITMENT

Diversity Training and Education Areas of Positive Impact

CHARACTER – COMPETENCE - COMMITMENT

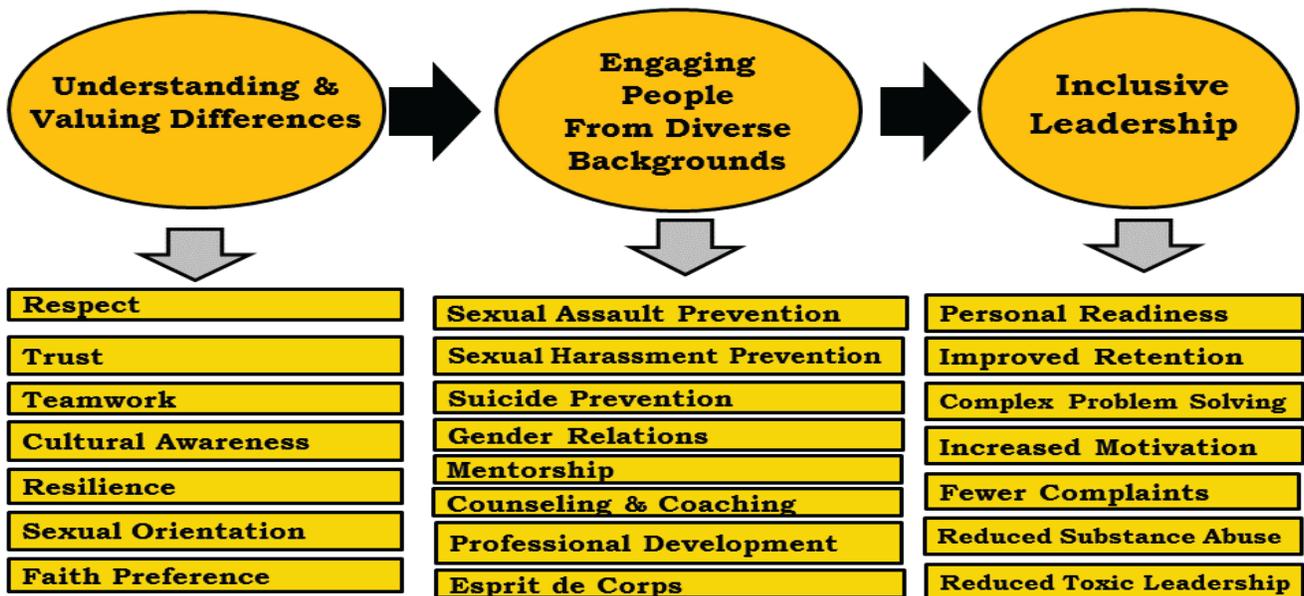


Figure 2: Dr. Andre Sayles, Director, Diversity Strategy & Implementation, ASA (M&RA), SAMR-DL

The AKOM leadership strategy ensures leaders are developed to effectively manage and lead diverse teams. Our training initiatives are vital to efforts that enhance an inclusive environment. Managing human capital to maximize potential by embracing and promoting each other's holistic characteristics ensures our team is proactive, innovative, and prepared. Continued success in the dynamic environment we live and serve requires more than leading edge technology and equipment. Our strength is sourced in our human interactions, agility of thought, and the variety of perspectives and approaches amplified by a culture of inclusivity.

DEFINING DIVERSITY & INCLUSION

DIVERSITY:

Composite of individual attributes, experiences, and abilities consistent with organizational core values. Diversity maximizes potential by embracing and promoting each other's holistic characteristics. The AKOM must attract people from all segments of our communities and tap into the limitless talent of our state's diverse population to reach its fullest potential.

INCLUSION:

Culture that fosters and builds organizational strength through a positive work environment that promotes and respects the differences and similarities, both visible and invisible, which encourages each member to feel valued for their unique qualities and experience a sense of belonging. This is manifested when a work environment is achieved where all individuals have equal access to opportunities, resources, and information to allow them to fully contribute individual strengths to the collective organization, and where there are no artificial barriers or biases that limit success.

WORKFORCE DIVERSITY:

A collection of individual attributes that together help agencies pursue organizational objectives efficiently and effectively. Figure 3 highlights four major areas of diversity that include demographic, global, cognitive, and structural aspects of an individual. These are not limited to characteristics such as national origin, language, race, color, disability, ethnicity, age, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, socioeconomic status, veteran status, and familial status. The areas highlighted in red are demographic diversity and are fixed. Global diversity also encompasses differences among people concerning geographic origin, differences of thought, and life experiences. Cognitive diversity and inclusion is a culture that leverages flexibility and fairness. Structural and organizational diversity connects each individual to the organization and encourages collaboration, so that all individuals are able to participate and contribute to their fullest potential.



Figure 3: The Four Major Components of Diversity, NGB DI, 2016

DIVERSITY & INCLUSION GOALS AND SUPPORTING OBJECTIVES

GOAL 1: ENHANCE DIVERSITY & INCLUSION IN THE AKOM.

- Recruit and retain a workforce that reflects the Alaskan communities we serve.
- Assess the effectiveness of current branding and recruitment practices to include all demographics/markets and enhance recruiting efforts.
- Establish quantitative and qualitative baselines to inform analyses of demographic trends across Alaska.
- Develop plans and policies to attract and recruit from a broader and more diverse pool of applicants or candidates, measure results, and refine approaches based on data and higher-level priorities.
- Utilize findings from climate surveys to get a better sense of attitudes and practices that are detrimental to the progress of enhancing diversity & inclusion.
- Establish a baseline initiative for annual analysis to identify and address barriers that prevent diversity in accessions, retention and advancement.
- Implement tools that identify individual internal strengths and talents.

GOAL 2: ENSURE LEADERS AT ALL LEVELS CHAMPION DIVERSITY PROGRAM PRIORITIES AND UNDERSTAND WHAT IS REQUIRED TO ACHIEVE SUCCESS.

- Emphasize diversity & inclusion are one of our top priorities.
- Increase participation in the Joint Diversity Executive Council (JDEC), working groups, and committees.
- Understand the metrics needed and the results leaders are expected to achieve.
- Track leader progress toward stated goals.
- Emphasize the value of diversity & inclusion at all levels.
- Integrate diversity & inclusion strategies into unit-level priorities and objectives.
- Articulate diversity & inclusion vision, mission, and goals into achievable objectives throughout the organization.
- Ensure all members understand how diversity & inclusion supports mission effectiveness.

GOAL 3: DEVELOP AND INCREASE DIVERSITY PARTNERSHIPS, BOTH EXTERNAL AND INTERNAL TO THE AKOM.

- Enhance collaborative efforts to conduct regular state-level meetings and participate in regional JDEC meetings to synchronize efforts to enhance an inclusive culture.
- Appoint representatives to participate in regional JDEC meetings to share best practices and proactively confront regional challenges.
- Identify external groups that have a nexus to diversity & inclusion and work to synergize efforts toward progress.
- Increase community outreach efforts (schools, community organizations, etc.) and coordinate strategies with recruiters to capitalize on centers of influence and prospecting initiatives with specific emphasis on under-represented demographics.

- Identify diversity & inclusion concepts, fundamentals, and team building training options that can be used at all levels to educate our personnel throughout the year.
- Encourage sponsorship of cultural events.
- Evaluate and develop internship opportunities that attract interest from under-represented demographics.

GOAL 4: DEVELOP, MENTOR, AND RETAIN DIVERSE TALENT REFLECTIVE OF THE COMMUNITIES THE AKOM SERVES.

- Assess and implement policies to support informal and formal mentorship.
- Offer mentorship at the state, regional and national levels.
- Provide information on potential career advancement opportunities for Soldiers, Airmen, Sailors, and Civilians.
- Collaborate with recruiting and retention specialists to develop strategy plans and program initiatives that emphasize diversity.

STRATEGIES FOR GOAL IMPLEMENTATION

Achieving the goals of the AKOM Diversity & Inclusion Strategic Plan will require a committed, coordinated effort from the entire organization. Implementation will be synchronized with operational readiness to ensure a balanced workforce is in place to meet current and future challenges. Strategic engagements and partnerships will be leveraged in order to maximize a diverse workforce to attract, develop, mentor, and retain top talent. The following Lines of Effort (LOE) are established:

- LOE 1: Alaska Native Relationship Initiatives
- LOE 2: Diversity in Leadership Initiatives
- LOE 3: Diversity & Inclusion Outreach Initiatives

LOE 1: ALASKA NATIVE RELATIONSHIP INITIATIVES

- Identify and engage service members with local area expertise within designated regions of rural Alaska. *(Local area experts include people with access to information that benefit rural operations, including (but not limited to) knowledge of navigation, cultural norms, governance structures, strategic priorities, survival skills, subsistence skills, and history.) (Goals 1/4)*
- Maintain an updated contact list for relevant tribes and tribal organizations. *(Examples include Alaska Federation of Natives, Inuit Circumpolar Council, ANCSA regional corporations, village corporations, and tribal consortiums.) (Goals 1/4)*
- Plan and pursue engagements with rural communities off the road system. *(Goals 1/3/4)*
- Provide assessment and guidance to enhance the effect of AKOM rural operations plan to support state and national interests in the Arctic region. *(Goals 2/3)*

- Publish an electronic database of cultural briefs including local tribal governance structures, directories of contacts, past innovative readiness training (IRT) projects and proposals, locally significant dates, land acknowledgments, and other pertinent information. (**Goals 1/3**)
- Promote Alaska Native wellness workshops. Family Readiness staff will attend an Alaska Native designed and lead wellness workshop at least annually. (*A list of wellness workshops will be developed and maintained with the assistance of the Tribal Liaison.*)(**Goals 1/3**)

LOE 2: DIVERSITY IN LEADERSHIP INITIATIVES

- Analyze state diversity statistics, including trend and gap analysis, and correlate with national analysis to provide situational assessment to JDEC members. (**Goals 1/2/4**)
- Discuss possible reasons for disparity and formulate suggestions to build and sustain diversity in leadership positions. (**Goal 1/4**)
- Review all AKNG strategies, policies, and processes to identify areas of improvement that would encourage an inclusive culture. (**Goal 4**)
- Review industry benchmarked policies and culture for applicability within the AKOM and recommend courses of action on diversity initiatives. (**Goal 3**)
- Review leadership training materials to ensure diversity, equity and inclusion concepts are current and represented. (**Goal 3**)
- Communicate with investigative organizations (IG/EO) to identify trend issues that would prevent a culture of inclusivity and ethical leadership. (**Goal 1**)

LOE 3: DIVERSITY & INCLUSION OUTREACH INITIATIVES

- Coordinate with other National Guard JDEC committees to reveal commonalities and share best practices for preventative programs and conflict resolution. (**Goal 3**)
- Network with other local diversity committees to maintain awareness and share lessons learned. (**Goal 3**)
- Participate in diversity trainings and conferences; bring new practices back to JDEC. (**Goal 3**)
- Provide assessment and prioritization recommendations to recruiting events that emphasize under-represented demographics. (**Goal 1/2/3/4**)
- Provide monthly Lunch ‘n Learn events to all employees to promote awareness of JDEC operations and meetings, and to increase cultural knowledge and reinforce mutual respect for our differences by celebrating the federally recognized observances established by law, bill, or resolution of Congress. Those federal observances are indicated in Figure 4: (**Goal 3**)

OBSERVANCE EVENT	TIMEFRAME	AUTHORIZATION
Martin Luther King Jr. Birthday	Third Monday of January	Public Law 98-144
African American History Month	February	Public Law 99-244
Women’s History Month	March	Public Law 100-9
Holocaust Remembrance	First full week in April	Public Law 96-388
Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month	May	Title 36, U.S. Code, Section 102
Juneteenth	19 June	Public Law 117-17
Women’s Equality Day	26 August	Public Law 93-105
National Hispanic Heritage Month	15 September – 15 October	Title 36, U.S. Code, Section 102
National Disability Awareness Month	October	Title 36, U.S. Code, Section 102
National American Indian & Alaska Native Heritage Month	November	Public Law 103-462

Figure 4: Federally Recognized Observances

CONCLUSION

Diversity is a leadership strategy employed at every level throughout the AKOM, not a single initiative owned exclusively by a special staff or department. Leaders at every level are accountable for establishing the values within their work environment that promotes understanding of an individual's role for influencing an inclusive organizational culture and alignment of diversity objectives that integrate into leader priorities. The AKOM Diversity & Inclusion Strategic Plan creates the framework specific to sustaining a diverse workforce to address capability gaps and advance the mission priorities of our military forces in Alaska.

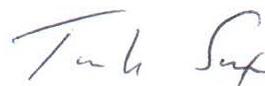
Enduring success requires daily commitment across the entire organization and understanding how diversity enhances mission effectiveness. Although fair treatment is foundational to good leadership, diversity is not about treating everyone the same. Blindness to difference can lead to a culture of assimilation, suppressing differences rather than leveraging them. Nurturing the top talent representative of the communities we serve requires candidates with a variety of experiences and values, as well as commitment, vision, and proactive leaders skilled in talent management and deliberate succession planning.

An inclusive organizational culture requires a level of psychological safety that inspires individuals to perform at their optimum level of performance with maximum creativity and engagement to the activities that advance our global, theater, and state missions. Cultivating this culture promotes a sense of belonging and encourages a broader perspective for collaboration, elevating the conditions that spark innovation, enhance mission effectiveness, and resilience.

Diversity & inclusion is a specialized skill that requires resources. While periodic, recurring training builds upon the framework and vocabulary to openly discuss challenging organizational issues, diversity & inclusion must not evolve into a compliance-based program. Instead, the emphasis is on the talent processes and systems that underpin leadership decisions and the activities that focus on building the foundational trust necessary in organizational relationships to set the conditions for an inclusive culture. The goals and supporting objectives outlined in this strategic plan require the investment of time and ethically driven members committed to enabling AKOM's ability to reach and sustain the highest standards and mission effectiveness. Leaders are highly encouraged to share and support the unique opportunities to serve on a working group or committee as an investment in the JDEC as we work together to reinforce the values that strengthen Team Alaska.



CHRISTOPHER F. WILSON, CMSgt, AKNG
Command Senior Enlisted Leader



TORRENCE W. SAXE, Maj Gen, AKNG
The Adjutant General

REFERENCES:

Alaska National Guard, “Alaska-America’s Arctic: The Arctic Strategy of the Alaska Organized Militia,” 2021

Air National Guard “Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plan,” 2019-2023

Army National Guard, “Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plan,” 2016-2020

Chief National Guard Bureau Instruction, NGBI 9651.01A, “National Guard Diversity and Inclusion,” August 20, 2018

Department of Defense, “Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plan,” 2012-2017

Executive Order 13583, “Establishing a Coordinated Government-wide Initiative to Promote Diversity and Inclusion in the Federal Workforce,” August 18, 2011

National Guard “Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plan,” June 01, 2017

United States Office of Personnel Management, “Governmentwide Inclusive Diversity Strategic Plan,” July 2016

RESOURCES:

Defense Equal Opportunity Management Institute (DEOMI): <http://www.deomi.org/>

National Guard Office of Equity and Inclusion Microsite:

<http://www.nationalguard.mil/Leadership/Joint-Staff/Special-Staff/Diversity/>

National Guard Equal Opportunity Branch Microsite: <https://gko.portal.ng.mil/Joint/Staff/D09>

National Guard Diversity and Inclusion Branch Microsite: <https://gko.portal.ng.mil/Joint/Staff/D10>

Society for Human Resource Management: <https://shrm.org>

USAF Diversity Website: <http://www.af.mil/Diversity.aspx>

USA Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Website: <https://www.armydiversity.army.mil/>

USA Army People Strategy: <https://people.army.mil>

National Guard Military One Source: <https://www.militaryonesource.mil/national-guard>

National Guard Youth ChalleNGe: <https://ngchallenge.org>

APPENDIX A: LINES OF EFFORT CHECKLIST

AKOM D&I Lines of Effort	FY Goals		
	FY 22	FY 23	FY 24
1. ALASKAN SPECIFIC INITIATIVES			
1.1. Identify and document service members with local area expertise within regions of rural Alaska.			
1.2. Maintain an updated point of contact (POC) list for relevant tribes and tribal organizations.			
1.3. Plan and pursue community engagements with rural communities off the road system			
1.4. Provide assessment and guidance to enhance AKOM rural operations plan.			
1.5. Publish an electronic database of cultural briefs.			
1.6. Promote Alaska Native wellness workshops. Family Readiness staff will attend at least annually.			
2. DIVERSITY IN LEADERSHIP			
2.1. Analyze state diversity statistics and provide situational assessment to JDEC members.			
2.2. Discuss disparities and formulate suggestions to build/sustain diversity in leadership positions.			
2.3. Review all AKOM strategies, policies, and processes to identify areas of improvement.			
2.4. Review industry benchmarked policies for AKOM applicability; recommend COAs.			
2.5. Review leadership training materials to ensure diversity concepts are current and represented.			
2.6. Communicate with investigative organizations (IG/EO) to identify trends.			
3. OUTREACH INITIATIVES			
3.1. Coordinate with other National Guard JDEC committees.			
3.2. Network with other local diversity committees.			
3.3. Participate in diversity trainings and conferences; bring new practices back to JDEC.			
3.4. Provide assessment and prioritization recommendations to recruiting events.			
3.5. Provide monthly Lunch ‘n Learn events to all AKOM employees.			

NOTES:

- Goals for each fiscal year will be presented and approved by the JDEC Co-Chairs.
- Progress will be measured by overall goal achievement each fiscal year.
- Scorecard: 75-100% = GREEN; 50-74% = YELLOW; 0-49% = RED

APPENDIX B: DIFFERENCES BETWEEN AFFIRMATIVE ACTION, EO, EEO, AND DIVERSITY

AFFIRMATIVE ACTION	EO	EEO	DIVERSITY
Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory	Fundamental to readiness
Legal, social, moral-compliance focus	Regulatory, social, moral-compliance focus	Legal, social, moral-compliance focus	Productivity, efficiency, quality-performance focus
Covers specific groups - protected categories	Covers specific groups - protected categories	Covers specific groups - protected categories	Inclusion of total workforce - no specific groups
Operational	Operational	Operational	Strategic
Ensures equal opportunity and fair treatment (brings previously excluded groups into organization)	Ensures equal opportunity and fair treatment	Ensures equal employment opportunity and fair treatment	Ensures climate of fairness and inclusive, cohesive culture
Directed by public law and consent decree	Directed by regulation	Directed by public law	Executive Order
Noncompliance= EEOC administrative proceedings & legal resolutions	Noncompliance = ACMJ	Noncompliance = EEOC administrative proceedings & legal resolutions	Failure to implement diversity = culture of assimilation, increased gaps in capability, inability to attract or retain talent, erosion of trust, decreased mission effectiveness, loss of relevancy

Table 1: Defense Equal Opportunity Management Institute