

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Efforts at MassDOT Update

October 19, 2020



Coordination between MassDOT and MBTA on DEI Efforts

- MassDOT and the MBTA are both moving ahead to implement intentional, specific changes to ensure that
 - All forms of discrimination are unacceptable and will not be tolerated
 - They are places where every employee feels valued and respected and can have a successful career unimpeded by conscious discrimination or unconscious bias
- The Office of Diversity and Civil Rights, a shared service department, has played and will continue to play a critical role in advancing Diversity, Equity and Inclusion efforts for both MassDOT and the MBTA
- Julian Tynes, who directs ODCR, is being designated as Chief Diversity Officer for both MassDOT and the MBTA
 - He will continue to direct ODCR and both MassDOT and the MBTA are working to hire additional staff to ensure execution of all DEI initiatives
- Because the two organizations are structured and operate differently but have shared service departments, DEI initiatives will be coordinated even when they are structured separately
 - For example, MassDOT and the MBTA will each create “executive councils” to better coordinate DEI work and accountability across each organization, ensuring that DEI goals and principles are embedded into their organizations and business strategy



Purpose of MassDOT DEI Initiatives

- Recent events have laid bare systemic racial injustices that pervade our communities and country – and MassDOT is not devoid of or immune from such racial injustices
- In order to do our part at MassDOT, we need to acknowledge this and immediately begin efforts to ensure that MassDOT is a place where every employee feels valued and respected and can have a successful career unimpeded by conscious discrimination or unconscious bias
- Addressing systemic racism requires changing the systems that support it (for example, systems for hiring, performance evaluation and promotion) and rebuilding new systems that value and support diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) throughout MassDOT



Our Approach to Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI)

1. Engage with employees to elevate the concerns of black, brown and other people of color and incorporate their feedback and perspectives into our work on diversity, equity and inclusion
2. Rather than conducting a DEI planning exercise and then implementing "the plan", begin immediately to make changes and continue to change systems and launch new initiatives to address racial and other injustices
3. Ensure accountability at all levels, beginning with the CEO and senior management, by creating inclusive mechanisms to govern DEI decisionmaking and ensure accountability for following through
4. Ensure transparency by regularly providing periodic updates to the MassDOT board, managers and employees on our progress and evolving initiatives



Update on Efforts Completed

- Listening sessions completed and lessons learned compiled
- New processes for appointments and acting positions implemented
- Employee concerns hotline instituted
- Consistent with requirements for all state managers, performance objective related to DE&I set as part of FY21 planning stage of ACES performance review system

Update on Efforts Underway

- Developing leadership and governance model for DEI initiatives
 - Julian Tynes will serve as Chief Diversity Officer for both MassDOT and MBTA (while continuing to lead Office of Diversity and Civil Rights)
- New Coach/Protégé Program (a.k.a Mentor Program) pilot being designed for implementation later in 2020
- Additional Employee Resource Groups (ERGs) being launched
- Diversity questions to be incorporated into MassDOT hiring process
- Monthly Lunch and Learn series focused on diverse topics
 - National Disability Employment Awareness Diversity Event on October 14th
- Upcoming “town hall” meetings will include discussion of DEI initiatives and solicit additional feedback from employees



Governance: Making Decisions and Ensuring Accountability

- The challenge: Change must start and at the top and senior managers must be held accountable for implementing change – but the process must also be inclusive of employees at our levels, especially because MassDOT’s senior management is not as diverse as it should be
- The proposal: Create two different but complementary governance structures to ensure both senior-level buy-in and accountability *and* incorporation of diverse viewpoints in to MassDOT’s DEI strategy
 - DEI Executive Council, co-chaired by Secretary and Chief Diversity Officer, comprised of senior MassDOT leadership and responsible for embedding DEI goals and principles into their organizations and business strategy
 - DEI Employee Advisory Council is an input and advisory body whose members both provide feedback and suggestions to the Executive Council while also serving as ambassadors for the rest of MassDOT

