

NASPE Communication Awards

Title of nomination: Washington State Diversity Website
(www.diversity.wa.gov)

Submission category: Electronic: Web site

State: Washington

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1. Please provide a brief description of the submission.

Washington State's new Diversity website (www.diversity.wa.gov) is an innovative solution that uses collaboration and technology to help sustain the state's commitment to diversity and inclusion in tough economic times.

The annual Washington State Diversity Fair was established in 2000 to honor, celebrate and increase diversity awareness in state government. In 2010, the Department of Personnel was the primary sponsor for this event along with nine co-sponsoring agencies.

A few weeks before the event was scheduled to take place, Governor Chris Gregoire announced an increasingly grim budget forecast and called upon state employees to look for innovative ways to save resources. While considering money-saving alternatives to the planned outdoor event, the Diversity Fair's sponsoring agencies came up with the creative solution of moving it to an online venue, which in turn became a permanent state Diversity website.

Diversity.wa.gov was created using a number of social media approaches—including WordPress and YouTube—allowing the committee to quickly build a robust and professional website, complete with videos of the Governor and DOP Director Eva Santos and content from participating agencies, in just over two weeks. To maintain the feeling of a diversity fair, diverse music, games and non-commercial ethnic recipe videos were featured on the site.

The intentions of the Diversity website are to:

- Demonstrate leadership's commitment for diversity and inclusion in WA state government.
- Increase the visibility and transparency of internal diversity and inclusion initiatives in agencies across the state.
- Provide opportunities to share agency diversity and inclusion initiative efforts and strategies among state employees at low cost.
- Increase awareness of diversity and inclusion through agency collaboration while providing opportunities for state employees to participate in the diversity discussion within their agencies.
- Provide a centralized resource for agencies to further enhance diversity initiatives.

The site is updated regularly with content ranging from employee diversity training at the Department of Transportation to the Attorney General's Office receiving the Diversity Award from the Seattle Society for Human Resources Management. A calendar of international holidays is updated quarterly and diversity-themed months, such as Women's History Month, are recognized on the home page.

2. How long has the submission been in existence?

The website went live at 12 noon on Sept. 9, 2010.

3. Why was the submission created?

Diversity.wa.gov was created for two primary reasons:

- To answer the Governor's call for innovative ways to save money and improve services. By changing the physical Diversity Fair into a virtual event, the state saved money while reaching a much broader audience. Instead of the few hundred employees who would typically be able to attend the diversity event in the Olympia area, the new Diversity website was visited in its first week by more than 5,000 people from 100 agencies and 88 cities located across the state.
- To demonstrate the state's commitment to diversity and inclusion and foster collaboration by providing a forum for state agencies to share their diversity initiatives.

4. How does this submission support the goals and objectives of your agenda/department?

In Washington state government, diversity is a community value that is reflected in our laws and culture. We believe that diversity gives our state a wide base of strengths and knowledge on which to build Washington's future. The mission of the Department of Personnel is to provide human resource guidance and services to maximize state government's ability to serve citizens of Washington.

The Diversity website supports the Department of Personnel's mission and Washington state values by providing a venue for agencies to share and collaborate on diversity initiatives enterprise-wide in a way that enhances agencies' ability to maximize services to the citizens of Washington. The website also provides additional resources that may enhance internal diversity and inclusion efforts. The diversity.wa.gov is a demonstration of Washington state government's value and commitment for diversity and inclusion.

5. Have you been able to measure the effectiveness of this submission? If so, how?

Through Google Analytics, we recorded the new Diversity website was visited in its first week by more than 5,000 people from 100 agencies and 88 cities located across the state. This was four thousand more participants than the Diversity Fair had at any event in its recorded history. The website also resulted in several thousands of dollars in cost savings compared to a physical diversity event.

Current participating agencies and interested agencies are considering the Diversity.wa.gov site, as a new (additional) tool to enhance diversity targeted recruiting strategies.

The Diversity website also provides an online diversity presence for agencies that did not have an online presence in the past.

Fig. 1: The diversity.wa.gov homepage is updated regularly with content ranging from employee diversity training at the Department of Transportation to the Attorney General's Office receiving the Diversity Award from the Seattle Society for Human Resources Management.

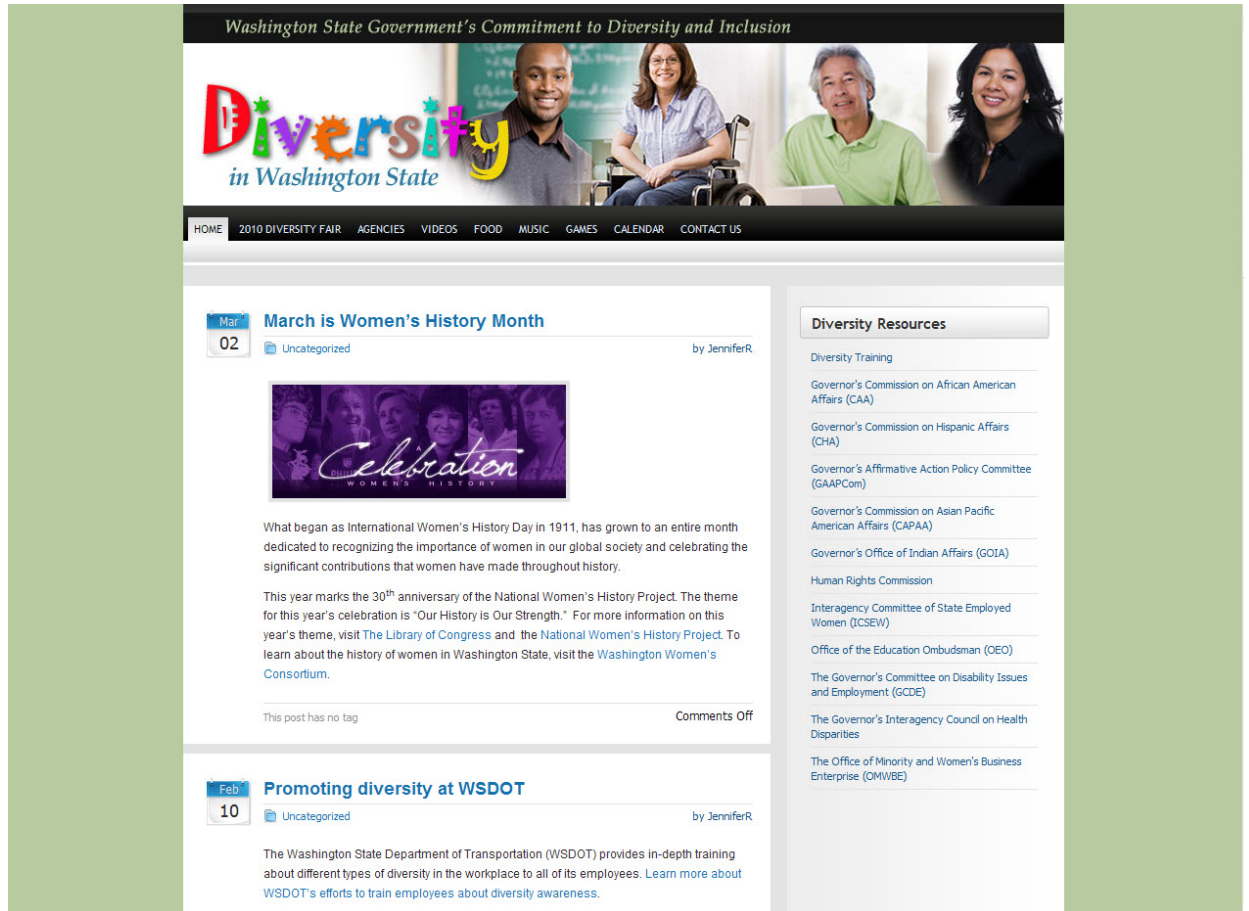


Fig. 2: Tabs take viewers to pages featuring agency initiatives, ethnic food recipes and music videos, and a calendar of international holidays.

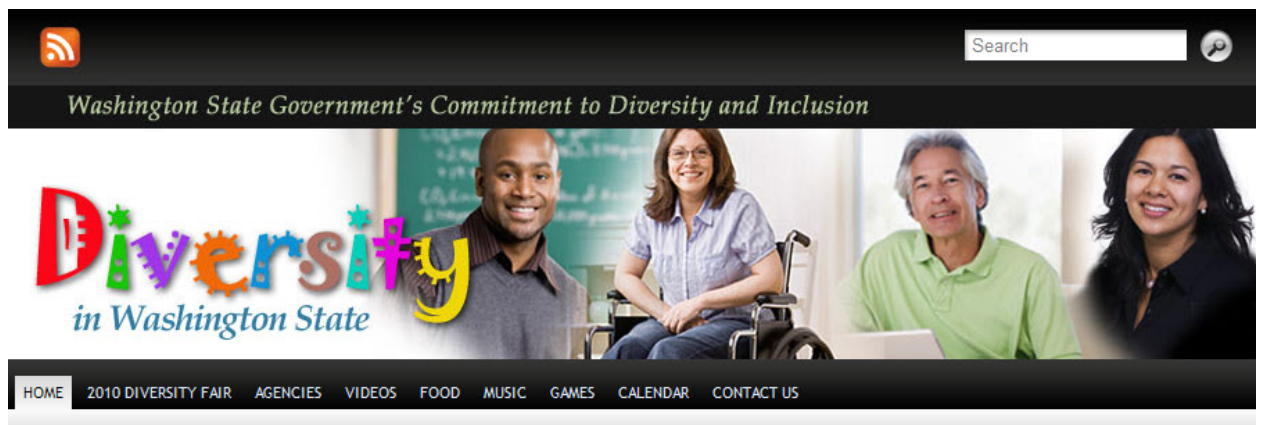


Fig. 3: When the 2010 Washington State Diversity Fair was moved to an online venue, the feeling of an event was maintained by launching the new website at 12:00 noon on the scheduled day of the fair, complete with welcome videos from Governor Chris Gregoire and Department of Personnel Director Eva Santos, music and food videos from around the world, diversity-themed games, and highlights of diversity activities from 13 state agencies.

