

2018 NASPE AWARD

Eugene H. Rooney, Jr. Award Nomination *Innovative State Human Resource Management Program*

Nominations from dues-paying states are considered for eligibility. Nominated leaders and programs should have a positive effect on the administration of state human resource programs. A state's central human resource department or line agency human resource operations may administer nominated programs.

Programs and projects must have been operational for at least six months and must be transferable to other states. Selection criteria are based on the questions asked on the award application. Included in this packet are the specific criteria for each award and their categories. Nominations are encouraged in all areas of human resource management administration.

Additionally, please attach a one-page summary of the program and prepare a narrative answer for the questions listed below. Do not send supporting documentation. Provide a narrative answer for each of the following questions.

PROGRAM INFORMATION

Program Title: Enterprise Business Resource Groups State: WA

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NOMINATOR INFORMATION

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ALL SUBMISSIONS MUST:

Meet all eligibility requirements. • Meet deadline requirements stated on the NASPE website. • Be entered in the correct category and be correctly identified. • Include a complete nomination packet. • Conform to all copyright laws.



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Innovative State Human Resource Management Program

“Enterprise Business Resource Groups (BRGs)”

Summary:

The state of Washington Employee Resource Groups first came into realization in 2012. Before that, a handful of state agencies maintained their own informal affinity, focus, and networking groups but nothing established or equipped to support the entire workforce and help push policy enterprise-wide. Once Executive Order 13-01 (Veterans Transition Support) was enacted, our first formal Employee Resource Group (ERG), the Veterans Employee Resource Group (VERG), gained immediate traction and was recognized as the vehicle to help integrate the experience, values, and knowledge of both veterans and transitioning service members in Washington state employment. This new group formation resonated across the enterprise and although its existence was called out by an executive order with implicit expectations for agency support and resources, the initial membership drive resulted in an abundance of passionate and committed state employed veterans and allies in just a few short weeks. As the group matured, we began building upon the success of the VERG and its impact on cultural change, producing deliverables, and meeting agency objectives. Decisions were made in 2017 to transition this group and other resource groups going forward from traditional Employee Resource Groups to the Business Resource Group (BRG) methodology – these groups drive business and invoke a greater expectation for direct alignment with our state’s business objectives. Four new BRGs have recently emerged. We expect more to come as the untapped potential of these groups are a critical strategy for supporting diversity, equity and inclusion within our state workforce and for helping Washington state government achieve our goal of becoming an ‘Employer of Choice’!

1. Brief description of this program: Our Business Resource Groups (BRGs) are state employee led, self-directed voluntary groups that offer opportunities to network internally, attract a diverse employee base, provide the inclusion of ideas and solutions, create opportunities for mentoring and career development, and allow the voices of our employees to be heard resulting in a more diverse, equitable and inclusive workforce. Although each group has an executive sponsor, all operations are done without any allocated budget. The state of Washington launched its very first Employee Resource Group in 2012 known as the Veteran's Employee Resource Group (VERG). Since then, four (4) more uniquely different and meaningful BRGs have either been created and rolled out enterprise-wide or are on the horizon to officially become a BRG this calendar year. They are the Rainbow Alliance and Inclusion Network (RAIN), Washington Immigrant Network (WIN), People with Disabilities, and the Latino Leadership Network (LLN). The following are their unique missions:

VERG: Help integrate the experience, values, and knowledge of both veterans and transitioning service members in state employment. The VERG provides advice and assistance to state agencies on veteran recruitment, retention, and development strategies in accordance with the Governor's Executive Order 13-01. The VERG assists state agencies in support of current state employees who have served as members of the armed forces through recognition, resource identification, and mentorship. The VERG is also in the process of collaborating with military spouses to address issues related to obtaining and retaining fulfilling state employment.

RAIN: Their purpose is to promote diversity and inclusion in the workplace and create best practices for state workers to ensure that Washingtonians in the LGBTQ+ community can look to public-facing state offices as safe and secure spaces.

WIN: This group's goal is to expand opportunities for immigrants who are current and future employees within Washington state government. Serves as a resource for all immigrants who are state

employees to connect, share, and educate each other and Washington state agencies on the skills, expertise and cultural value of a diverse workforce.

LLN: This group wants to create a workforce that reflects the populations that we serve, at all levels of state government, in order to better serve the citizens of our state.

People with Disabilities: The PWD BRG is our newest BRG, they want to engage the experience, values and knowledge of people with disabilities in state government, promoting universal access, and create an environment where people with disabilities can fully participate in all aspects of the workplace.

2. How long has this program been operation

State of Washington BRG Creation Timeline					
	10/2012	1/2017	6/2018	7/2018	9/2018
	Veteran Employees Resource Group - Began as an ERG and transitioned to BRG in 2017	Rainbow Alliance and Inclusion Network - launched January 2017	Washington Immigrant Network - forecasted launch for June 2018	People with Disabilities - forecasted launch for July 2018	Latino Leadership Network - forecasted launch Sep 2018 (although named a 'network', this group has operated as an ERG providing networking and learning opportunities for many years...)

3. Why was this program created? BRGs offer our state employees, camaraderie, and connections, giving them a sense of belonging. Moreover, they promote a positive workplace culture where employees with different backgrounds, lifestyles, and abilities are respected, have equal rights, and are given the opportunity to succeed. We realized that initiatives which focus on recognizing and respecting the talents and contributions of all employees increases morale and maximizes retention and productivity, all the while enhancing growth and development opportunities. These critical factors impact our mission in serving the public and help to make better policy and business decisions.

4. How are BRGs new and creative? First and foremost, we are unaware of any other state governments that currently have a suite of statewide BRGs as we do in Washington state. Although we are pleased to be one of the first and proud to be pioneers in state government, we see an opportunity to share this best practice with other state governments so they can benefit from our experience. Multiple private sector companies and organizations have already made this a priority in many different industries and are now reaping the value and benefits of such endeavors. Our BRGs routinely strategize in finding creative ways to enhance the skills or provide opportunities for professional development of group members so they are more productive and continue to grow within our leadership ranks. This includes determining our effectiveness in recruitment, retention, and engagement of state employees and potential employees who share the identity of that particular BRG. In addition, these BRGs are open to *all* employees, not just the named communities. These efforts ensure that the focus of these groups engage in activities that have direct impact on state business objectives and branding activities in our drive to be an Employer of Choice.

5. BRGs start-up cost: BRGs do not have a monetary start-up cost. In-kind support has been provided from partnering state agencies, executive sponsorship, employees and volunteers.

6. BRGs operational cost: BRGs do not have a monetary operational cost. In-kind support has been provided from partnering state agencies and executive sponsorship.

7. How is this program funded? There is not a requirement to fund this program at this time.
8. Did the BRGs originate in Washington? Yes.
9. Are there similar programs in other states? We are unaware of identical programs in other states, although many private sector companies and some city and county governments have similar programs in various stages.
10. Measuring the success of BRGs: We've incorporated and/or strategized a number of key measurements that we currently deploy or hope to use in the near future:
 - * Tracking the number of community events and participants particularly if the group's goal is to increase involvement between the state and our community.
 - * Tracking the number of presentations given by BRG members at diversity-focused conferences and meetings.
 - * Tracking the number of BRG members involved in a mentoring program.
 - * Tracking employment referrals given by BRG members.
 - * Recruiting members from BRGs to go to career fairs, visit colleges and then calculating the return on investment from their participation.
 - * Comparing employee engagement and retention of BRG members to other employees.

11. How have BRGs grown or changed since its inception? We have come a long way since the inception of the first BRG! The 'VERG' has been the 'flagship' in which we have modeled for most our other BRG ventures. It has not been an easy road and we have come to realize that strong planning, solid executive sponsorship, and taking 'baby steps' is paramount. We have found the best and most effective way to undertake or maintain new BRG initiatives is by learning from the success of others. We have taken many of the challenges and successes of the past and have established best practices in the form of a BRG toolkit that encompasses steps on how to start, implement, and maintain enterprise Business Resource Groups. This valuable toolkit will be used for the startup of these groups and as a guideline for our current groups.