



United
Way



COMMITMENT TO DIVERSITY FROM THE TOP

United Way's commitment to diversity begins in the United Way of America boardroom, motivates our national staff, and extends throughout our network of more than 1,300 local United Way organizations that cover the entire country. It's more than just a footnote to our mission and vision statements. Our commitment to diversity holds an honored place in all of our work. It's at the heart of our approach to improving communities and lives throughout our nation.

United Way is fortunate to have an outstanding volunteer leader and partner in current Board Chair, Dr. Johnnetta Cole, president of Bennett College for Women. Whenever I introduce Dr. Cole, I note that she is the first African-American board chair. She is quick to remind me that being the first to do anything means you have the responsibility to work in the interest of a second, a seventh, a nine hundredth to follow where you pioneered. It's a lesson that all of us at United Way have taken to heart.

Dr. Cole leads a board that was reorganized in 2002 to more accurately reflect the diversity of the communities we serve. The board has changed from a group that was 72.4% Caucasian and 65.5% male, to a group that is 56% Caucasian and 40% male. Increasingly more diverse, our current board composition is 24% African American, 12% Latino, 4% Asian/Pacific Islander, and 4% Native American. We still have a way to go, but we're making progress.

In 2005, as part of our strategy for developing outstanding United Way staff, we conducted separate forums with women, young leaders, Latinos, African Americans, Asian/Pacific Islanders, and Gay,

Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender (GLBT) leaders to talk about how the United Way system can become more inclusive and responsive. One immediate step we're taking is to create national affinity groups to provide an opportunity for continued dialogue with one another, as well as to guide the United Way System in developing strategies and programs for emerging markets.

United Way of America has been a catalyst for a renewed focus on diversity at the local level by establishing a membership requirement that addresses this priority directly. To be a member of the United Way system, each of the 1,339 local and state United Ways must adhere to a locally developed and adopted diversity statement to ensure volunteers and staff broadly reflect the inclusiveness of the community they serve. Inclusiveness is also a key element of our newly revised Standards of Excellence, which define what 'best in class' operations look like for the United Way system.

Our efforts on diversity are driven not only by our belief that it's the right thing to do, but also on an understanding that it provides us with a competitive advantage. Our research shows that when local United Ways work with target markets and focus on initiatives of interest to them, both leadership giving and investor involvement in the community increase. The result is improved lives and improved communities. Not only is diversity core to our organization's beliefs, but the numbers show that it's also the best way for us to achieve our mission. Our success is rooted in a movement that is fully inclusive and responsive to the rich diversity of our nation.

United Way of America has been a catalyst for a renewed focus on diversity at the local level by establishing a membership requirement that addresses this priority directly.