

Investigating a Company's Commitment to Diversity

BEFORE APPLYING

Examine the company's recruiting practices.

Is it clear that they are trying to reach out to various underrepresented populations in their recruitment approaches? Do they bring employees from different backgrounds to on campus recruiting events to share their personal experiences? Are they advertising their jobs through websites or organizations targeting minority professionals?

Conduct informational interviews with employees working for the organization.

Don't simply speak with the recruiters, but try to get the inside scoop by talking with employees who work within the organization doing the work you want to do. Ask them some of the following questions:

- Do women and minority employees fully participate in all aspects of office life, including social events?
- Is there a reporting procedure for worker complaints, including those about discrimination or sexual harassment?
- Are conflicts constructively resolved? Is there space to openly discuss conflict?
- Does the organization use language that is inclusive?
- Does the management demonstrate favoritism? Go through regular diversity training?
- Is there equal pay for equal work, regardless of gender or race?
- What are the leave policies for those who observe non-Christian religious holidays?
- Is the company's office/facility accessible for individuals with disabilities? Are there unisex bathrooms?

DURING THE INTERVIEW

Find out if they have any employee programs in place to help foster an inclusive culture.

Recruitment is one thing, retention is another. Look for evidence that the company has support structures in place to ensure the success of minority employees.

Does it have mentoring programs? Employee affinity groups? Family friendly programs such as job sharing? Does the company seem to have unbiased retention in the work force, meaning that employees are retained at equal levels, regardless of race/ethnicity or gender. Examine all levels and pay particular attention to the diversity at the management, executive, and board levels.

AFTER GETTING AN OFFER

Investigate where and with whom the company does business.

Do a Google search combining the company name with phrases such as "Corporate Responsibility", "Code of Ethics" or "Standards of Business Practice". Do their suppliers include small business, women, minority and/or LGBT suppliers? Does the company conduct business with and/or have products made in countries that do not protect the human rights of their workers? Who are their primary investors? What kind of causes do the company's charitable efforts benefit?

Research the company's compliance with federal laws.

Have any lawsuits involving civil rights violations been filed against the company lately? To find out, conduct a search online or contact the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. In addition to other federally protected classes, do they have a non-discriminatory policy that includes sexual orientation? Gender identity?

Evaluate the benefits package.

Are there equivalent spousal and partner benefits? What is their paternity leave policy? Do they offer transgender inclusive health insurance coverage?