

Diversity and Inclusion

Developing a Culture of Passion around Diversity

Welcome to the Diversity and Inclusion webpage of the US Coast Guard Auxiliary, Seventh District. Join with me in 2017 as we embark on a journey to refine our Diversity goals at all District levels. Commodore Hudson supports the US Coast Guard's 2014-2020 Strategic Plan, promulgated by National Commodore Washburn and Commandant, Admiral Paul F. Zukunft, defining the goals and requirements for the matter of Diversity. This plan calls on each member, regardless of position, to identify unintended disincentives to recruiting and retention at all levels and to work to eliminate them through a process of training and mentoring. The top priority is to make the US Coast Guard Auxiliary the *"Volunteer Organization of Choice"* in the United States. We must now sharpen our focus and pinpoint district needs and requirements for a successful Diversity Plan. The *"Coast Guard deems diversity a matter of readiness."*

The Seventh District program will be measured by how well our leadership can identify and capitalize on our members' talents, finding the best in everyone. We must work to ensure that trust is at the foundation of each of our initiatives. Our members must know where the lines are drawn, what is acceptable and unacceptable behavior toward other members, and we must use training at all levels to build an inclusive environment, promoting Diversity of thoughts, ideals, and competencies. We must also be certain that each member knows their role in Diversity and how it ties to the mission of the Auxiliary. This will enable us to work on building high performance teams and empower us to mission readiness and excellence.

Realizing that all of us are stakeholders in Diversity management, let us consider several areas that we can promote to achieve and sustain Diversity.

First, our recruiting initiatives need to ensure we attract top talent to our organization. Using multiple methods, we must seek a wide range of potential members from underrepresented minority groups, regardless of race, gender, color, national origin, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, age, religion, or disabilities, both physical and mental. We should be working to identify shared interests and commitments within these groups and forge new relationships with them which will open new doors within our communities. Such a model will guide us to achieve a measurable improvement in the Diversity of our membership, our mission and our partners. The result will be an increase in morale and a positive impact on the success of our members in the fulfillment of their mission.

Second, through membership training at all levels we can establish and build an environment of inclusion. This year we are calling upon all Division and Flotilla Commanders to once again establish Diversity Staff Officer positions (SO-DV & FSO-DV). Each unit is unique, with a rich blend of Diversity among its membership, engaging in a wide range of mission requirements in support of the Coast Guard. These individuals, along with a core group of Assistant District Staff Officers, who will be geographically assigned, will serve as mentors and trainers to promote the policies and best practices established by the Commodore. Diversity is a top priority for the Seventh District, as it is for the National Auxiliary Organization. We will seek to ensure that a mentor and trainer are readily available to each and every Division and Flotilla throughout the District. Commodore Hudson is committed to providing the necessary assets to ensure the success of this program.

Thirdly, all members, across all levels, are responsible for fostering an inclusive team atmosphere. The National Commodore has stated that it is his view that *Diversity is not a problem to be solved: it is an asset to be developed*. As we travel this road together we must be keenly aware of the hurdles we face in removing barriers to inclusion. As Diversity leaders we must meet the challenge, embracing new ideals, supporting and celebrating differences, and building upon the foundation established by the Strategic Plan instituted by Commodore Hudson, the National Commodore and the Commandant of the Coast Guard. We must always be guided by the Coast Guard values; *Honor, Respect, and Devotion to Duty*. Our devotion to these principles will ensure we stand firm in always doing the right thing, even in the face of adversity.

The majority of content in this statement was written by Dr. Phillip Poole for the D7 website. We are grateful for Dr. Poole's contributions to District 7 Diversity values and steps forward.

Tom Bamford

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