WGR
Women in Government Relations

Position Statement on

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Within the Field of Government Relations

This issue goes far beyond an inclusive work place in the field of government relations – indeed, it transcends gender. At the center of the issues facing women in our field are power inequities, whose contributing factors include the wage gap, lack of diversity equity and inclusion, limited paid leave policies, and above all else, professional conduct. In 2018, we are raising our voice on each of these issues to advance and empower women in the field of government relations.

Background: Evidence demonstrates that in any field, diversity, equity, and inclusion in the workforce and in leadership strengthens, improves, and enables greater realization of institutional goals.[i] There are many benefits of a diverse workforce, including the ability to bring many talents from different backgrounds, perspectives, abilities and disabilities to the workplace.[ii] Women must be included in leadership positions in the government relations field regardless of their race, sexual orientation, religion, age, gender identity, disability status, political affiliation or any other dimension of diversity. Beyond this, open communication that allows for all perspectives to be heard is the foundation of any inclusive community.

Women only represent approximately 35 percent of registered lobbyists despite public views that women contribute significantly to the public policy and legislative process.[iii] According to a survey of members conducted by Women in Government Relations (WGR) in June of 2017, 67 percent of WGR members are Caucasian while 14 percent are African American. We have very little data about the representation of women in the broader field of government relations beyond registered lobbyists, including those in the regulatory, policy, and communications fields. Women of color, women who are disabled, older women, and other historically underserved groups are even less likely to be employed in the government relations field.

WGR Position: Women in Government Relations (WGR) strongly supports and strives for greater diversity, equity, and inclusion amongst women government relations professionals, including in positions of leadership in both the public and private sector. WGR values different perspectives and strongly believes that these viewpoints improve society and create better public policy.

WGR is dedicated to ensuring that the greater government relations community as well as its own leadership and membership welcomes, values, and includes diverse viewpoints. WGR's mission, vision and strategic direction reflect the growing importance and role of women in the field. As an organization, we also recognize the diversity of the United States is not reflected in the composition of the profession, nor is the WGR internal leadership reflective of the demographics of its membership. We

seek for change in this regard and will strive to advance diversity, equity, and inclusion in the field as a top priority.

WGR's Commitment to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion: To ensure diversity, equity, and, inclusion within the field of government relations, as well as within the WGR membership, WGR will:

- Raise awareness among our membership and within our professional community at large of the importance of diversity, equity, and inclusion within the government relations profession through strategic programming, critical dialogue, and communications;
- Actively support mentorship opportunities among all members, in particular members from historically underrepresented groups, to increase and sustain a diverse membership base;
- Implement programming that promotes and celebrates diversity and features speakers who are thought leaders on this topic;
- Intentionally strive for diverse and inclusive perspectives on panels, working groups and in WGR leadership capacities;
- Create and sustain a strategy to diversify the leadership pipeline;
- Encourage a culture that ensures equitable treatment of all members; and
- Intentionally invite multiple perspectives to the decision-making table, while incorporating ideas from various viewpoints.

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[i] Bourke, J., Smith, C., Stockton, H. & Wakefield, N. "From diversity to inclusion." Deloitte University Press, March 7, 2014. Retrieved from https://dupress.deloitte.com/dup-us-en/focus/human-capital-trends/2014/hc-trends-2014-diversity-to-inclusion.htm; Padamsee, X. & Crowe, B. "Unrealized Impact: The Case for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion." Promise 54, 2017. Retrieved from: https://promise54.org/our-research/
[ii] https://www.experience.com/advice/professional-development/diversity-and-the-workplace/
[iii] LaPira et. al.