
WHY STATES SHOULD

DEFUND



DEI

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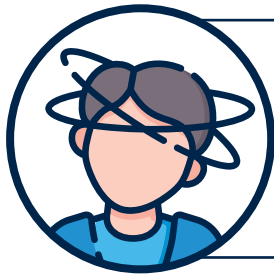


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KEY FINDINGS



**DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION (DEI)
PROGRAMS HAVE BEEN ON THE RISE.**



**DEI TRAININGS ARE NOT EFFECTIVE
AND CAN MAKE BIASES WORSE.**



**DEI EFFORTS ARE COSTING
TAXPAYERS MILLIONS.**



**STATES CAN PROHIBIT FUNDING FOR
RADICAL AND DIVISIVE DEI DEPARTMENTS,
TRAININGS, AND PROGRAMS.**

THE BOTTOM LINE:

**STATES SHOULD DEFUND DIVISIVE, RADICAL,
AND INEFFECTIVE DEI EFFORTS.**

Overview

In recent years, there has been a proliferation of DEI initiatives that purport to increase diversity and promote an inclusive environment in schools, universities, and government departments.¹ DEI efforts are deceptively named, and instead of promoting diversity, they are politically charged and promote a racialized worldview.²



DEI EFFORTS ARE DECEPTIVELY NAMED, AND INSTEAD OF PROMOTING DIVERSITY, THEY ARE POLITICALLY CHARGED AND PROMOTE A RACIALIZED WORLDVIEW.

DEI programs and departments use language pulled from critical race theory and often explicitly call for activism for a set of political causes.³ For example, the Division of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion at West Virginia University suggests *How to Be an Antiracist* by Ibram X. Kendi as a resource for students.⁴ This text is recommended by many university DEI departments, government agencies, and even the U.S. Navy.⁵ The book explains how individuals can be “antiracist,” and calls for policies that explicitly and intentionally discriminate on the basis of race as the only way to correct previous injustices.⁶

While diversity training is not new, the term has taken on a new meaning. Employee trainings focused on diversity and inclusion date back to the implementation of the Civil Rights Act.⁷ These initial efforts were targeted at ensuring employees understood their legal obligations to not discriminate against others.⁸ Now, in many places, these programs have evolved into political indoctrination.⁹ DEI trainings occur in universities, public schools, and state and local governments and use tactics such as sorting individuals into categories based on their race.¹⁰

DEI efforts that engage in racial stereotyping and call for radical policy changes are pervasive. **For example:**

- **During a diversity training put on by Clemson University at a cost of nearly \$27,000, participants were instructed that valuing punctuality was culturally insensitive.**¹¹
- **The Ohio State University’s College of Medicine calls for medical students to learn to evaluate everything through the lens of race and identity, rather than evaluating patients individually.**¹²
- **Federal employees at the Department of the Treasury were subjected to training that taught that “virtually all White people contribute to racism.”**¹³
- **A school district in Missouri provided teachers with a training program that asked them to rank their privilege, referred to parents as oppressors of their children, and told educators that it was their duty to support socialism in the classroom and with their vote.**¹⁴

While diversity programs have existed for decades, there has been a sharp rise in DEI efforts in recent years. At the college level, a survey of chief diversity officers at universities found that 60 percent of institutions that employ a chief diversity officer created the position within the last five years.¹⁵

The DEI industry is estimated to be valued at \$9.4 billion annually and expected to continue growing, despite no evidence that DEI programs are effective.¹⁶



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DEI initiatives are ineffective and counterproductive

Not only are DEI efforts divisive and overtly political, they also do not improve diversity and can actually create a less inclusive environment.¹⁷ Researchers have attempted to quantify the effectiveness of DEI initiatives and have found no evidence that DEI trainings are effective.¹⁸ There is some evidence that DEI training and programs are actually harmful to the cause of diversity.¹⁹ For example, implicit bias training, often a part of DEI efforts, teaches individuals to recognize subconscious biases for or against certain groups.²⁰ The implicit association test and training have been shown to have either no impact on individual behaviors and attitudes toward other groups or, in some cases, a negative impact.²¹

Surveys have shown that schools with larger DEI programs have less inclusive and diverse student environments.²² DEI offices have also failed to address hostility towards certain groups. Since 2014, there has been a 300 percent increase in reported antisemitic incidents on college campuses.²³ During the same period, DEI bureaucracies on campuses have ballooned, yet very few DEI offices have any programming related to antisemitism.²⁴



SURVEYS HAVE SHOWN THAT SCHOOLS WITH LARGER DEI PROGRAMS HAVE LESS INCLUSIVE AND DIVERSE STUDENT ENVIRONMENTS.

Additionally, DEI efforts in public schools and government may be unconstitutional.²⁵ The Supreme Court ruled in *Students for Fair Admission v. Harvard* that race-based college admissions violate the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution.²⁶ Following this decision, universities were warned to rethink diversity initiatives that may discriminate against certain groups based on federally protected characteristics, such as race and sex.²⁷ Following the Supreme Court's decision, the Biden administration immediately circulated information on strategies that universities can use to circumvent requirements to treat people of different races equally under the law, indicating that race-based DEI efforts will continue to occur.²⁸

DEI efforts at public universities are costing taxpayers millions

Despite growing evidence that DEI initiatives are not effective in promoting diversity and inclusion, publicly funded universities spend millions on DEI. For example, a review of DEI programs across public institutions in South Carolina found that more than \$8.3 million was spent in 2022.²⁹ While it is difficult to quantify the full scale of public university DEI programs, a 2021 survey found that the average public university had 45 DEI administrators on staff.³⁰



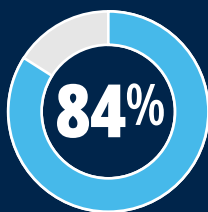
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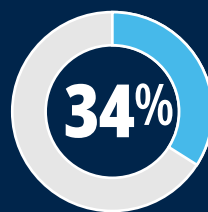
Administrator salaries are a driving factor in the cost of DEI programs. For example, at Georgia Tech, there are 74 administrators who have job responsibilities related to DEI who earn a total of nearly \$6.7 million combined.³¹ The University of Alabama is estimated to spend at least \$2 million on salaries for DEI employees alone.³²

A review of the salaries of the top diversity officials shows that 84 percent of chief diversity officers have an annual salary of more than \$100,000, with 34 percent making more than \$200,000.³³

MAJORITY OF DEI OFFICIALS MAKE MORE THAN \$100,000



earn more than
\$100,000



earn more than
\$200,000

Source: National Association of Diversity Officers in Higher Education

To put DEI spending into context, the amount spent on the annual salary of the top diversity official alone would cover the cost of attendance for multiple students.

HOW MANY SCHOLARSHIPS CAN BE FUNDED BY ONE DIVERSITY OFFICIAL'S SALARY?

STATE	SCHOOL	ANNUAL SALARY OF TOP DIVERSITY OFFICIAL	NUMBER OF FULL IN-STATE SCHOLARSHIPS THAT COULD BE FUNDED
Alabama	University of Alabama	\$271,848	10.64
Alabama	Auburn University	\$268,040	10.14
Georgia	University of Georgia	\$200,356	8.93
Georgia	Georgia Tech	\$281,086	11.10
Idaho	Idaho State University	\$108,442	7.08
Idaho	Boise State University	\$155,000	11.60
Kentucky	University of Kentucky	\$360,000	13.53
Louisiana	Louisiana State University	\$185,477	7.29
Louisiana	University of Louisiana	\$125,000	5.59
Missouri	University of Missouri	\$262,500	9.49
Missouri	Missouri State University	\$120,617	10.39
Montana	University of Montana	\$79,560	3.91
Ohio	University of Ohio	\$215,000	7.86
Ohio	Ohio State University	\$131,799	4.84
South Carolina	Clemson University	\$202,500	7.12
South Carolina	University of South Carolina	\$263,937	8.25
Tennessee	University of Tennessee	\$296,945	11.43
Utah	University of Utah	\$281,659	12.19
Utah	Utah State University	\$259,700	14.53
Virginia	University of Virginia	\$374,850	10.12
Virginia	Virginia Tech	\$391,929	12.91
Wyoming	University of Wyoming	\$151,680	6.98

Source: Author's calculations

In addition to full-time staff, diversity departments at public colleges conduct trainings for students and faculty. For example, the University of Louisville reports conducting 182 training sessions in just one year on antiracism, implicit bias, and related concepts.³⁴

Administrative bloat is a driving force in the rising cost of college.³⁵ The rapid growth of DEI departments with highly paid administrators should be scrutinized by those in charge of ensuring that taxpayer dollars are spent wisely.

DEI is pervasive in all levels of government

Federal, state, and local governments fund DEI executives, programs, and trainings. On his very first day in office, President Biden issued an executive order decreeing that the federal government prioritize “advancing racial equity.”³⁶ Other executive orders have followed, which require agencies to establish or enhance DEI offices and diversity training.³⁷

These executive actions have spawned more than 300 DEI projects in the federal bureaucracy, some of which call for discretionary grants and contracts to be awarded on the basis of advancing racial equity.³⁸ Putting this into practice, the Biden administration’s Department of Transportation used funding from the Bipartisan Infrastructure Act to create a \$1.5 billion grant for transportation projects that “address climate change, ensure racial equity, and remove barriers to opportunity.”³⁹ The Department of Defense requested close to \$115 million for diversity and inclusion efforts in its 2024 budget request.⁴⁰ NASA has spent nearly \$500,000 on employee training that taught concepts such as equality being incompatible with diversity.⁴¹



At the state and local level, a survey of public service human resource officials found that 42 percent of state and local government human resource departments report having a formal DEI program.⁴² In 2023, 48 percent of school districts with more than 15,000 students, and **89 percent of school districts with more than 100,000 students had a chief diversity officer.**⁴³

In one example of how spending on these programs can add up, a single school district in Kentucky has a DEI office with a budget of \$6.3 million.⁴⁴ The top official in that department earns more than \$119,000 annually, 140 percent more than the average salary of an employee for the district, which is less than \$45,000 per year.⁴⁵

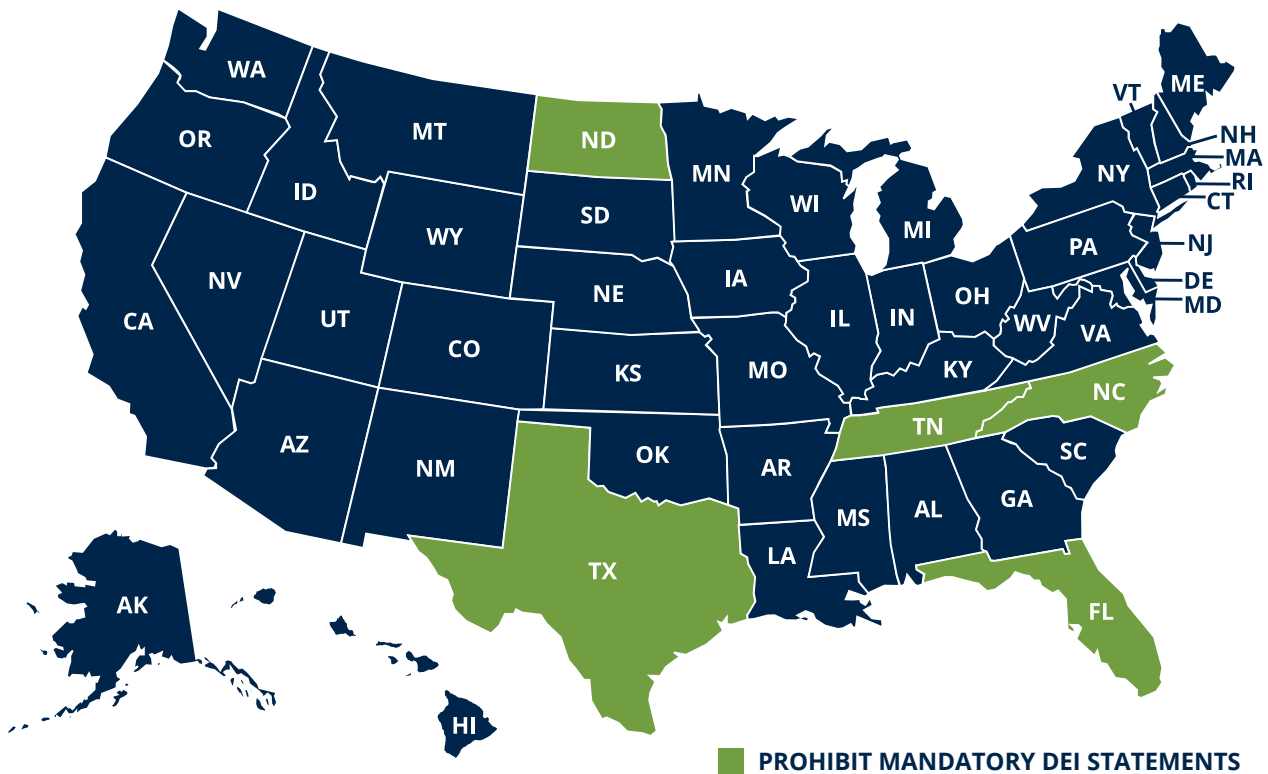
In another example of DEI spending at the local level, Fairfax County, Virginia paid Ibram X. Kendi more than \$85,000 for three separate lectures for employees, two of which took place virtually.⁴⁶ In the same county, the school district spent more than \$450,000 on a contract with a California-based diversity training company that touts an “equity plan” that calls for equal outcomes at all costs, even when achieving this goal requires purposefully distributing resources and access to opportunities for students unequally.⁴⁷

States should defund DEI initiatives

Fortunately, there are steps that states can take to stop wasteful spending on DEI programs. Public universities are accountable to taxpayers and states can prohibit funding for DEI offices at public universities. Florida has led the way in ensuring that public colleges do not fund discriminatory DEI initiatives, and instead encourage true diversity of thought and workforce development.⁴⁸

Another way that states can stop DEI in universities is by prohibiting so-called diversity and inclusion statements from being required during the hiring process for university employees. These statements are often used in practice as an ideological litmus test to ascertain if potential employees would be in lockstep with DEI departments.⁴⁹ Several states have passed legislation banning the use of DEI statements in hiring university faculty, and more states should join them.⁵⁰

A GROWING NUMBER OF STATES PROHIBIT MANDATORY DEI STATEMENTS IN HIRING UNIVERSITY FACULTY



PROHIBIT MANDATORY DEI STATEMENTS

Source: State laws

States can also prohibit funding for DEI training for government employees, including teachers. Taxpayers should not be on the hook for funding the lucrative contracts for these training efforts.

Lawmakers should be on the lookout for other instances of taxpayer funding being used for radical DEI training and programs, such as in training for National Guardsmen or government agencies using DEI metrics to determine grant and contract awards.

THE BOTTOM LINE: States should defund divisive, radical, and ineffective DEI efforts.

Diversity and equality are important, but DEI is not about accomplishing those goals. DEI departments, training, and programs that tout radical leftist policies, divide individuals based on race, and promote discrimination should never be funded by taxpayers.

Public universities should foster intellectual diversity, instead of conducting trainings that teach students and staff to categorize themselves according to race. DEI departments on college campuses increase the cost of college and do not work to improve campus diversity and inclusivity. DEI programs are often an ineffective drain on taxpayer dollars and should be defunded.



Public universities should foster intellectual diversity, instead of conducting trainings that teach students and staff to categorize themselves according to race.



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