

Missouri Valley Division of the IAFC: Include as a Strategic Goal

The Missouri Valley Division (MVD) of the IAFC recognizes and appreciates the greater awareness of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) in our communities and within fire and emergency services. The MVD also recognizes and appreciates the positive impacts fire and emergency services can realize when we act to Lead, Educate, and Serve regarding DEI. It is in affirmation of these beliefs that the MVD is taking action to join the IAFC is adopting *Include* as our fourth Strategic Goal. By adopting Include as a strategic goal, we emphasize our strong commitment to DEI. As modern fire chiefs, ensuring the members of our departments are prepared and equipped to meet the challenges of the job is not enough. We, and our changing society, demand that today's fire and emergency service leaders, and emerging leaders, adapt accordingly. As leaders, we will not push diversity and inclusiveness matters down on our priority list. Rather, we take this action to highlight and advocate DEI initiatives as a part of our Strategic Goals for the betterment of the Missouri Valley Division and our membership.

All fire and emergency service leaders must make it a priority to promote diversity, inclusion, and basic human dignity inside their organizations. Far too many incidents involving bullying, hazing, discrimination, and harassment continue in the fire service. We must be in tune with the culture in our departments and lead positive change by example. How we treat each other as the MVD, within our state chief organizations, and within our local organizations and communities, matters all the time, not just some of the time. If we look the other way at words and deeds that are inappropriate, or if we fail to seek available improvements to create a more inclusive and welcoming workplace, we are doing our entire industry and the public a grave disservice.

The MVD joins the IAFC urging the entire fire and emergency service to take positive steps to ensure human dignity by avoiding any remaining vestiges of discrimination or unequal treatment including, but not limited to, a basis on race, color, spirituality, gender, age, national origin, ancestry, socio-economic backgrounds, sexual orientation, gender expression, gender identity, ethnicity, marital status, or any legally protected characteristic.

The MVD joins the IAFC standing firmly behind its [Human Dignity statement of 2013](#) which "strongly recommends that all fire and emergency services organizations/agencies develop

written policies and have procedures in place to support these position recommendations. Included in these policies should be a statement reinforcing a zero-tolerance posture for acts of deliberate and/or intentional discrimination."

Written policies are not enough, however. The policies must be enforced every shift, every day, and be reflected in our actions and words. The culture of the MVD, state chief organizations, and our members, if it is poisoned socially and culturally, must be changed and it begins with our leadership, action, and assistance. The MVD Board of Directors challenges all state chief organizations and members to reaffirm their commitment to promoting diversity and inclusiveness in their departments and adopt this statement.

(DIVERSITY STATEMENT WAS ADOPTED BY: IAFC Board of Directors, August 2016)

ADOPTED BY: MVD Board of Directors, March 28, 2024