Getting Started With IDEA In Your Chapters

Undertaking IDEA as another function of your chapter may feel daunting. However it does not need to be so. Many chapters and AFP headquarters are addressing IDEA in a variety of ways. This document sets out some of the work that others are doing. We share them with you so feel free to use them in your chapter and/or to personalize it for your use.

MY CHAPTER RECOGNIZES IDEA IS IMPORTANT! WHAT NOW?

Get Leadership Buy In. As with all chapter initiatives, your leadership must support activities and provide resources to implement IDEA as part of regular chapter activities. It is also helpful to have a board or committee member lead any IDEA initiatives. This may be your Membership Chair or IDEA/Diversity Chair.

> As has been noted in several recent instances where diverse communities have not felt their voices are heard, representation matters! One person cannot necessarily speak on behalf of an entire group, but having a diverse and inclusive board adds new perspectives and can lead to a more considerate, diverse and inclusive chapter. If your board is not diverse, this may be a good place to start addressing it.

Strategize. Find a few ways to incorporate IDEA as a concept. This can be as simple as a chapter survey, using a diversity matrix to ensure that you are thoughtful about chapter events and communications to be as inclusive as possible. Consider developing an IDEA goal with action steps to hold your chapter accountable – convene a small group of chapter members and/or leadership to determine what reasonable goals you can set.

Implement. Take action! Recruit chapter members from underrepresented groups (and types of non-profits), check in on chapter events and communications to ensure that the matrix is being used, consider bringing in a speaker or workshop on an IDEA related fundraising topic, and evaluate your progress towards your IDEA goal.

Evaluate and Tweak. Has your chapter implemented all your strategies? Has your chapter become more diverse? Is it more reflective of your community at large and the types of non-profits in your community? Have inclusivity efforts led to chapter growth? It's best to look at your IDEA efforts as a journey, not a destination. You can expect to learn a lot about your chapter and your community as you implement IDEA. What you learn will probably challenge your assumptions and cause you to change some of your strategies – that is a good thing!

Additional IDEA activities you can implement can be found in the document: IDEA Activities Best Practices for AFP Chapters at www.afpnet.org, About AFP.

TYPES OF DIVERSE COMMUNITIES

There are obvious "classifications" people of think of when addressing diversity. We usually depend on visual clues and preconceived notions to classify each other by race, sex, sexual orientation, religious affiliation and physical ability. Here are other types of diverse groups/characteristics to consider:

- gender (different than sex, see chart below)
- socioeconomic status
- ethnicity
- language
- age
- parental status
- culture
- diet (which is often, but not always, a function of health consideration culture or religion)
- education level
- geography
- political/ideological beliefs
- marital status
- citizen status

A FEW IMPORTANT NOTES…

This is not a checklist or a complete list. This is a journey, a process.
You may find that, within your community, there are other types of diverse groups to consider. The purpose of listing these major groups is to make you think. What does diversity mean in your community?

A diverse group is not the same as a marginalized group.
Though many of these classifications may include a marginalized community it is important to consider, but not define diversity by those marginalized members.

Diverse groups are not a monolith.
While many communities have shared experiences or perceived prevailing characteristics, they are not a monolith - each individual is unique - which speaks to their humanity - and the range of diversity within each community is as broad as the wider community.

One person. Many Groups.
While a diverse characteristic may be a defining characteristic, an individual can and probably will be a member of more than one group!

Consideration is key. Consideration requires that you know your audience, not just relying on visual clues to determine which communities are represented within your group. Considering different perspectives drives innovative thought. Careful and thorough consideration can strengthen inclusion in your chapter, your communications as a fundraising professional, and your organization's relationship with your community