



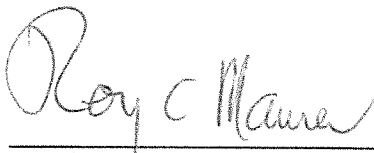
**BOARD RESOLUTION
DIVERSITY PLAN**

At the Thursday, April 27, 2017, meeting of Board of Directors of the Society of St. Vincent De Paul Archdiocesan Council of St. Louis the following recommendation was proposed and approved.

WHEREAS, The United Way recommends submitting a Board Diversity Plan, which includes an analysis of current Board members, identifies gaps and includes recruitment goals to diversify membership, and

WHEREAS, the Board recognizes the importance of being representative of the people we serve and our own staff and thus remains committed to increasing diversity;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board approves the Diversity Plan presented by the Executive Director at the April 27, 2017 Board Meeting.



Board Secretary



Date



Board Diversity Recruitment Plan

Updated April, 2017

In an effort to better understand and engage the larger St. Louis community in addressing the diverse needs of the poor, the Society of St. Vincent De Paul – Archdiocesan Council of St. Louis seeks to diversify its board composition through the initiatives outlined in this plan.

Historical Overview

The Society of St. Vincent de Paul originated in Paris, France, in 1833. Frédéric Ozanam, a young Sorbonne student, met regularly with his fellow Catholic students to discuss the issues of the day. At one of their public meetings, someone challenged, “What is the Catholic Church doing now? Show us your works and we will believe you.”

Shortly afterward, Ozanam drew six friends together and inspired them to create the Conference of Charity, with the purpose of serving the poor of Paris. Ozanam and his friends decided that no act of charity would be foreign to their organization. Members established volunteer groups known as “Conferences” or chapters. For people in need, the Conference members provided food, clothing, shelter and financial and spiritual assistance.

Ozanam chose the 17th-century priest St. Vincent de Paul, known as the Apostle of Charity, as patron of the Conference. Subsequently, the Conference of Charity was renamed the Society of St. Vincent de Paul. The international office of the Council General remains headquartered in Paris. In 1845, the first Conference in the United States started in St. Louis, Missouri.

Organizational Structure

Today, Conferences remain the basic organizational unit of the Society. Usually affiliated with a parish, Conferences provide grassroots support to those in need in their specific areas.

As the Society grew, Conferences organized into geographic areas called “Districts” to coordinate efforts and maintain communication and remain united in spirit.

Eventually, groups of Districts organized into “Councils.” Councils help create and expand Conferences, engage in Special Works beyond the capability of Conferences, prepare training courses and promote cooperation with other organizations and institutions.

Factors for Diversity Consideration

The St. Louis Council board structure corresponds with the federated structure of the Society, where each level retains some internal autonomy. The president of each level sits on the board of Directors of the next higher level. This practice ensures the member leaders, as well as the members they represent, retain decision-making rights from the conference level up the Council General in Paris.

The St. Louis Council is divided into ten Districts that serve the City of St. Louis, St. Louis County, St. Charles County, Franklin County, and nine surrounding Missouri rural counties. Each of these Districts elects a president who oversees the Conferences in his or her geographical area and sits as a voting member on the Council board.

In addition to the District presidents, the by-laws allow for the board president to appoint at-large members. The appointed members cannot exceed the District presidents.

The Society's Commitment to Achieving Diversity

The St. Louis Council remains intimately interested in diversity/multicultural issues because it is actively engaged on a regular basis with people of diverse backgrounds. In addition, the Council needs to be well-informed on such issues in order to serve its members well and to provide the most efficacious service to others, always maintaining the dignity of people. Moreover, the Society's Rule and the Catholic Church constantly remind members of the importance of working to address, in appropriate and sensitive ways, issues of diversity.

Ultimately, the Society's Mission Statement clearly identifies who the organization is and what it does about promoting diversity and affecting future change. Key passages that specifically address diversity are highlighted:

*Inspired by the Gospel values, the Society of St. Vincent de Paul, a Catholic lay organization, leads **women and men to join together** to grow spiritually by offering person-to-person service to those who are needy and suffering in the tradition of its founder, Blessed Frederic Ozanam, and patron, St. Vincent de Paul.*

As a reflection of the whole family of God, members, who are known as Vincentians, are drawn from every ethnic and cultural background, age group and economic level.

*Vincentians are united in an **international society** of charity by their spirit of poverty, humility, and sharing, which is nourished by prayer and reflection, mutually supportive gatherings and adherence to a basic Rule.*

*Organized locally Vincentians witness God's love by embracing all works of charity and justice. The Society **collaborates with other people of good will** in relieving need and addressing its causes, **making no distinction in those served because, in them, Vincentians see the face of Christ.***

At the meeting of the Board of Directors of the Society of St. Vincent De Paul - St. Louis Council on September 18, 2014, the following resolution was proposed and approved:

WHEREAS the Board of Directors is committed to increasing Board inclusiveness and diversity;
RESOLVES to approve the following Diversity Statement:

Society of St. Vincent DePaul - Archdiocesan Council of St. Louis is committed to fostering an inclusive environment that welcomes and celebrates diversity to advance our mission. We promote and respect the dignity of all individuals, and are committed to learning the diverse needs of those we serve, so we may serve them better. Our diversity is at the service of inclusiveness.

Initial Step to Increasing Diversity - Establishment a Board Governance Committee

In 2012, the board of directors recognized that, by far, the most important factor in developing an effective governing body and cultivating a diverse board involved having an intentional board recruitment and nominations process in place. Many homogeneous Boards can often be traced to the casual or haphazard way that some organizations go about recruiting, selecting and orienting board directors.

Although ten of the Council's current board seats were filled by the elected District presidents, the newly elected board president can appoint at-large board members. Depending on when the election is held, however, he or she has limited time from the point of taking office until his or her first board meeting, making recruitment, in general, a challenge.

Because board recruitment and nominations is such an important activity, in 2012, the Council board formed a standing, year-round, board Governance/Development committee to focus on recruiting quality members of diverse ethnic, gender, expertise and skills, as outlined above from the United Way indicators.

The Council board understands that developing effective board members and recruiting quality diverse leaders truly is an ongoing, year-round function: prospecting, contacting, recruiting, orienting, supporting, training, and evaluating board members.

Secondary Steps – Developing a Board Recruitment Matrix

The St. Louis Council board understands that the search for quality board members is a strategic activity that has long-term implications for the board's effectiveness. The board knows that having people with strong leadership skills, the ability to work as part of a team, and who ask good questions and follow through on commitments are minimum requirements. Likewise, consideration of current issues/trends facing the Society and resources needed, to serve the organization well, will drive the search process. Moreover, having our new strategic plan in place clarifies the specific skills and guides the members in their choice of whom to bring onto the board.

In addition to the needs illuminated by current issues and our strategic direction, the board recognizes it would benefit from seeking out diverse perspectives represented by individuals from different age and racial/ethnic groups as well as a balance of men and women. In its 2014 self-assessment, 64 percent of St. Louis Council board members responded that board diversity and inclusiveness needed improvement.

As of May 1, 2014, the St. Louis Council board consisted of:

Gender	Age	Race/Ethnicity	Expertise
12 – Male	1 – 20 to 39 years	1 – Native America	2 – Administration
3 – Female	5 – 40 to 65 years	1 – African-American	3 – Financial management
	9 – Over 65 years		0 – Fundraising
			0 – Government
			0 – Law
			1 – Media, marketing, PR
			5 – Corporate, business
			0 – Public utilities
			0 – Retail
			0 – Healthcare
			0 – Social services
			4 – Other

Once it was clear what kinds of composition the board needed over the next several years, the Governance Committee began to assess the attributes of the current board members. By comparing the two lists it became clear what gaps needed to be filled to support the Society’s strategic direction. Then the Governance Committee developed a recruitment matrix.

The Governance Committee’s final draft of the proposed board recruitment matrix was presented to the board for review in July, 2014, and approved. The goal here was to define what diversity means to the board and organization, and its benefits and challenges. This includes not only race, gender and age, but also diversity of skill sets.

Upon approval, the Governance committee worked with the board president to look for prospective new board members, not only to fill immediate vacancies, but also to meet the Society’s needs over the next several years.

Primary Step for Increasing Diversity – Board Diversity Assessment and Training

The St. Louis Council board recognizes changing demographics in American culture are requiring human service organizations to gain new knowledge about diversity and inclusion to build more cohesive work teams, leverage differences to meet goals, and to better understand and serve the Society’s clients.

Consequently, the St. Louis Council board approved a March 2014 proposal to invest \$2,000 in contracting the training services of St. Louis based, Diversity Awareness Partnership. The Diversity Awareness Partnership (DAP) is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization dedicated to promoting diversity in the St. Louis region around issues of race, religion, disability, etc.

The Diversity & Inclusion Training content included an overview of key diversity areas, such as race and ethnicity, religion, disability and age. Embedded in the training were facts, figures, and activities that helped participants to explore stereotypes, biases and the origins of discrimination.

Cultural Climate Assessment

Beginning in May, 2014, DAP conducted a cultural competence climate assessment of the St. Louis board: Cultural competence is the ability to understand, accept, respect, lead, work, and volunteer with people from other cultures and backgrounds. Cultural competence can be measured by the extent to which individuals and organizations can create and maintain an environment that is welcoming, equitable, and supportive of difference in the pursuit of common goals.

The 44-question electronic assessment addressed a) perceptions and understandings around diversity and inclusion in the community, and b) personal attitudes, biases, and values. Sample assessment questions included:

- I believe that we must be colorblind to achieve our diversity objectives.
- I have experienced some form of racial discrimination while on the board.
- I have heard racial slurs being used in at St. Vincent de Paul.
- Expectations/Standards on the board are different for men and women.
- I would not be comfortable if there were younger people on the board.

The results from 11 board members responding and presented here are only a representative of the major data points and data are demonstrated as a percentage of total respondents:

- Race & Ethnicity
 - 60% agree that they have never wondered whether someone has treated them a certain way because of their race
 - 27% agree that they feel uncomfortable discussing issues of race with their colleagues on the board
 - 100% agree that more people should be colorblind
- Gender
 - 60% disagree that the board has a good balance of male and female members
 - 45% agree that gender inequality exists on the board
- Age
 - 50% agree that older people tend to be more committed to an organization than young people
 - 30% think that most old people are unable to adapt to change
 - 80% agree that age discrimination is equally important as other types of discrimination
- Religion
 - 100% agree that they assume most of their colleagues are Christian
 - 100% agree that they feel comfortable discussing their religious tradition with their colleagues
 - 9% disagree that they are comfortable with colleagues including Scripture in their email signatures
 - 20% are not sure if people who celebrate Jewish and Muslim holidays should get time off work for those holidays
- Disability

- 50% agree that they are unsure of social etiquette around interacting with people with disabilities
- 36% are not sure if SVDP is easy to navigate for people with physical disabilities
- Representation
 - 50% disagree that the board is representative of the St. Louis region at large

Training

After the assessment was conducted and reviewed by DAP, the board participated in a 90-minute training program. Highlights included:

- Review of regional racial demographics & national projections.
- Know the business case for diversity and inclusion at the board level and on the ground
- Discuss Catholic Identity and its intersection with race, gender, and age.
- Examine perceptions about people who are different than us impact our board and community interactions.
- Explore common racial/ethnic stereotypes, and “What Should I Say and What Shouldn’t I Say?”
- Make the board more accessible for people with disabilities.
- Explore the advantages of generational diversity.
- Discuss “What’s in it for me” – why is it important for everyone to be involved in this conversation?

Post-Training Results

As of April 1, 2017, the St. Louis Council board consists of:

Gender	Age	Race/Ethnicity	Expertise
13 – Male	2 – 20 to 39 years	1 – Native America	2 – Administration
4 – Female	6 – 40 to 65 years	3 – African-American	3 – Financial management
	9 – Over 65 years		0 – Fundraising
			1 – Government
			0 – Law
			1 – Media, marketing, PR
			5 – Corporate, business
			1 – Public utilities
			1 – Retail
			0 – Healthcare
			1 – Social services
			4 – Other

Next Steps

The Governance Committee will continue the progress created with DAP assistance to identify strategic recruitment partnerships and tactics to develop a more diverse pipeline of board

candidates relative to the approved recruitment matrix/goals and the United Way's governance quality standard indicators.

Specifically, the Governance Committee will:

- continue to make progress recruiting more diverse board members
- continue annual board survey about diversity, inclusion and change
- coordinate issue-specific follow-up sessions
- update and continue to utilize the diversity recruitment for recruitment

Finally, the Governance Committee will monitor activities and results by scheduling progress reports on diversity metrics.