

Diversity & Inclusion is a team effort

How Blue Cross & Blue Shield of Rhode Island is building a culture that reflects our community

WHY we value Diversity & Inclusion

At Blue Cross & Blue Shield of Rhode Island (BCBSRI), we have no doubt that Diversity & Inclusion (D&I) is integral to our success as a local, nonprofit health insurer—helping us meet the evolving needs of our members, our community, and our employees. D&I efforts have a great impact on our ability to grow our business, retain and attract talented associates understand our members and community, and be an innovative and high-performing organization.

Some people believe that the real measure of how diversity affects an organization is to count people by category, such as disability, ethnicity, sexual orientation, or race. Knowing the numbers in each of these categories is helpful, but D&I is, even more importantly, also about appreciating our individual qualities, experiences, and beliefs—ultimately uniting our different perspectives to benefit from each other's strengths.

Back in 2012, we created a strategic Diversity & Inclusion Plan that reflected our commitment to building a stronger culture for our employees and a better support system for our members. Here is a look at how we changed our culture, what we accomplished, and where we're headed next.

HOW we changed our culture

These steps reflect the changes we made from 2012-2016 to instill D&I as an essential part of our organization. We launched some of these initiatives concurrently as we worked to incorporate D&I into our employer, member, and community efforts.

Created a D&I strategy based on research, best practices, and leadership involvement.

Before we set goals and strategies for changing the culture at BCBSRI, we first had to understand where we were. In September 2012, BCBSRI's Office of Diversity & Inclusion, staffed by two D&I professionals, contracted with an external consultant to conduct a D&I assessment, which collected data through three avenues:

Executive interviews

Each of our 16 senior leadership team members participated in a two-hour, one-on-one interview with the consultant.

Employee focus groups

More than 10% of our employees voluntarily participated in focus groups organized by dimension of diversity and facilitated by consultants who shared that dimension of diversity with the participants. The groups available were: women, men, Asian, Black/African American, Hispanic/Latino, LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender), employees born before 1965, and employees born in or after 1965.

Confidential employee survey

78% of associates contributed to the assessment by completing a confidential survey.

78%

Employees who participated in D&I assessment survey

After the assessment was complete, our 16 senior leaders met to review the results and identify the top priorities of the organization related to D&I. Each of these leaders chose at least one priority they would personally champion. The identified priorities were:

- Define our ideal organizational culture and how we get there.
- Integrate D&I and people into corporate strategic objectives and measure progress.
- Develop career development opportunities, mentoring, pipelines, and transparent career paths.
- Focus externally on community, cultural competence, and data collection.

HOW WE SUPPORTED D&I INTERNALLY

Incorporated D&I goals into our Employee Performance Incentive Program.

To demonstrate how integral D&I is to BCBSRI's future, our senior leaders created a D&I goal for each of our corporate divisions. Employees receive financial incentives based on how well the company performs on these goals, including increasing supplier diversity, advertising in local publications for diverse audiences, and completing D&I and cultural competence education.

Made D&I training a requirement for leadership.

In 2013, we worked with Human Resources to incorporate a half-day D&I session into the leadership development program. Through discussions, videos, games, and role playing, managers learned more about each other, their teams, and the business case behind D&I initiatives. At the same time, every member of management (up to and including our CEO) was expected to attend a custom-designed, full-day session titled "Leading Inclusion" to:

- Examine how D&I contributes to exceptional performance and supports the business success of BCBSRI.
- Engage in dialogue about the role of managers in creating a high-achieving workplace that leverages all available talent.

Managers left the training with the Harvard Business Review article "How (Un)ethical Are You?," a personal development plan, and a list of essential skills for inclusive leaders. We continue to offer this session for all new managers.

Offered D&I training to all employees.

After the leadership training, many managers said that they'd like their direct reports to experience the training. We rolled out "Championing Diversity & Inclusion for Business Success" to all employees.

What individual contributors thought of the training:

"I learned more about who I am and what my biases are and got the building blocks to work on these."

"Loved it and will use it in my everyday life (at work and not)."

92%

Managers who rated the D&I training "very good" or "excellent"

85%

Employees who completed the training in the first year

Provided helpful D&I information on our intranet.

In addition to in-person trainings, we made information available on our intranet, including:

- A diversity dictionary to provide employees with information about inclusive and exclusive language
- Links to organizations and resources supporting a variety of dimensions of diversity
- “Meetings in a Box” to help managers talk to their teams about D&I
- A calendar of holidays that are important to many employees, but are not part of our corporate calendar, to make sure big meetings aren't scheduled on major religious holidays

100%

Diversity film series attendees who felt the event was a good use of their time

Established a Diversity Council.

In 2013, our Diversity Council was created with 25 associates nominated by senior leadership as strong representatives of their division who are ambassadors for D&I. Their mission is to promote D&I and cultural competence within BCBSRI. Our Diversity Council has taken an active role in advocating for and celebrating D&I, including:

- **Keeping management up-to-date on D&I initiatives.** In 2015 alone, this group presented nearly 50 times to departments across the organization.
- **Acting as sounding board for the Office of D&I.** The council provides advice, guidance, and input on programs and initiatives.
- **Hosting a diversity film series.** This series inspires learning and conversation around films dealing with topics related to D&I, including *The Joy Luck Club*, *Pride*, and *The Best Exotic Marigold Hotel*. Films are pre-watched and discussed over culturally themed food.
- **Celebrating Diversity Week.** In 2016, we held Diversity Week, featuring speakers and interactive activities that provided education, conversation, and fun while employees learned more about various D&I topics.

5

Employee resource groups now available

Created employee resource groups.

Our Diversity Council oversees employee resource groups (ERGs), which we introduced in 2015. These are fully supported by the executive leadership team. ERGs are networks of like-minded associates who come together around a non-majority dimension of diversity. All employees are welcome to participate, regardless of their identity. We took a grassroots approach to setting up ERGs by letting associates organize and determine our biggest needs. Five groups quickly emerged:

Blue pRIde

Focus: LGBTQ individuals

Mission: To create a safer, more supportive environment for members of the LGBTQ community for employees, partners, and the community as a whole through the power of diversity

Goals: Supporting LGBTQ employees and their allies through BCBSRI products, services, policies, and/or procedures and by fostering a safe and supportive environment at BCBSRI. They are raising BCBSRI's profile within the statewide LGBTQ community by actively supporting external events.

Emerging Blue Talent

Focus: Young professionals

Mission: To shape the future of BCBSRI by motivating, supporting, and facilitating the growth of developing professionals under the age of 40 (who make up nearly 50% of the organization)

Goals: Serving as a think tank for corporate initiatives and increasing engagement of associates younger than 40.

Latin@Link

Focus: Latinos

Mission: To serve as a channel to welcome ideas, talents, and contributions from Latinos and allies to further advance the mission, vision, and strategy of BCBSRI

Goals: Acting as a sounding board, exploring emerging market products and needs, and encouraging the creation of culturally sensitive marketing and branding materials. They have organized two “lunch and conversation” series to help employees practice their Spanish and Portuguese language skills.

“Latin@Link was an important partner to our in-house creative team in the development of a comprehensive marketing campaign that connects our brand to Hispanic and Latino communities in Rhode Island. We’re so proud to feature our employees in the ads.”

–Jeremy Duncan, vice president, Brand and Marketing Communications

Military Services

Focus: Active, retired, reserve, and separated military service members and their families

Mission: To provide professional development opportunities and enhance the experience of current and future BCBSRI leaders who have served our country

Goals: Supporting service members and their families before, during, and after deployment to help with the challenges associated with military life.

Parents@Work

Focus: Professionals working to achieve the balance between career and childcare

Mission: To provide resources, share experiences, and advocate for all types of families at BCBSRI

Goals: Hosting discussions, advocating for enhanced parental benefits, and helping BCBSRI be recognized as one of the best companies for working parents.

Tracked employee diversity and created development opportunities to close gaps.

While D&I is not just about counting the different groups of people at BCBSRI, tracking employee diversity does allow us to keep an eye on any major trends. When we started tracking employee diversity in 2013:

- Our organization was 72% women, which is fairly standard for the healthcare field. However, that percentage was lower at the management level and declined more significantly in the upper levels of the organization.
- People of color made up approximately 14% of BCBSRI employees, but 25% of the state's population.*

These numbers don't inform the actions we take; they inform the questions we ask. For example, if the question is, "Why aren't there more women and people of color in leadership?" and the answer is, "There aren't as many women and people of color ready for leadership roles," then our response is to offer very specific development opportunities. To that end, we invested in a few targeted development programs to help close the identified gaps.

116 employees

Participated in B.I.G. Blue: Build. Invest. Guide. from 2014 to 2016. Designed and developed by our office of D&I, this 10-month structured mentoring program supports employees' professional development. Mentors and mentees are all BCBSRI employees.

11 employees

Participated in programs through WOMEN Unlimited, a world-renowned organization focused on developing women leaders in major corporations

14 employees

Participated in two year-long leadership development programs through The Partnership, the region's premier expert on talent management solutions for professionals of color

"The Partnership is a remarkable leadership program that has positively influenced my perspective and management approach."

–Judith Shepherd, managing director, Business Change & Continuity

Updated employee benefits to align with D&I best practices.

BCBSRI has made changes to employee benefits to support our D&I efforts. Our Family Medical Leave Act policy has been updated to provide time off equity to different kinds of new parents. Employees who are giving birth, are the partner of a person giving birth, or are adopting receive 10 days of leave with pay that does not affect their paid time off bank.

To create an environment where employees who transition genders feel supported, we also enhanced our health benefits to include gender-confirming surgery before this coverage was required. We already covered mental health and pharmacy services for transitioning employees, so our benefits are now in line with health insurance best practices. We also developed guidelines to help support transitioning associates, their team, and Human Resources.

*U.S. Census Bureau, Rhode Island Quickfacts 2016.

116

Employees who graduated from B.I.G. Blue: Build. Invest. Guide, from 2014 to 2016

10

Days of additional company paid leave for all new parents

99%

BCBSRI employees with clinical backgrounds who received cultural competence education

HOW WE SUPPORTED OUR MEMBERS

Offered cultural competence education to all BCBSRI employees who talk with members on the phone and in person.

This includes employees in our call center, our stores, and on our clinical staff. The training helps make employees aware of how culture and subtle bias affect perception as well as explains the business case for culturally competent phone-based interactions.

Helped improve members' healthcare experience through cultural competence education for providers.

Part of making healthcare affordable and simple is ensuring that our members—those who carry a BCBSRI insurance card—receive care that is culturally relevant to them. Here are some things we did to work toward this goal:

Offered web-based Quality Interactions® tool for primary care providers.

Our Advance Primary Care practices can take advantage of this case-based educational tool that helps increase the quality of cross-cultural interactions. We cover the cost and provide incentives to nurses and physicians who complete the program.

Hosted in-person training.

In October 2015, we partnered with Warren Alpert Medical School of Brown University to hold a day-long conference for providers: "Cultural Considerations and Applications to Healthcare." It highlighted the importance of acknowledging culture with respect to providing care to patients with a different cultural background from their own.

Created the BCBSRI Safe Zone program to identify LGBTQ-friendly provider practices.

We created this program to highlight community healthcare providers—physicians, dentists, and behavioral health providers—who commit to supportive and affirming practices for LGBTQ patients. Research and our community members have told us that it is a struggle to find healthcare professionals who provide safe care to LGBTQ people. This certification helps to close that gap.

100%

BCBSRI customer service reps who are trained in providing a safe environment for the LGBTQ community

HOW WE SUPPORTED THE COMMUNITY

Educated diverse audiences on health and healthcare.

Getting involved in the community helps us to learn more about who community members are and what they need and want from us. When we develop relationships in the community, we become a better insurer and employee, which helps us continue to diversify our workforce.

Our Community Relations Department does incredible work in the community, with a focus on serving the most vulnerable members of our community, including the uninsured and under-insured. We partnered with them on a number of programs, including:

Educating Rhode Islanders on healthcare

As a result of the Affordable Care Act, many Rhode Islanders are now receiving healthcare benefits for the first time. To help educate new enrollees, we created *Healthcare Basics: Your Guide to Understanding Healthcare in Rhode Island*. It's available in English, Spanish, and Portuguese.

Partnering with Latino Public Radio

Since 2012, we've worked closely with Latino Public Radio on a program called "Asegúrate" ("Insure Yourself") that provides information on healthcare, wellness, and health insurance. The program is hosted by our employees and features special guests from BCBSRI and the community.

Offering diabetes screenings in communities of color

Hispanic and African-American communities experience higher than average rates of diabetes, high cholesterol, and high blood pressure. To help address these health disparities, we held free health screenings in collaboration with community partners.

49%

People screened who had blood pressure above recommended levels

Helped students with disabilities receive job training.

We participate in Project SEARCH—a high school transition program for students with disabilities ages 18-21—through a partnership with a local school district and state agencies. The students are given opportunities at BCBSRI in food services, office services, maintenance, and other areas of the company. Project SEARCH improves employment outcomes for participants as well as enriches our organization.

“Like all of us, people with disabilities simply need opportunity and support to achieve their potential. Project SEARCH does just that, while giving us all the opportunity to learn from each other.”

*– Bobby Rodriguez,
vice president, Human Resources and Chief Diversity Officer*

11%

People screened who had blood sugar levels high enough to warrant a doctor’s visit

Advertised and placed articles in local niche publications serving diverse audiences.

In 2013, we began expanding our media efforts—paid and unpaid—to Rhode Island’s African-American newspaper as well as both Rhode Island-based news magazines for the LGBTQ population. These three publications now include BCBSRI advertisements in every issue.

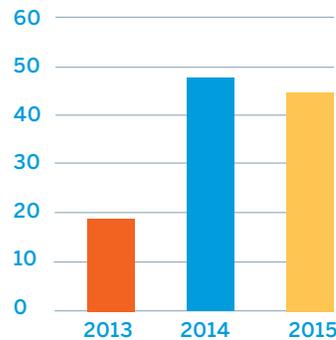
30+

Number of D&I community events that BCBSRI supports annually

Unpaid media – in publications aimed at or in articles about marginalized communities

Sample topics for placed articles

- How to find an LGBT-friendly provider
- BCBSRI Latino Health Fair
- Mental health challenges at the intersection of sexual identity and race



169%

Growth in spend with diverse suppliers in 2015

Increased the number of small or diverse businesses that provide our goods and services.

Our Supplier Diversity Program encourages small businesses or those that are at least 51% owned by people of color, women, LGBTQ people, people with disabilities, veterans, or those in other disenfranchised groups to participate in the competitive bid process for goods and services. This program helps build stronger relationships with a more diverse set of stakeholders and supports our local community.

WHAT we achieved

Over the last three years, we've invested our time and resources into helping create a diverse and inclusive environment for our employees, members, and community. As these numbers show, we've made significant and measurable progress.

15%

Employees who belong to at least one employee resource group

Growth in employee involvement

Employee engagement with the Diversity Council, employee resource groups, and other "extracurricular" D&I-sponsored programs has increased over the last three years.

Increase in employee diversity

While we do not require hiring managers to report on dimensions of diversity in their candidate pools, our D&I efforts have triggered a ripple effect in the composition of our associate population, which now more closely reflects our community.

All numbers reflect end-of-year figures except 2016, which is as of 6/30/16.

Employees of color

2016	17.2%
2012	14.2%
Rhode Island Labor Market*	20.4%

Employees of color in leadership**

2016	7.7%
2012	4.7%

*Source: U.S. Census Bureau. 2010 American Community Survey

Women in organization

69%

Employees are women (2016)

Women in leadership**

55%

Leadership roles filled by women (2016)

**Leadership is defined as any position with supervisory responsibility.

Improvement in inclusion

We measure employee's feelings about inclusion on our annual surveys using a five-point scale, with five being "strongly agree."

Improvement in inclusion as measured on annual employee surveys

8.85%

Increase in inclusion (2012 - 2016)

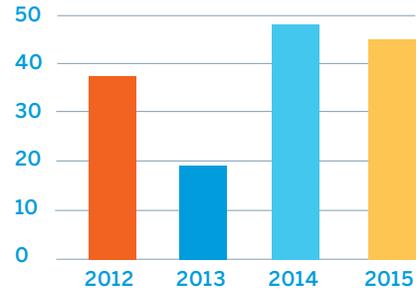
78%

Percentage of participants or clients served by overall community investments in 2015 who are people of color

Growth in D&I community investment

As we've increased our support for D&I throughout the organization, that change has been reflected in our investments in the community, including grants, sponsorships, and other support.

Community investment funding provided to organizations that support diverse and inclusive communities (African-American/Black, Asian, people with disabilities and mental health support needs, Hispanic/Latino, LGBTQ, veterans, women, youth, seniors)



Increase in supplier diversity

With the support of our leadership team, we've been making strides in supplier diversity. We're currently identifying the supplier diversity spend of our suppliers (how many diverse suppliers they work with) to help us better understand the impact we have on small businesses and those owned by women, people of color, veterans, people with disabilities, LGBTQ people, and others from disenfranchised groups.

11.5%

Percentage of administrative spend paid in 2015 to vendors who are classified as a minority- or women-owned business enterprise

AWARDS AND RECOGNITION

Seeing substantial improvements for our employees, members, and community is the best reward we could ask for. We're honored that our work is also recognized by organizations that we hold in high regard.



In 2015 and 2016, BCBSRI received a score of 100% on the Corporate Equality Index, a national benchmarking survey and report on corporate policies and practices relating to LGBT workplace equality, administered by the Human Rights Campaign Foundation. We are one of only two Rhode Island companies to receive a perfect score.



In 2015, BCBSRI was proud to receive the 2015 Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Award from the Providence branch of the NAACP.



Vice President of Human Resources and Chief Diversity Officer Bobby Rodriguez was named 2015 Corporate Diversity Officer of the Year by The Providence American newspaper. Bobby was recognized for leading BCBSRI's efforts in addressing D&I through programming and community involvement.

WHERE we're headed next

The strategic D&I plan that we developed was for 2013-2016, but that was just to get us started. We are continuing to measure and monitor our current initiatives as well as think and act bigger. Encouraged by the changes we've already seen, we're looking forward to doing more to support these important efforts on behalf of our employees, members, and community.

In 2016, we're thinking about D&I as a core component of our organizational culture. We are gaining greater understanding of the behaviors employees feel are expected of them and those we believe we should exhibit to more effectively reach our mission and vision.

In the coming years, we'll focus even more on recruitment of diverse employees. We'll make sure that our community thinks of us not only as a great source of information and health insurance plans, but also as a great employer. To achieve this, we'll engage local college and university students and offer them opportunities to see all that we have to offer. We'll also work with current and previous members of the military and help them translate their military experience into corporate language. With this work and more, we'll continue to make our organization richer by broadening the breadth and depth of experiences that our employees bring to the table. After all, as Maya Angelou said, "In diversity there is beauty and there is strength."

Diversity & Inclusion