



Starting an Employee Resource Group (ERG)

This is an example of the steps Douglas found many ERGs have followed to become established in the past (2009). Remember that each agency is unique and your employee groups are unique as well. Use this model as a conversation starter with your forming group. Create your own steps to follow based on your needs and community.



Step 1: Awareness and Education

Educating and bringing awareness at a broad level and the micro levels

- Assessing the organization and recruit employees to the group.
- Consider what leadership looks like and where folks from your community are within the organization. How do you engage folks at all levels?
- Educate employees at the organization, this is an opportunity to share and celebrate culture and help employees understand the ERG. Examples might include Bring your Child to Work Day for a parents group, or a Pride day for an LGBTQ group.



Step 2: Affiliation

Build community, build communication networks and methods.

- Events may include guest speakers, facilitated discussions, or reading groups. Begin and end events with networking opportunities for members to build community.
- During this phase you will establish and begin maintaining communication strategies and methods.
- Remember to listen to your members, survey or do quick focus groups to establish the kinds of events that would be most interesting or inviting. Similarly, use communication methods that your group prefers.



Step 3: Access

Assess the organization and the access your ERG members have. Develop a plan to improve this access.

- Start by understanding the access group members may already have to leadership and to making systematic or policy changes.
- Group members may be interested in a training on networking --both within the organization and beyond it.
- Develop a mentorship program to increase members access to leadership and to provide an opportunity for leadership development. Learn more on our mentorship page.



Step 4: Advancement

Continue the work started in step three, with a focus on leadership and trainings.

- Gather data and present your findings to leadership. For example, are members from your group not being presented with the opportunity to enter into existing leadership trainings?
- Use this data as a springboard to suggest a new training or development program specifically for your members.