

Using Responsible AI to Meet DEIA Goals in the Federal Government

Executive Order 13985 has renewed the focus on advancing diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility (DEIA) in the federal workforce. Federal agencies that have been subject to non-discrimination laws for decades now must expand efforts to hire more people from minority and under-represented groups.

Artificial intelligence (AI) is a powerful and proven tool for improving hiring diversity. Modern talent intelligence platforms can help agencies attract more diverse applicants, remove human bias from the hiring process, and advance DEIA goals. But agencies should tread cautiously, as not all AI technologies are created equal. Improving diversity outcomes requires fair and responsible AI.

Challenges Hiring Diverse Candidates

Federal agencies have made important progress toward building a diverse workforce. But obstacles to hiring diverse and under-represented talent remain:

- > **Unconscious bias** can creep into the screening and hiring process, resulting in candidates from minority backgrounds being disproportionately overlooked.
- > **Difficulties assessing candidate skills** has led to an over-reliance on filters like a four-year college degree, which puts diverse candidates at a disadvantage.
- > **Imposter syndrome** reduces the application flow from diverse candidates, who are more likely to disqualify themselves because they feel like they don't "fit the bill".
- > **Lack of meaningful diversity metrics** makes it difficult for talent leaders to track, report, and create accountability for DEIA outcomes.

Eightfold® Enhances Hiring with AI

The Eightfold® Talent Intelligence Platform™ helps agencies overcome these obstacles with an AI-powered hiring process. The Eightfold platform uses AI to match applicants to jobs and opportunities by leveraging a rich cross-sectional dataset of over a billion career paths. Through the AI, employers can calibrate their requisitions with necessary job skills and see recommended candidates that have the potential to succeed in that role. With AI surfacing best-fit candidates based on relevant skills and not personal characteristics such as race and gender, diverse job seekers get the consideration they deserve, and agencies can quickly find and engage the best talent. The Eightfold platform enhances human decision-making in hiring by providing intelligent metrics and facilitating outreach to diverse candidates. The AI empowers hiring processes driven by equality and fairness, and never replaces the human in the loop. The recruiter always has the final say.

"I believe that, carefully designed and properly used, AI really has the potential to advance diversity and inclusion in the workplace by mitigating the risk of unlawful discrimination."

Keith Sonderling,
 Commissioner, U.S. Equal
 Employment Opportunity
 Commission (EEOC)

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Eightfold's AI Improves DEIA Outcomes

The Eightfold platform has delivered quantifiable improvements in diversity hiring, including a 91% increase in female applicants, a 30% increase in Black and Hispanic applicants, and a 47% increase in diversity hires. The platform's AI-powered hiring process has these advantages:

- > **Creates a level playing field** by matching applicants with jobs based on what they can do now and in the future based on their skills potential, rather than what their background is or the connections they may have.
- > **Mitigates imposter syndrome** to increase applicant diversity by showing job seekers why they are a good fit for a given role.
- > **Prevents unconscious bias** during the screening process by masking candidate details like name, race, and gender.
- > **Provides rich diversity analytics** so talent leaders can see where bias enters the hiring process and take corrective action.
- > **Enables more inclusive job descriptions** with real-time insights on how adding or deleting skill requirements can impact the size and diversity of the candidate pool.

Our Commitment to AI for Good

Our commitment to ethical AI is embodied in our human-centered AI design and governance. Eightfold AI is built on the principles of fairness, accuracy, and robustness. These values guide the lifecycle of our services.

- 1) **Responsible:** We believe that human oversight is a critical tool for responsible AI governance. Eightfold conducts regular feature audits to check against biases before implementing any changes to the algorithm.
- 2) **Equitable:** Every individual should be matched to opportunities that best fit their capabilities and skills. Eightfold's platform is designed to be fair across protected groups. Our algorithms do not consider gender, race, age, and other personal protected characteristics that can lead to unconscious bias.
- 3) **Traceable:** Eightfold validates AI systems with pre-deployment testing to reinforce risk management and human oversight. We couple these safeguards with strong post-deployment controls to provide transparency and configurability to our customers and candidates.
- 4) **Reliable:** Eightfold helps customers comply with EEOC and OFCCP non-discrimination obligations by ensuring that candidate assessments are driven by job-related skills. Eightfold's AI validation methods such as candidate masking and statistical parity provide reliable measures for mitigating biases.
- 5) **Governable:** Our AI drives equitable employment and talent management. We govern our AI with the goal to facilitate outreach to diverse groups, mitigate selection biases, and promote diversity and inclusion. Eightfold brings experience in working jointly with government and stakeholders to accelerate labor market transitions with the responsible use of AI.

From Commitment to Results

The time is right to apply AI to the diversification of the federal workforce. AI-powered systems like the Eightfold Talent Intelligence Platform can increase the number of diverse applicants and help equalize the playing field for finding opportunities. AI has already proven its value in the private sector, where Eightfold customers have measurably improved hiring diversity. The federal government can make similar advances in meeting its DEIA goals. By adopting AI-powered hiring, the nation's largest employer can set an example for others and capitalize on the opportunity to add diverse talent during the post-pandemic jobs recovery. Agencies can transform the workforce with AI that starts learning and delivering results from day one.