

DEI in 2025: Navigating Compliance and Culture in a Polarized Climate



New federal actions, agency guidance, and court rulings are reshaping how employers approach Diversity, Equity & Inclusion. Programs must now balance **culture goals** with **compliance requirements** to avoid legal and reputational risks.

Key Federal & Enforcement Changes

- **EO 14173 (Jan 2025)** revokes EO 11246, changing federal contractor affirmative-action rules; OFCCP rescission is proposed but not final.
- **EEOC/DOJ guidance** warns DEI efforts can violate Title VII if they influence decisions based on protected traits.
- **Certification risk:** Some agencies require compliance attestations; a DOL enforcement rule is currently under injunction.

On-the-Ground Trends

- Federal contractors should **maintain current AAPs** until rules are finalized.
- DEI policies are being reframed toward **skills-based inclusion**.
- Whistleblower and FCA enforcement risks are rising.

Need Help?

Talk to an MP HR partner to align your DEI goals with today's regulatory reality and protect your workplace culture.

HR Action Steps for 2025

- **Audit DEI programs** for quota language or trait-based criteria.
- **Document merit-based decisions** in hiring and promotion.
- **Track OFCCP rulemaking** and court updates.
- **Train managers** on compliant, inclusive practices.
- **Review certifications** with legal counsel before signing.

Why This Matters

Effective DEI still drives engagement and retention, but in 2025, success depends on neutral, job-related criteria backed by clear documentation.