

# DEI Expansion in MidAm

Recommended for adoption by the Mid Am Executive Board on July 7, 2020

DEI is Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. There is a recognized need for increasing DEI efforts and impacts in USA hockey and in the MidAm district. To do this successfully, the three components all need to be present and working together for the goal of changing the culture within USA hockey. This goal requires leaders and grassroots members to address the issues and work together to improve individual awareness and group actions to make everyone feel welcome in MidAm.

There are multiple parts of this proposal that are designed to work cooperatively to increase our DEI awareness and sensitivity, improve our DEI efforts and emphasize the zero-tolerance policy for those who behave negatively through speech and action. The overall goals of this proposal are:

1. To create more resources (people) in the district who provide support with DEI
2. To educate our leadership and new resource personnel to better understand the issues and how to move MidAm forward as a district and regarding individual incidents
3. To further support changing the culture by addressing instances of 601(e) (3) incidents of hateful, or discriminatory language that is reported to the game officials but do not fall under the match penalty rule.

## New Resource - State DEI Advisor

-Purpose To provide a grassroots individual who can offer support specific to DEI concerns in a designated area

-Selection The DEI advisor will be nominated by any USA hockey association in the respective state or area (western PA). The candidate can be inside or outside the USA hockey community. Candidates will be reviewed by a committee of state VPs and other MidAm board members. The candidates must be willing to become a USA hockey member and complete all required training and screening.

-Responsibilities With assistance from state VPs and MidAm administrator, the state advisor will be responsible to initiate contact with all associations within their state or area. They will work to establish contact in associations and develop a database of DEI initiatives and activities that already exist. This information will be shared with the MidAm Diversity director and the MidAm board.

The state advisors will meet regularly with the MidAm diversity director and work to better understand best practices for DEI initiatives in associations, states and the district. The active database and continued discussion and sharing of information will help support future DEI initiatives. This group will report to the MidAm board through the Diversity director.

-Desired Outcomes Select state advisors by August 15th. The state advisor will be a grassroots point of contact and support for families, coaches and associations who have questions concerning DEI, with a goal of 30 such support and advisory actions in year 1. They will not replace SafeSport and supplemental reports of incidents, but they can advise on questions based on their training (see next section) and refer people to the appropriate point of contact in MidAm, i.e. SafeSport, Diversity director, Coach-in-chief, etc.

## Training

-Purpose To educate and prepare the MidAm executive board members and the state DEI advisors to best address questions, issues and incidents that are specific to DEI. The board is evaluating DEI training proposals.

-Desired Outcomes The participants will gain insight into cultural competency and unconscious bias as it applies to society and particularly to MidAm. The individuals will better understand and address all instances of offensive, hateful, and discriminatory language. The state DEI advisors will better understand how to communicate and work with families, coaches, associations, and administrators to provide support and guidance on diversity, equity, and inclusion. The executive board members can proactively work to support and create more diversity, equity, and inclusion throughout MidAm and particularly at the leadership level.

## Rule 601(e) (3) Expansion

-Purpose To document and address all instances of 601 (e) (3), offensive, hateful, and discriminatory language, that are reported to game officials. \*These are instances when the game official did not hear the language and cannot issue the match penalty for what was said.

-History The October 30, 2019 rule addendum helped address the issue of hateful language, requiring game officials to issue a match penalty for incidents when a game official hears the words and can identify the speaker. The addendum also called for officials to file a report for incidents which they do not hear, but rather the language is reported to them. These incidents leave a troubling situation where the victim(s) feel everything from hurt, anger, shame, unwelcome, etc, and the speaker has no consequences for their words.

This needs to be addressed for multiple reasons; the education of individuals and teams and support of the USA hockey zero tolerance policy on hate speech.

-Proposed Response All MidAm officials will be educated on the requirement to submit a report on incidents of reported 601(e) (3) incidents. MidAm will keep an active database on all reported incidents. The coaches of both teams in the game will receive notification of the submitted report. The coach of the victim's team will be notified, so they can speak to their player and player's family with knowledge that the reported incident is being addressed.

For a first reported incident by a team, the reported team's coach and association administrative contact will be notified of the required educational DEI activity\* and the time frame for completion. The activity is a guided discussion with specific questions to help participants gain awareness of our similarities, differences, and how words can significantly affect others. To support the initiative, the team (coaches, players, and an association leader) will participate in the complete within the allowed time (10 days) or the coach will be suspended until the activity\* is completed. The proposed documentation of completing the DEI activity is pictures of the scribed responses generated during the discussion and these will be submitted to MidAm as confirmation.

For a second or third reported incident by a team, the reported team's coach and association administrative contact will be required to meet with MidAm staff to determine a course of action for the team. MidAm executive board members and the diversity director would be directly involved in developing plans for a course of action as they will have the training to best understand how to approach the situation.

All actions taken under this policy shall comply with USA Hockey Bylaw 10.C.

-Development Plan The questions and guide for facilitating the DEI activity will be developed in cooperation with RISE, a national nonprofit organization that works in the sports community to promote social justice and eliminate racism, or it will be outsourced through USA hockey national office with an estimated cost of \$750.

-Desired Outcomes The participants in MidAm hockey will gain more awareness of how 601(e)(3) language impacts on the victims. As more people understand and accept the zero tolerance for hate speech, the goal is a decrease of 25% in the number of incidents reported per month from September to February in year 1. The position of the MidAm district will be strengthened on a significant issue and we see more DEI growth and initiatives within our district. There will be feedback from within MidAm associations which will be compared to an active database to review tangible results and continue to improve our efforts. Additionally, documentation can be shared with USA hockey national office and possibly impact national DEI improvements.