

Social Equity and ODOT's Advisory Committees

HB 2985

Frequently Asked Questions

House Bill 2985

FAQs

Question: What is HB 2985?

Answer: HB 2985, passed by the 2021 Legislative Assembly, directs ODOT to diversify its advisory committees to reflect the racial, ethnic, and ability composition of Oregon's population, as determined by the most recent American Community Survey. The effective date of this measure is January 1, 2022.

Question: Why are we doing this?

Answer: In addition to being required by law (with the passage of HB 2985), ODOT's Strategic Action Plan directs the agency to prioritize diversity, equity and inclusion to ensure all Oregonians benefit from transportation services and investments. Diversifying advisory committees and engaging voices from all communities is an important step toward achieving that. When people ask about how you are implementing HB 2985, you should be able to clearly and concisely articulate this message and indicate what actions your advisory committee is taking.

Question: Where do I access the American Community Survey data (ASC)?

Answer: The American Community Survey reports on race/ethnicity and disability and can be found on the [United States Census Bureau webpage](#). ODOT has also developed a [Social Equity Index Map](#) that uses the ACS data and provides more detailed information based on a geographic location.

Question: What if all the counties for my Regional Advisory Committee aren't listed in the Survey?

Answer: Use the data for the counties that are listed, or the closest counties to your area of Oregon or refer to the [Social Equity Index Map](#) which provides more detailed information on block areas.

Question: Do we need to dismiss members right now in order to meet the requirements of the bill?

Answer: No, committees will be diversified through attrition. In other words, when a member's term is about to expire, recruitment efforts will begin to replace that member with a person who increases the diversity of the committee.

Question: Can I use the Advisory Committee Interest form to understand the racial, ethnic and ability composition of committee members now?

Answer: Yes, the form is a great way to get the baseline information of your committee now.

Question: What is the timeline for implementing HB 2985?

Answer: Efforts to diversify your committee are not one and done. This effort will be ongoing and with the understanding that this is a process that may take some committees longer than others to meet the goals established through HB 2985.

Question: What if my committee's membership is technical in nature?

Answer: Best efforts must be made to recruit members who meet the technical requirements and also diversify the committee.

Question: What if my committee's membership is set?

Answer: Review the committee's requirements. Expanding the charter may be the solution.

Question: Will my committee's work have to stop if seats are vacant and we are unable to find anyone available to join who diversifies the committee?

Answer: No, a committee's work will continue if seats remain vacant.

Question: How do I find potential committee members who would represent the racial, ethnic, and ability composition of Oregon?

Answer: Reach out to community-based organizations who serve various minority groups, such as the Urban League of Portland, Causa, Disability Rights Oregon, APANO, etc. Also consider reaching out to trade associations, both local and national, such as National Association of Minority Contractors Oregon, National Association of Minority Automobile Dealers, COMTO Oregon/SW Washington, etc.

Question: Does this interact at all with the Equitable Engagement Compensation Program or HB 2992, both of which compensate ODOT committee members for their participation?

Answer: While the EECF and HB 2992 are separate from the requirement to diversify ODOT's committee memberships, they do complement each other. As we transition to involve diverse populations, some may have limited ability to participate due to experiencing income disparities. HB 2985 is assisted by the EECF and HB 2992 by offering compensation to qualifying members for their participation on ODOT's committees, thereby reducing or eliminating financial barriers.

Question: Is implementing HB 2985 my responsibility as the ODOT staff person for the committee?

Answer: Yes and no. It is incumbent upon the committee to make membership diversity a core value of the committee. The committee should reflect these values in their bylaws and membership recruitment practices and effort should be made by the committee as a whole to better represent Oregon. The committee will need guidance from ODOT staff, but the responsibility to diversify and engage voices from all communities falls to the entire committee.

Question: Who should I contact if I have additional questions?

Answer: Please contact Susie Ashenfelter in the Office of Social Equity (jesusa.m.ashenfelter@odot.oregon.gov).