



Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Action Plan



Introduction

The Oregon State Marine Board (OSMB) was established in 1959 to be the leader in recreational boating for Oregon. Throughout our history, boating has evolved from being primarily a middle-aged white male activity, to one that better reflects Oregon's diverse population. Boating has diversified in all aspects including race, gender, age, physical ability, income level and geography. The agency was slow to respond to the changing demographics of Oregon boaters, but in 2019, the agency embarked on a multi-year effort to reshape our agency to serve all boaters and be prepared to respond to future changes in boating.

The OSMB vision, "**Boaters benefit as the Marine Board navigates change and growth of waterway use,**" provides the forward-looking call to action in serving boaters. As a public agency committed to access and equality, it is our privilege to work with communities across Oregon to fulfill our vision.

The Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Plan is built to integrate and support the agency's Strategic and Affirmative Action Plans. By aligning these three plans, our actions are harmonized with the agencies core values:

- **Transparency:** We ensure agency information is available to the public through honest and collaborative engagement.
- **Trust and Credibility:** We communicate with authenticity, are accountable for our mistakes, seek to understand issues and find solutions with others.
- **Innovation:** We push ourselves to find solutions for tomorrow that are better than what we did yesterday.
- **Boating:** Our passion is the confluence of boating, innovation, tradition, safety, and stewardship.
- **Diversity and Inclusion:** We are a culture where inclusivity is a reflex, not an initiative.

OSMB is ready to take on the challenge of meeting the diverse needs of Oregon boaters. While this plan will serve as a guide, there is a recognition that the agency needs to be flexible, continue to learn and remain engaged as we move forward.

Plan Development

OSMB developed this plan as part of a multi-year effort to modernize our strategic plan. Throughout the process, input from local communities across Oregon was used. The following are some examples of the community engagement process:

- Held community engagement meetings across the state.
- Consulted with Oregon's Federally recognized Tribal Governments.
- Attended meetings with non-profit organizations who serve Oregon's diverse communities.
- Received feedback from the Environmental Equity Committee.
- Participated in the Racial Justice Council's budget development process.

- Utilized statewide outdoor recreation survey data.
- Offered multiple opportunities for staff to provide input.

Establishing a Foundation

OSMB has taken actions to set a foundation for future DEI work. These actions were developed and implemented in partnership with underserved communities across Oregon.

1. In 2020, OSMB began implementing a new Waterway Access Program. This program created a new grant mechanism for paddling access, and education and outreach for underserved communities. In addition, Oregon's nine federally recognized Tribes are eligible to receive grants.

As of December 2022, over \$250,000 grants have been awarded to non-governmental organizations to increase opportunities for underserved communities to experience nonmotorized boating, safely.

2. In 2021, OSMB started a pilot program designed to expand outreach to underserved communities. The program had two Boating Safety Advocates (BSA) who conducted education and outreach to the approach used by park rangers to engage visitors. This approach deviated from the current model of outreach conducted by law enforcement partners.

The agency has received recognition from the National Association of States Boating Law Administrators (NASBLA) for piloting this new approach to boating safety. One of the BSA's also received recognition for saving a life on the Oregon coast.

Working through the Racial Justice Council's budget development process, the agency requested expanding the program to five seasonal BSAs.

3. As the number of boaters with physical disabilities or limitations increases, OSMB sees a need to ensure facilities are ready to serve them. Working with non-profits and individuals, OSMB developed a guide to increase accessibility at boat ramps. This guide has served as the basis for several projects that resulted in a facility that can be used by boaters that previously would have been overlooked.

Future Action

1. **Strategy/Focus area: Community Engagement**

- a. *Challenge:* The Boating Safety Program is undergoing a modernization process to ensure the agency is prepared to serve boaters into the future. This includes outreach and education to traditionally underserved communities where an established relationship with OSMB has not existed.
- b. *Action:* The agency worked with the Racial Justice Council and community partners that serve underrepresented communities to develop the budget request for permanent Boating Safety Advocate (BSA) positions.

As the BSA's are implemented, the agency will continue to engage underrepresented communities to refine implementation of these positions to ensure that they are meeting their intended outcomes.

- c. *Timeline:* Implementation began in August 2023. The Boating Safety Program will assess the program by January 2024, so changes can be made prior to the 2024 boating season. As part of the 2025-2027 budget presentation to the Oregon Legislature Joint Ways and Means Committee, the agency will include an analysis of the how effective the positions were at expanding outreach and education to underrepresented communities.

2. Strategy/Focus area: Communications

- a. *Challenge:* Ensuring boaters have the resources and information they need so they can have a positive boating experience.
- b. *Action:* Review and update the agency communication plan to ensure it adequately addresses communications with underserved communities.
- c. *Timeline:* This will be completed by January of 2024, allowing for adequate time for engagement with underserved communities.

3. Strategy/Focus area: Data

- a. *Challenge:* Lack of understanding about where underserved communities participate in boating and changes to facilities that would enhance their boating experience.
- b. *Action:* Complete the Facilities 6-year plan with input from underserved communities.
- c. *Timeline:* Data collection will take place throughout 2023 and an official report will be issued by June of 2024.

4. Strategy/Focus area: Budget

- a. *Challenge:* Alignment of the agency budget and budget development with actions that are developed with underserved communities.
- b. *Action:* OSMB developed the Boating Safety Program 2023-2025 budget with input from the Racial Justice Council and community organizations that represent underserved communities. For the 2025-2027 Agency Requested Budget, the agency will expand its engagement to all programs.
- c. *Timeline:* The Agency Request Budget is developed from January 2024 to September 2024.

Conclusion:

The OSMB DEI plan is essential to creating an inclusive organization that serves all Oregonians. By establishing specific goals, strategies, and actions, we can promote diversity, reduce barriers, and foster a culture of openness, dialogue, and collaboration that values and celebrates diversity. Our agency commitment to DEI will benefit our employees and enhance our ability to achieve our mission and serve the citizens of our state.