

Updated August 2024

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion ACTION PLAN



Mission: To help protect and restore healthy watersheds and natural habitats that support thriving communities and strong economies.

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Description of Agency

The Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board (OWEB) is a state agency that provides grants to Oregonians to help protect and restore healthy watersheds and natural habitats that support thriving communities and strong economies. Local partners work with landowners and land managers to develop projects to conserve and improve rivers and natural habitat in the places where they live. OWEB grants are funded from the Oregon lottery funds, general fund, federal dollars, and salmon license plate revenue. The agency is led by an 18-member board. The board has 11 voting members, including six public-at-large members, which includes a member from tribal government and five members from other state natural resource boards/commissions. In addition, seven non-voting members serve on the board representing Oregon State University's Extension Service and six federal natural resource and regulatory agencies.

OWEB's vision is to be a leader in the conservation and restoration of Oregon's natural resources. OWEB enjoys strong public support for its contributions to community-based conservation, watershed health, and local economies.

OWEB's primary function is to fund watershed restoration and protection efforts. OWEB also funds monitoring, assessment, engagement, and technical assistance as it relates to watershed health.

Mission and Objectives

OWEB's mission is "to help protect and restore healthy watersheds and natural habitats that support thriving communities and strong economies." OWEB staff and board members recognize that achieving our mission demands we consider all actions within our authority to restore, protect, and improve the health of our watersheds for the well-being of all, including land-owning and non-landowning Oregonians and environmental justice communities.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Commitment

OWEB has long been committed to incorporating DEI principles into the agency. OWEB uses the following resources to guide its work.

- OWEB Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Action Plan
- OWEB Affirmative Action Plan
- 2024 OWEB Strategic Plan
- OWEB Board Diversity, Equity, Inclusion & Environmental Justice Resolution
- An Assessment of OWEB Granting Practices Impacts to Tribes (2021) to guide

All these documents are available on OWEB's website.

In 2018, OWEB developed a DEI staff team. OWEB's team meets monthly and has a charter, attachment A, to guide its work. The team includes representatives from all sections of the agency. OWEB's Tribal Liaison as well as a representative of OWEB Executive Team are permanent members of the team. The objectives of the team include:

1. Normalize diversity, equity, and inclusion conversations within the agency and promote agency DEI efforts
2. Organize efforts to build agency DEI capacity
3. Work with OWEB's Executive Team to operationalize DEI practices into OWEB's business practices

The team is committed to advancing DEI principles throughout the agency. The team develops an annual work plan, incorporates training opportunities into all OWEB quarterly all-staff meetings, and shared DEI resources through email communication and other learning opportunities.

OWEB has an 18-member citizen board drawn from the public at large, tribes, and federal and state natural resource agency boards and commissions. This interagency/citizen board is unique in Oregon state government and was created to foster intergovernmental collaboration. The public at large members come from different parts of the state and offer diverse perspectives and experiences to Board discussions and decisions. The OWEB Board is committed to DEI and recently realigned its committee structure: Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion/Environmental Justice, Water and Climate, and Grants committees which meet quarterly before each board meeting. OWEB staff will provide regular updates to the DEI & EJ committee on progress to implement this action plan to ensure alignment with board-adopted plans and the DEI resolution.

OWEB Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Team Charter

Purpose

1. Promote and support learning opportunities for OWEB staff;
2. Guide the implementation of OWEB's 2018 Strategic Plan Priority 2: Leaders at all levels of watershed work reflect the diversity of Oregonians; and
3. Work with OWEB staff and leadership to bring diversity, equity, and inclusion values into our operations and grant-making.

Goals

- To lead, develop, and support OWEB's strategies that promote diversity, equity, and inclusion.
- To continually educate ourselves, all OWEB employees, and OWEB Board members on diversity, equity, and inclusion topics.
- To build OWEB's DEI capacity.
- Incorporate DEI concepts into OWEB's grantmaking.

Objectives

- Normalize diversity, equity and inclusion conversations within the agency and promote agency DEI efforts.
- Organize efforts to build agency DEI capacity.
- Work with OWEB's Executive Team to operationalize DEI practices into OWEB's business practices.

Meetings

- The Team will meet monthly with a rotating facilitator.
- Agendas will be developed collaboratively amongst Team members.
- Key topics from meetings will be shared out by Team members at OWEB section meetings.

Membership

- Is open to everyone in the agency, including interns.
- Should include a representative from all OWEB sections.
- Will include a manager, who acts as the sponsor and chair, and include OWEB's Tribal Liaison.
- 2-year terms, except for the manager and Tribal Liaison. Staff can serve multiple 2-year teams, but other staff should be given the opportunity to join.

Roles and Responsibilities

- Attend and actively engage in meetings.
- Communicate the work of the team with your agency section.
- Track internal and external DEI training of staff.

2023-2025 DEI Goals and Actions

OWEB believes by focusing on these specific areas of implementation we will be able to make meaningful progress to operationalize DEI actions and be able to report to our staff, board, grantees, community members, and Executive Branch of government on our progress. Specific goals and actions as well as the responsible party and timeline for implementation are included below.

Goal #1: Foster a culture of inclusivity and belonging.

Action	Why	Responsible Party	Timeline	Connection to other documents
Working with staff and board to develop an OWEB Board Diversity, Equity, Inclusion & Environmental Justice Resolution	To articulate the why behind OWEB's DEI work.	Executive Team and Board	Jul-24	Strategic Plan
Update agency strategic plan to include DEI considerations.	To hold OWEB accountable for its commitment to DEI work.	Restoration Grants Manager with Executive Team and Board	Oct-24	Strategic Plan
Facilitate small group learning and discussion opportunities	Foster an environment to learn and exchange ideas in a safe space	IDEA Team	Ongoing	IDEA Team Charter, OWEB mission, Strategic Plan
Continue DEI training quarterly with OWEB staff.	Grow OWEB's DEI capacity.	Executive Team	Ongoing	DEIJ Resolution, AA Plan
Continue DEI training annually with OWEB Board.	Grow OWEB's DEI capacity.	Executive Team and Board	Ongoing	DEIJ Resolution

Goal #2: Provide equitable access to all of OWEB's services

Action	Why	Responsible Party	Timeline	Connection to other documents
Streamline online grant application	Time spent applying for grants is typically unfunded. Ensure applications only request information necessary to make a funding decision.	Restoration Grants Manager	Phase 1 Dec-23, Phase II Dec 25	Strategic Plan
The OWEB Board adopted new rules to allow more flexibility related to match requirements. Implementation will begin in the 2023-2025 biennium.	Address inequities in the distribution of resources, including the limited access to match for some non-traditional partners and some grant types.	OWEB Staff	June 2024	Tribal Assessment Report, DEIJ Resolution
Offer Tribal specific grant offering based on available funds from Pacific Coastal Salmon Recovery Fund grant award	Address inequities in the distribution of resources, including the limited types of grants and projects available for traditionally underrepresented, underserved, and climate-vulnerable communities.	Monitoring and Reporting Program Manager and Tribal Liaison	Fall 2024	DEIJ Resolution, Tribal Assessment Report, OWEB Strategic Plan
Online Training Tools	Online training tools, with translation and closed captions create increased access to information.	Online Training Team	Ongoing	Strategic Plan
Provide financial support to entities that manage Small Grant Program Teams	Ensure OWEB does not put unfunded administrative burdens on local partners.	Restoration Programs Manager	2025-2027 biennium	DEIJ Resolution, Strategic Plan

Expand eligible applicants to the Small Grant Program	Address inequities in the distribution of resources, including the limited types of grants and projects available for traditionally underrepresented, underserved, and climate-vulnerable communities	Restoration Programs Manager	2025-2027 biennium	DEIJ Resolution, Strategic Plan
Expand who is eligible to sit on OWEB grant application technical review teams	Actively listen to diverse voices and integrate them into the grantmaking process to ensure that solutions benefit all communities.	Restoration Programs Manager	Spring 2025	DEIJ Resolution, Strategic Plan

Goal #3: Engage with all Oregonians, actively build relationships, and promote the work of new and non-traditional partners.

<i>Action</i>	<i>Why</i>	<i>Responsible Party</i>	<i>Timeline</i>	<i>Connection to other documents</i>
Meet with 3 new organizations each quarter	New, diverse partners, have relationships with OWEB Board and staff and are engaged in grantmaking and operations.	OWEB Director and Deputy Director	Ongoing, report quarterly to OWEB Board DEI Committee	DEIJ Resolution, Strategic Plan

Promote the work of our local partners through social media and through OWEB's partnership with Oregon Lottery. Highlight at least one new organization a quarter.	It is important for all Oregonians to understand watershed restoration and see themselves in the stories we share.	Publications Specialist with Monitoring and Reporting Program Manager	Ongoing, report quarterly to OWEB Board DEI Committee	DEIJ Resolution, Strategic Plan
Seek out non-traditional events where OWEB can intentionally engage with more diverse groups of natural resource professionals and organizations	New, diverse partners, have relationships with OWEB Board and staff and are engaged in grantmaking and operations.	Executive Team	Ongoing	DEI Resolution, Strategic Plan

Goal #4 Leverage qualitative and quantitative data to identify needs and track progress

<i>Action</i>	<i>Why</i>	<i>Responsible Party</i>	<i>Timeline</i>	<i>Connection to other documents</i>
Determine a method to collect and track information related to new small grant rules and increased eligible applicant types.	Help us understand whether we are making progress towards our goal of increased accessibility and distribution of small grant program grants.	Executive Team and software development staff	2025-2027 biennium	

Goal #5: Ensure OWEB's communication is transparent, open, and accessible.

Action	Why	Responsible Party	Timeline	Connection to other documents
Review all sections of OWEB's website to ensure content is written using plain language whenever possible.	Language matters and the words we use can have unintended consequences.	Publications Specialist, Outcomes Specialist with Monitoring and Reporting Program Manager	Ongoing	OWEB Strategic Plan
Training for OWEB staff on the importance of language moving us to be more intentional in the words we use.	Language matters and the words we use can have unintended consequences.	Executive Team	Complete	OWEB Strategic Plan
Include access to OWEB digital materials through subtitles and translation.	Provide greater access to OWEB digital materials to expand opportunities to apply for grants and learn about OWEB resources	Online Training Team with Publications Specialist	Dec-24	OWEB Strategic Plan
Ensure all OWEB public meetings have closed captions.	Improve opportunities for all Oregonians to engage in OWEB's decision-making processes.	Publications Specialist and Executive Assistant to the Director and Board	Jul 2024	OWEB Strategic Plan