Oregon Racing Commission Policy on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

Overview

Emphasizing Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) within the Oregon Racing Commission (ORC) will benefit the commission by representing the broader community we serve, and by providing equity ensures all individuals are treated fairly without discrimination or bias. By having a strong DEI plan, policies, and culture, we will greatly improve public trust, decision making, and employee engagement.

Definitions

Diversity: Diversity refers to the range of individual differences that exist among people. These differences can include but are not limited to race, ethnicity, gender, age, sexual orientation, religion, physical abilities, socioeconomic background, and more. Embracing diversity means recognizing and valuing these differences and creating environments where individuals from various backgrounds feel welcomed and included.

Equity: Equity refers to fair treatment, access, and opportunities for all individuals, ensuring that everyone has an equal chance to succeed. It recognizes that some individuals or groups may face historical or systemic disadvantages, and thus, equity aims to level the playing field by providing targeted support and resources to address those disparities.

Inclusion: Inclusion is the practice of actively involving and valuing individuals from diverse backgrounds in all aspects of life, such as in decision-making processes, discussions, and activities. An inclusive environment is one where everyone feels respected, supported, and empowered to contribute their unique perspectives and talents.

Key partners involved in developing our plan:

The Oregon Racing Commission will partner with internal and external stakeholders and will place specific emphasis on greater outreach to the following communities: Middle East, African, Native, Pacific Islander, Latino and LGBTQ Americans.

Our community currently consists of the following associations. The Oregon Quarterhorse Racing Association, Oregon Thoroughbred Breeders Association, Oregon Horsemen Benevolent and Protective Association.

We will initially focus our outreach with the aforementioned groups with the intent of broadening our outreach over time.

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Although we are Oregon based, our online wagering extends to South America, Europe, North America, Asia, Australia, and Dubai.

Internally, all staff must be involved and committed to cultural change.

Key ORC partners include Mike Twiggs – Presiding Steward, Dawn Rome – Supervisor of Pari-Mutuels and Connie Winn – Executive Director.

External Oregon government staff:

Rosa Klein Equity and Racial Justice Director, Melinda Gross Director of Cultural Change, Scott Emry Assistant Security Chief Information Officer.

1. Diversity Initiatives:

These focus on actively promoting diversity by encouraging representation from individuals of different backgrounds, races, genders, and identities. This could involve creating outreach programs, partnerships with diverse communities, and setting specific diversity targets.

a. Increasing the ability to speak Spanish amongst staff. A large portion of our constituents are Latino and Spanish speakers. Many speak minimal English. The ORC is encouraging all staff to learn some basic Spanish and providing resources to assist with this, for example, one of our staff will be taking Spanish this winter at a local community college. We also plan on creating a poster with pictures of common horse racing items that is in both English and Spanish. This will assist the ability to translate and for staff to speak the most common words.

Specific Measurable Goal:

- Increase basic Spanish language for all staff by enough to interpret the most basic needs in each functional area.
- Develop tools to assist in translation such as the poster for English to Spanish for common horse racing terms.

Owner: Karen Parkman

b. A policy was created to make all forms and communication available in other languages. We have already created several common forms in Spanish including the certification test which this Fall alone has allowed three Spanish speakers to become certified that would have previously had to find an interpreter. This previous process did not translate to the number of passes on the certification we are now witnessing. We have provided staff training on the new policy and have directed staff to reach out to certain individuals if they need assistance in translating forms.

Owner: Karen Parkman

Specific Measurable Goal:

- Have all common forms available in Spanish.
- Have staff that are able to use translation tools for other languages.

c. Some of our staff have limited expertise with technology.

Specific Measurable Goal:

- Create a mentor program within the commission staff to partner tech savvy people with those that need assistance.
  Owner: Micah Lloyd
- Provide opportunities for staff to share the wealth of experiences they have with the rest of the staff, so they are valued for all of their knowledge.
  Owner: Connie Winn

d. Provide learning opportunities for staff to broaden their understanding of other diverse groups.

Specific Measurable Goal:

- Add diversity follow-up to touch base meetings to encourage staff to be more involved and seek opportunities to grow and develop.
- Spotlight diversity in monthly staff meetings.
- Provide bias training annually at our January annual staff training meeting.

  Owner: Connie Winn, Mike Twiggs, and Dawn Rome

e. Increase representation of underrepresented groups throughout the commission and staff.

Specific Measurable Goal:

- Track the number and type of diverse positions throughout the staff as well as the commissioners. Increase diversity by 20% in the next three years.
  - Begin recruiting for additional commissioners in areas such as Latino, African American, Eastern Asian, and Pacific Islander and Native American groups and associations.
  - Create a list of associations and groups to recruit from and build that list.
  - When an internal staff position is open, heavily recruit from those aforementioned developed sources.
    Owner: Connie Winn

f. Engage with local communities and support diversity initiatives outside the organization.

Specific Measurable Goal:

- Be actively involved with at least one association or group in 2024, two in 2025 and three in 2026.
  Owner: Connie Winn

2. Equity Measures:

Equity involves ensuring that all individuals have access to equal opportunities and resources, even if they come from different backgrounds. Policies may address pay equity, access to training and development, and support for underrepresented groups.

a. Provide equal access to development opportunities.

Specific Measurable Goal:

- Provide opportunities for all staff to work on committees that will challenge them and assist their development.
- Work with managers to ensure all staff are getting equal opportunities for training and growth. Track training and presented training opportunities. Ensure that each year at least one training opportunity has been presented to each member of staff. Ensure that the type of opportunities presented are fair and equitable based on the position and skills and interest. Provide cross training opportunities.
    - Owner: Connie Winn

b. Accessible accommodations

- Provide support for staff that have limited resources for travel at our summer fair.

    - Offer advances for travel expenses when appropriate at the begging of the race meet season.
    - For those with limited resources process expenses within 48 hours and request a rush on processing.
    - If needed, and when the Director is at the meet, the Director will pay rental car fuel for staff with limited resources that cannot wait for reimbursement.

      Owner: Connie Winn

- Provide resources and assistance for those that do not have technology available to them.

Specific Measurable Goal:

- Track requests for assistance and outcomes.
  Owner: Connie Winn

c. Ensure that all employees have access to necessary accommodation and assess the effectiveness of accessibility measures.

Specific Measurable Goal:

- All staff have been provided and asked to complete a checklist and tools for ergonomic workstations. Spot check with employees to see if needs have changed.
- Ensure all new employees also complete tools and checklists for ergonomic workstations.
- On an annual basis during the summer training session, remind staff about accommodation availability and that if they have a need, they should work with HR and their manager to get appropriate accommodation.
  Owner: Karen Parkman

3. Inclusion Culture:

Inclusion aims to foster an environment where all individuals feel valued, respected, and included. Policies may include training programs to raise awareness about bias and discrimination, promoting open communication, and establishing grievance procedures.

a. Regularly collect feedback from employees on their experience with inclusivity. As a minimum, this should be formally done annually.

Specific Measurable Goal:

- Annual survey
- Annual analysis of results and review by DEI Committee to review results and consider new initiatives based on those results.
  Owner: Connie Winn

b. Conduct outreach to differently abled people to work with the agency. When feasible, consider creating unique opportunities based on the skills that are available.

Specific Measurable Goal:

- At least annually, conduct outreach to communities with different abilities.
- When possible, provide unique opportunities that fit where the skills and abilities of individuals that seek opportunities.
  Owner: Connie Winn

4. Diversity and Inclusion Training:

Training programs are often implemented to raise awareness about unconscious bias, stereotypes, and the importance of creating an inclusive environment.

a. The Oregon Racing Commission is embracing the training component of diversity equity and training.

Specific Measurable Goal:

- Encourage each member of the staff to identify a community group and or activity that celebrates diversity, equity, and inclusion.
- During monthly staff meetings each of us will share how we have reached out in the community and what we have learned and what we are passionate about.
- Look for opportunities to bring diversity training at least twice a year during our two annual in-person meetings.
- Provide plain language training annually.
  Owner: Connie Winn & Karen Parkman

5. **Data Collection and Accountability:**

Organizations may collect data on diversity metrics to measure progress and hold themselves accountable for their DEI goals. There is inconsistent data on the communities we serve.

a. Collect data to identify the current communities we serve.

Specific Measurable Goal:

- By March 2024 creates a data strategy to better identify who the communities we serve are.

6. Partnerships and Community Engagement:

a. Collaborating with diverse community organizations and stakeholders can help racing commissions better understand and address the needs and concerns of underrepresented groups.

- By May 2024, develop and implement a system to track engagement with community partners.
  Owner: Connie Winn – Executive Director

7. Internal and External Communication:

a. Transparent communication about DEI efforts, progress, and challenges is essential to garner support from stakeholders and the public.

Specific Measurable Goal:

- By December 2023, ensure all major documents are available in Spanish and English. Provide messaging on our website on who to contact if applications are needed in other languages so we may provide those documents on a timely basis.
  Owner: Chris Adams Chief Investigator

- By January 2024, provide quarterly messaging to staff through staff meetings or training on ORC's efforts to increase DEI.
  Owner: Connie Winn

8. Decision Making and Budget

a. Ensure that all governance and budget decisions include a thoughtful review of diversity equity and inclusion.

Specific Measurable Goal:

- Track specific examples that were considered.
  Owner: Connie Winn

9. Contracting and Procurement

a. Ensure that contracting and procurement is reviewed for considerations to diversity equity and inclusion.

Specific Measurable Goal:

- DEI Committee to annually review and assess success of initiative. When appropriate, provide feedback on best practices for future opportunities.