



2018 Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Action Plan



Words Used by Staff and Board to Describe Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

Adopted by Board of Directors on December 11, 2017

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Introduction

Our Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Action Plan creates a guide for our culture that values trust, respect, and the preservation of personal dignity. It provides the opportunity for personal development and self-fulfillment in the attainment of RDI's mission and goals. This plan is designed to:

- ◆ Establish the definition of diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) for our organization.
- ◆ Create strategic outreach and recruitment initiatives to reach all segments of society.
- ◆ Support an internal Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Action (IDEA) Team to monitor progress and support employee engagement.
- ◆ Promote effective and ongoing communication with employees and stakeholders to heighten awareness of diversity, equity, and inclusion issues and share best practices.
- ◆ Heighten diversity, inclusion, and equity in staff development programs and promote continual learning among our staff and board.
- ◆ Set a path to demonstrate leadership commitment and accountability to diversity, equity, and inclusion at RDI.

The tool selected to assist us in the assessment and establishment of our baseline and strategies is the Protocol for Culturally Responsive Organizations by Anne Curry-Stevens, Marie-Elena Reyes, & Coalition of Communities of Color. This protocol was designed to cover the full range of an organization's governance and operations organized around nine different domains. The assessment contains a set of 99 standards to establish ideals for our work and a set of 109 ranking statements that address the level of equity in our organization. Below is a list of the nine domains:

- ◆ Commitment, Governance, and Leadership
- ◆ Equity Policies and Implementation Practices
- ◆ Organizational Climate, Culture, and Communication
- ◆ Service Based Equity
- ◆ Service User Voice and Influence
- ◆ Workforce Composition and Quality
- ◆ Community Collaboration
- ◆ Resource Allocation and Contracting Practices
- ◆ Data, Metrics, and Quality Improvement

Our organization first took this assessment during the summer of 2016 and, upon the review of our results, we determined that strategies should be created for our initial diversity, equity, and inclusion plan within seven of the nine domains. This year, our organization repeated the assessment to measure our progress. In looking at the results, we determined that strategies should be in place to work on all nine domains in the coming year. After completion of the assessment, teams were assigned to take a closer look at each domain to review progress to date, determine which strategies should carry forward to the new plan, and add new strategies for 2018. The draft strategies developed by the teams were presented to the Equity Advisory Board (EAB) for their review. The suggestions and input from the EAB were incorporated into the strategies, and those action items are included in this plan.

Work To-Date

Our initial DEI plan had 36 strategies organized around seven domains. So far, work has been completed on 14 strategies, work is in progress on 14 strategies, and work has not begun on eight strategies. Some highlights from our accomplishments this year include:

- ◆ Established a rural community-based Equity Advisory Board (EAB) to provide input to RDI on policy, administration, and program-related decisions
- ◆ Thirty percent of our staff development fund was designated for learning opportunities related to DEI and all staff included DEI-related action items in their Action Plans for Development for 2017
- ◆ Developed a Diversity Policy that was formally adopted at the board and staff retreat in June
- ◆ A portion of staff and board meetings was devoted to increasing awareness of equity and cultural responsiveness
- ◆ A number of RDI programs were either designed or revised to include DEI best practices and the promotion of DEI
- ◆ Program materials for Rural Community Leadership in Washington were developed in Spanish
- ◆ A Spanish translation team was formed to translate our priority marketing materials into Spanish
- ◆ Program staff were conscious of cultural norms when interacting with program participants
- ◆ Recruitment efforts were expanded to increase the diversity of candidates for open positions
- ◆ Diversity training was developed and presented to leadership program graduates at regional Conference of Communities

Definitions

How do we define *diversity, equity, and inclusion*?

- ◆ **Diversity** is the variation of social and cultural identities among people existing together in a defined setting.
- ◆ **Inclusion** means that everyone can participate and everyone belongs.
- ◆ **Equity** is when everyone has access to the opportunities necessary to satisfy their essential needs, advance their well-being, and achieve their full potential.

Commitment, Governance, and Leadership/Equity Policies and Implementation (Domain 1 & 2)

	Strategies	Responsible Party	Collaborators Partners	Timeframe by Quarters			
				Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
1.1	The RDI Board of Directors guides the organization’s improvements in cultural responsiveness and racial equity.	Executive Director	Board of Directors				
1.2	Dedicate time during all board meetings to advance diversity, equity, and inclusion and encourage board members to engage in their own education in this area.	Executive Director	Board of Directors				
1.3	Maintain and commit resources to support a rural community-based Equity Advisory Board (EAB).	Executive Director	Board of Directors				
1.4	Maintain and support internal working group focused on diversity, equity, and inclusion (i.e. IDEA Team).	Executive Director	Board of Directors				
1.5	Participate with other organizations that are advocating for rural in public policy and institutional reforms related to rural.	Executive Director	Board of Directors				
1.6	Review and update board members’ job description to reflect commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion.	Human Resources Director					
1.7	Develop categories related to diversity and equity and prioritize when recruiting new members for Board of Directors.	Executive Director	Board of Directors				
1.8	Dedicate 30% of RDI staff development resources to increasing individual knowledge, enhance awareness, and strengthen skills related to addressing bias and fostering cultural responsiveness.	Executive Director	Board of Directors				
1.9	Hold an annual deep dive training for RDI board and staff.	Human Resources Director	Board of Directors				
1.10	Develop, adopt, and release a public statement of commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion.	Executive Director	Board of Directors				
1.11	Develop visionary goals for diversity, equity, and inclusion.	Executive Director	Board of Directors				
1.12	Evaluate and report on progress towards our DEI vision and goals. This progress report will be shared with staff and board with highlights posted on RDI website.	Human Resources Director	Board of Directors				
1.13	Develop an Equity and Inclusion Plan for 2019 that outlines key goals and strategies. Publish this plan to RDI website to have it publicly available.	Executive Director	Board of Directors				
1.14	Include review of progress towards diversity, equity, and inclusion goals in annual Executive Director performance review.	Human Resources Director	Board of Directors				

Organizational Climate, Culture, and Communication (Domain 3)

	Strategies	Responsible Party	Collaborators Partners	Timeframe by Quarters			
				Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
3.1	Raise the rural voice! Staff strive to create and maintain strong positive talk about rural when working in communities, attending conferences, and speaking at events to highlight success and challenges in rural.	Program Directors	Program Managers				
3.2	Increase the overall cultural and rural presence in our communications and physical spaces. Example: 1) Increase multiple language on signage and banners, 2) Increase presence of rural artwork in RDI office, and 3) Increase DEI presence on website.	O & E Coordinator	Executive Director				
3.3	Have the EAB review our external marketing items (documents, banners, website) to determine if it is visible that we value and respect our participants.	O & E Coordinator	Board of Directors				
3.4	Utilize quotes from satisfaction surveys on RDI website as “Yelp” type reviews to show that participants affirm that our culture is respectful and inclusive.	O & E Coordinator	Board of Directors				
3.5	Prioritize removal of language barriers that prevent access to our programs and services. Have option for translation on our registration form and related expense included in budget calculator.	Program Directors					
3.6	Develop and implement a protocol and capacity to review our newsletters, annual reports and website through a cultural lens.	O & E Coordinator	EAB				
3.7	Share our journey working on DEI including influence of the EAB with newsletter story, images, and on the website.	O & E Coordinator	Executive Director, Leadership Team				
3.8	Utilize Regards to Rural Conference (R2R) to highlight the success of rural and hold a session on the perception of rural at R2R.	O & E Coordinator					
3.9	Research and determine if the CARE Protocol (current organizational assessment tool) should continue to be our tool or if there is another option.	Human Resources Director	IDEA Team				
3.10	Conduct organization level review of satisfaction surveys (staff and participants) from DEI perspective once per year with all staff and board present.	Human Resources Director					

Service Based Equity (Domain 4)

	Strategies	Responsible Party	Collaborators Partners	Timeframe by Quarters			
				Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
4.1	Continue designing each RDI program to include DEI best practices and the promotion of DEI with emphasis on the recruitment and outreach stage.	Program Directors					
4.2	Have program delivery and marketing materials available in Spanish to participants based upon need and program demand.	O & E Coordinator					
4.3	RDI staff members interact with community according to cultural norms and be intentional about it, such as providing food appropriate to cultures represented by participants.	Program Directors					
4.4	Review of all print materials and web presence to reflect a DEI lens, in an effort to eliminate embedded bias and replace with culturally responsive language.	O & E Coordinator					
4.5	Develop criteria for community selection that provides RDI staff the ability to give weighted priority to communities that are experiencing the greatest disparities, and utilize research partners in this process.	Evaluation Coordinator					
4.6	Each RDI program will include a community demographic assessment for each community on the front end to identify marginalized populations to be served, cultural adaptations needed, and local culturally specific organizations as potential partners.	Evaluation Coordinator					

Service User Voice and Influence (Domain 5)

	Strategies	Responsible Party	Collaborators Partners	Timeframe by Quarters			
				Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
5.1	Continue to utilize and invest in a rural community-based Equity Advisory Board (EAB) to provide input to RDI staff on policy, administration, and program-related decisions.	Executive Director					
5.2	Match service delivery team with composition of communities served, and make accommodations by adding community volunteers to the delivery team.	Program Directors					
5.3	Create an end of event/program report that includes outcomes disaggregated by race and language and require use for all contractors and staff; review reports at program manager meetings.	Evaluation Coordinator	Program Support Staff				
5.4	Research best practices around adding salary <i>premium</i> for bilingual ability and other specialized culturally specific skills to our pay practices.	Human Resources Director					

Workforce Composition and Quality (Domain 6)

	Strategies	Responsible Party	Collaborators Partners	Timeframe by Quarters			
				Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
6.1	Maintain an internal structure and entity responsible for workforce diversity.	Executive Director					
6.2	Have all staff and key contractors participate in staff development activities related to DEI. Reflect this in staff action plans, and designate staff development resources for DEI efforts.	Human Resources Director	Program Directors				
6.3	Implement strategies from staffing diversification plan	Human Resources Director					
6.4	Provide a list of educational resources to staff to allow multiple methods of increasing DEI knowledge and/or accessing DEI training.	Human Resources Director	IDEA Team				
6.5	Research and select a reflective tool for self-audit on bias and differences in treatment of communities of color.	Human Resources Director	IDEA Team				
6.6	Have all staff, key contractors, and board members take reflective tool for self-audit on bias with results discussed at board/staff meeting. Highlight and address commonalities with goal of adapting practices to eliminate disparities.	Human Resources Director	IDEA Team				
6.7	Include responsibility for workforce diversity in the performance goals for director level staff.	Executive Director	Human Resources Director				

Community Collaboration (Domain 7)

	Strategies	Responsible Party	Collaborators Partners	Timeframe by Quarters			
				Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
7.1	RDI has a strong understanding of the many culturally specific organizations that serve throughout our region.	Executive Director					
7.2	Partner with culturally specific organizations (i.e. tribal, Latino, youth, low income) to seek mutual resources, incorporate their work into ours, and effectively serve people of all cultures.	Executive Director					
7.3	Continue to convene and have staff attend gatherings of culturally specific partners, stakeholders, and participants to understand needs, interests, and gaps related to rural capacity building and economic vitality services, i.e. R2R/RSB/CBS/ATNI.	Program Directors					
7.4	Include in RDI's silver anniversary report a list of supporters from organizations who formally represent communities of color and other cultural differentiations that RDI has served, i.e. tribal, Latino, youth, low income.	Outreach & Engagement Coordinator					
7.5	Analyze the demographics of each community we serve and work alongside culturally specific organizations to scope, design, and deliver programs in their communities.	Program Directors					
7.6	Request, and keep on file, letters of support from culturally specific organizations that highlight RDI's actions for inclusion and to improve service equity and cultural responsiveness, i.e. Pasos al Éxito, Latino leadership, Rural Community Leadership Yakima, Ford Institute Leadership Program Madras, Happy Camp.	Program Directors	Program Managers				
7.7	Design and host a webinar that introduces a panel of culturally specific organizations to rural communities, leaders, and RDI staff.	Executive Director					

Resource Allocation and Contracting Practices (Domain 8)

	Strategies	Responsible Party	Collaborators Partners	Timeframe by Quarters			
				Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
8.1	Include resources in contracts to reduce specific disparities, i.e. extended recruitment, child care, adapted schedule, language interpretation, local community hosts/connector.	Program Managers	Program Directors Finance Director				
8.2	Establish targets for minority contracts and subcontracts for catering, facilities, and consultants by dollar and number with steps to achieve target.	Finance Director	Program Directors				

Data, Metrics and Quality Improvement (Domain 9)

	Strategies	Responsible Party	Collaborators Partners	Timeframe by Quarters			
				Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
9.1	Establish and implement an approved evaluation and client satisfaction plan for every RDI program and service that includes a set of uniform customer satisfaction questions as well as customized evaluation questions related to diversity, equity, and inclusion.	Evaluation Coordinator	Program Directors Program Managers				
9.2	Collect data from customer satisfaction surveys, pre-tests, and post-tests with regular review of results at program manager meetings.	Program Director	Program Support Staff				
9.3	Monitor demographic changes in the Pacific Northwest on yearly basis.	Evaluation Coordinator	Program Directors				
9.4	Conduct market analysis for services useful to communities of color.	Evaluation Coordinator	Program Directors				
9.5	Evaluate RDI progress towards becoming a culturally responsive organization based on the spectrum from the CARE Protocol and share with staff and board.	Human Resources Director	IDEA Team				
9.6	Conduct annual assessments that include the following elements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participant satisfaction including experiences of inclusion/exclusion Comparisons of customer satisfaction outcomes between race/ethnicity of participants from same cohort/program/event 	Evaluation Coordinator	Program Directors				

Assuring Impact: Accountability, Evaluation, and Periodic Revision

This Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Plan is a guiding document that will help shape and direct our work in the coming years. As we move forward, the IDEA Team will meet regularly and will gather input from the EAB as we move strategies to action and monitor our progress at accomplishing the strategies for each domain. As we evaluate this forward progress, we will determine if we are doing the right thing in the right way and whether there are ways to have a greater impact. RDI will adjust the strategies and timelines accordingly throughout the year.

Conclusion

The values and practices of diversity, equity, and inclusion are critical to the success of our organization. RDI will continue working to advance a perspective of integration, learning, and valuing differences. Diversity, equity, and inclusion are not just buzzwords or boxes to check and we realize that the undertaking of a diversity, equity, and inclusion initiative is not a one-time event, but rather a long-term journey. Our organization understands that diversity, equity, and inclusion are important values to embrace and are about excellence in who we are and what we do.