



FOR CHAPTERS

Equity, Diversity & Inclusion How-To Guide

**Guide for incorporating equity,
diversity, and inclusion into chapter
partnerships, programs, and culture**

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II. Audubon's Commitment to Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion

Just as biodiversity strengthens natural systems, the diversity of human experience strengthens our conservation efforts for the benefit of nature and all human beings.

The birds Audubon pledges to protect differ in color, size, behavior, geographical preference, and countless other ways. By honoring and celebrating the equally remarkable diversity of the human species, Audubon will bring new creativity, effectiveness and leadership to our work throughout the hemisphere.

In order to achieve these goals, National Audubon Society has made equity, diversity, and inclusion a strategic imperative. Protecting and conserving nature and the environment transcends political, cultural, and social boundaries. Respect, inclusion, and opportunity for people of all backgrounds, lifestyles, and perspectives will attract the best ideas and harness the greatest passion to shape a healthier, more vibrant future for all of us who share our planet. We are committed to increasing the diversity of our staff, board, volunteers, members, and supporters, and fostering an inclusive network of Audubon centers and chapters in all communities, from rural to urban. We respect the individuality of each member of our community, and we are committed to an environment free of any kind of discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, age, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, disability, national or ethnic origin, politics, or veteran status.

This How-to Guide—developed by internal and external experts with input from many Audubon chapter leaders—is intended to help your chapter live out these ideals.

III. How to use this Guide

Audubon's network includes 446 chapters and approximately 130 campus chapters. The way each chapter expresses Audubon's beliefs, values, and priorities impacts the organization's overall reputation and contributes to public perceptions of the conservation movement. Each chapter's beliefs, values, cultures, and actions influence its own reputation and impact and contribute to perceptions of the overall conservation movement. Historically, bird conservation organizations have not been led by—or engaged—people of color, low-income individuals, and young folks. Data shows the next generation will be more racially, ethnically, and culturally diverse than their parents or grandparents. Bird enthusiasts and conservationists are evolving their organizations to become more diverse, inclusive, and equitable.

Individuals who bring a variety of experiences, perspectives, and skills will help chapters reach and engage more people to provide lasting protection and stewardship of birds and bird habitats. This evolution is an essential to staying relevant and supporting the type of conservation community and the healthy bird populations we want.

This How-To Guide is intended to serve as a resource to the Audubon Network of chapters to help advance Audubon's commitment to EDI and increase the impact of our conservation goals. A companion Guide has been developed for Audubon's state and regional offices, centers and sanctuaries, and national programs.

CHAPTER CHALLENGES

Many businesses and nonprofits are making intensive efforts to advance equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI). A cursory review of the literature reveals that even multinational corporations with seemingly endless resources (such as Google and Microsoft) have found it difficult to successfully define EDI goals, let alone to meet them. While we are impatient for our work to be more fair, inclusive, and effective, our organizations have been built on centuries of policies, practices, and assumptions that uplifted certain races, genders, and backgrounds. Our

organizations cannot be transformed in a few months—or even a few years—regardless of earnest intentions, solemn commitments, and costly consultants.

Incorporating EDI into organizational practices and processes requires attention to internal culture; team skills, capacities, and willingness to change; an understanding of the historical impact of the conservation field and our organizations; and the lived experiences and feelings of community members.

EDI progress is often incremental—with a fair number of plateaus—that often leads to frustration and fatigue. Below is a summary of the challenges noted in Audubon’s 2018 EDI survey. Audubon Network respondents reported lacking the necessary resources, tools, knowledge, funds, and relationships with under-represented communities to conduct effective EDI work. These are explained in more detail below:

EDI Funding and Resources: Finding a funding source, and not needing to charge program fees, was cited as a significant challenge for many chapter respondents. Programs involve a lot of volunteer participation and respondents stated that for many of their volunteer groups/residents who have limited incomes, finding the time to volunteer is difficult. While residents often want to see positive changes in their communities (in the form of bird/butterfly gardens, for example), volunteering with no pay is a limiting factor.

Staff Capacity and Skills: While respondents feel there is general support for EDI within the Network, it is not specifically funded or a regular part of work plans. With limited volunteers/staff and resources, some chapter respondents indicated decisions on how to allocate time often boiled down to their own capacity. EDI efforts often depend on one personally invested staff or volunteer who helps connect to under-represented groups. When that key person leaves, the EDI work also stops. Assumptions about under-represented groups were also a barrier, such as perceptions that under-served people are not interested in conservation. Lack of diversity and skills (language, cultural competency, etc.) within Audubon’s network on how best to engage under-represented groups was also cited as a challenge.

Ongoing Relationships with under-represented groups: Many respondents relayed they do not have relationships with the groups they want to engage. Navigating local politics was an issue, along with cultural gaps, and gaining credibility with groups that do not know them. How to develop the relationships and/or partner effectively with under-represented groups was also a question raised. Culturally different ways of doing the work (language, means of communication, pace of work, etc.) and making Audubon’s mission relevant to people who may have more direct-human-service needs, were also challenges cited. The time it takes to cultivate and maintain relationships was repeated as a challenge numerous times, with many also constrained by funder timelines—particularly when relationship and trust-building cannot be contained to a one-or two-year grant period.

Other challenges: Respondents noted diverse representation within communication materials, unaddressed historical issues, distance to natural birding areas, understanding of local demographics, and limited tools for appropriate evaluation to track their EDI trajectories. Many of these challenges intersect with one another, indicating a need for linked strategies for the greatest possibility of success.

Despite these challenges, chapters are making successful inroads into reflecting and incorporating this country’s rich variety of perspectives. This How-to Guide is intended to serve as a reference for all Chapters—from all-volunteer groups with minimal funding to those with staff and significant resources. The following sections are intended to offer specific tools and strategies for chapters to design, implement, and evaluate effective EDI strategies. This document will address common EDI challenges faced by Audubon chapters of all types and will provide recommendations and suggestions on how to navigate them.

BEGINNING OR CONTINUING YOUR EDI JOURNEY

This Guide is designed as an in-depth address the EDI challenges identified above in the 2018 EDI Chapter survey so our work can bring the greatest benefits to both bird and human communities. This Guide is intended to serve as an in-depth resource that can be used by chapters at every stage of their EDI journey.

This Guide should also be considered a living document, to be updated as context, priorities, and our own understanding of EDI issues improves. The points below explain important beginning steps for chapters seeking to become more equitable, diverse, and inclusive in their internal practices as well as their external partnerships and programs:

Learn conservation history (Section V)

No chapter can—or should—try to work on all EDI issues at once. The first place to start is by understanding your chapter's—and the conservation field's—history with diverse groups locally, regionally, and nationally (Section III). The conservation community has made clear strides in elevating the ideas of protecting nature and addressing practices that damage bird populations. Yet there is an often-unseen darker side as well. Take time to learn about how conservationists perpetuated and normalized the taking of Indigenous lands¹ and preventing Indigenous groups, African Americans, other POC, and low-income Whites from owning, living on, and harvesting from, areas protected for wilderness.²

Build EDI language, knowledge, and skills (Sections II, V, and VI)

Board members, staff, and volunteers should look for opportunities to learn together. Become familiar with EDI language and terms (Section II) and understand the history behind certain words and phrases. Read articles and reports, learn from webinars and videos, and look for other no-cost or low-cost learning opportunities, such as workshops or trainings offered by partners. If you attend a conference, take time to attend an EDI session.

Learn about the histories and challenges facing diverse groups in your area—including racial, ethnic, religious, and LGBTQIA+ communities. Participate in the public education offerings—especially during celebratory events such as Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, PRIDE month, and religious observances and holidays such as Rosh Hashanah, Eid, Easter, etc. Look for opportunities for your chapter to help sponsor or participate.

Attend presentations and events hosted by different groups and institutions—for example at churches (particularly those that work with specific ethnic or racial communities), mosques, temples, synagogues, community colleges, universities, and schools catering for special needs groups (e.g., physical disabilities, autistic children, those who are deaf, or blind, etc.) Most of these events are free to the public and are a great place to network and build relationships.

Invest in relationships (Section VII)

Successful EDI efforts require relationships. Institutional partnerships start with trusting relationships between individuals from each group. Intentionally build diverse networks for yourself and your chapter. Expand your personal inner circle of advisors and your institutional advisors so they are more reflective of the diverse communities in your area. Be wary of spaces where everyone looks and thinks alike.

As a chapter leader, take it upon yourself to begin building relationships with leaders from different communities. Invite a partner, community member, or new colleague to meet for coffee. Be ready to truly listen—and to open up and share your own stories. Look for ways to share personal and chapter resources (expertise, connections, etc.) to begin building meaningful partnerships. Learn about their dreams, hopes, and visions for the community. Look for

1 <https://www.audubon.org/magazine/september-october-2011/facing-future>

2 Taylor, D.E. (2016). *The Rise of the American Conservation Movement: Power, Privilege, and Environmental Protection*. Duke University Press.

possible areas of shared work. Focus on building trust—which can take time—before making any requests. Leave the door open to continuing the relationship even if there is not an immediate opportunity for partnership.

Prioritize relationships with well-connected individuals who are respected for the roles they play. Look for ways to develop relationships and partnerships with community leaders, organizations, and agencies. Are there venues for you to attend or explore to find out who are natural community leaders? Are there organizations that currently have relationships with the community that you can connect with? Which other agencies or organizations are working on similar issues that you should be partnering with?

Know why EDI is important for achieving chapter goals (Section V)

Use your EDI knowledge and information to identify and communicate why the diversity, equity, and inclusion values are important to the success of the chapter (more details are offered in Section III). Brainstorm all the benefits and motivations for building a more equitable, diverse, and inclusive chapter. Lift up the points where the group feels the deepest connection and enthusiasm.

One way to spur conversation is by sharing stories of meaningful or memorable experiences related to fairness, belonging, and differences (or the opposites). What can be learned from these stories about what you want for the chapter's culture, approach, and goals?

Establish an EDI Committee and Develop a Workplan (Sections VII-XXIII)

Identify 3-5 individuals who represent Board, staff/volunteers, and trusted partners to help plan, facilitate, and oversee the chapter's EDI efforts. Invite representatives from under-represented groups but be careful not to place undue burden on these folks to lead, teach, and facilitate the committee. The EDI committee should develop a charter that outlines its purpose, which should include:

Developing a governance model and identifying roles and responsibilities. Decide who will be on the committee and how decisions will be made. How will responsibilities be shared? How will this group communicate with the larger board and membership? Will compensation be offered to offset committee member's time and energy?

Assessing how the chapter reflects and supports diverse groups and communities. Conduct a needs assessment or simply commit to conversations with a representative sample of Board members, volunteers, staff, members, and participants. Communicate lessons and progress across all chapter representatives and partners to build collective knowledge and understanding. Seek ongoing feedback from these folks to refine the relevance of activities and monitor overall progress.

Establishing reasonable goals. Identify 2-3 top priorities that are important to set the foundation for growing your EDI efforts. First focus on building EDI knowledge and skills of individuals and the chapter overall. Recognize this learning takes time, commitment, and energy. Next, work to develop and strengthen relationships with diverse groups and partners.

Committing time and resources for EDI work. Establish regular meeting times for the group. Look for spaces that allow confidential discussion. Determine budget in support of your EDI goals such as hiring, training, outreach and engagement, transportation, events, communications, etc. It is okay to start with a very small amount. Putting real money into an EDI line item shows a real commitment to the values and practices you seek to develop.

Integrating EDI Values into chapter culture and programs. Organizational culture is a powerful force that is an unwritten rulebook deeming "the way things are done." It determines how your team operates and will impact your ability to engage board members, volunteers, partners, staff, participants, and donors. Make it a habit to regularly, as a team, consider how decisions and assumptions are being made and whether they are in alignment with your values and EDI goals.

Look for ways to ensure your program content and target audiences accurately reflect your intentions and goals.

Tracking progress. Find simple ways to track progress. This may mean monthly or quarterly check-ins with your team to identify what is working and adjust when challenges arise. Reviewing progress regularly will help identify any gaps and determine which efforts are making the greatest impact. Refer to Section IV's subsection EDI Learning and Evaluation for help on developing metrics to track progress.

Don't be afraid of mistakes and missteps

There is no way around it—changing an organization's culture is difficult and takes time. Understanding and fulfilling the values of equity, inclusion, and diversity requires an extra level of courage and humility.

Make sure to take care of yourself and your colleagues as you move forward in your EDI efforts. There will be emotionally difficult times ahead. You will face setbacks, navigate interpersonal conflicts, and feel like no progress is being made. Always refer back to the chapter's "why" (see more in Section II) and remember that by taking concrete steps to advance EDI, the chapter is already making progress towards a more fair, healthy, and safe place for birds and for people.

Find allies and ask for help

Develop a network with others who are on EDI journeys. Board members, volunteers, staff, and partners can help identify other conservation allies and diverse partners who can offer experience, advice, and support. Once you've found a group of partners with similar interests and needs, set up regular meetings to discuss EDI issues and provide support when challenges or questions arise. The Audubon Network provides spaces to connect with other chapters across the country; make use of these opportunities to learn from your peers.

Learn from other institutions and organizations that may have historical knowledge, local relationships, or specific skills related to recruiting, reaching, and engaging many types of diverse groups (including racial and ethnic diversity, different age ranges, types of disabilities, etc.) Community foundations, United Ways, and nonprofit resource centers often offer programs and workshops at low or no-cost.

Universities, community colleges, and other nonprofits often have specific individuals (and maybe entire departments or programs) who may be able to answer specific questions or talk with you about certain practices or policies. Depending on your needs, you might reach out to a professor, human resource officer, marketing or communications team, or specific student group (including religious groups, ethnic and racial support groups, issue-area groups, etc.). You may seek out experts working on specific issues (such as environmental justice or climate change) or look for individuals with connections to specific groups (e.g., religious leaders, community organizations, or neighborhood business chambers). When asking for the time or advice of a leader from a resource-strapped grassroots group, try to find ways to build reciprocal relationships—find ways to support their priorities and needs.

Sometimes you need to call a plumber, as trying to fix it yourself is just making things worse. In the same way, sometimes you need to pay an EDI expert to navigate through an impasse or achieve the next level of goals. Here are a few examples of when it might be helpful to pay for support:

- Providing a workshop or training to build EDI understanding and skills for Board, staff, volunteers and partners. Topics could cover anti-racism, accessible workspaces, or gender and sexuality issues.
- Designing a strategic planning process that incorporates EDI goals and values.
- Facilitating difficult meetings with Board, staff, volunteers or partners.

- Revising and updating Board bylaws or organizational policies and practices (with special attention to those related to hiring protocols, equal employment guidelines, sexual harassment discrimination policies, volunteer management, etc.).

As with any contractor, the best way to find an effective and affordable EDI consultant or service-provider is to ask your network and interview at least 2-3 providers before making a decision.

Develop additional resources and refresh this guide

Consider developing resources such as a bird-walk inclusion checklist and other guides that would be of use to chapter members and participants. These documents can build on the ideas and suggestions presented in this How-To Guide. Such shared activities can further build and strengthen chapters' EDI knowledge and skills in a way that supports conservation and community goals.

This guide is a starting point for Audubon chapters—but will need updates and refreshes to remain relevant and useful. You will become experts on integrating EDI efforts for each chapter's mission, values, culture, and programs. As you learn, revisit this guide every 2-3 years to update the Terms and Definitions (Section II) and add details, ideas, and case studies in each section to share ideas, strategies, and lessons with your colleagues and to provide a solid foundation for those who come after you.

IV. What is EDI? What do all the terms mean?

Audubon's mission to protect birds and the places they need, today and tomorrow. We believe that success in addressing conservation challenges depends on inclusive efforts that incorporate multiple views of valuing and practicing conservation.

EDI is an acronym that encompasses three separate, but deeply interrelated, concepts: equity, diversity, and inclusion. Recent social movements such as marriage equality, #MeToo, Black Lives Matter, and Standing Rock have elevated the public dialogue about the urgent need to address social inequalities. The environmental and conservation movements have had varying degrees of success in incorporating EDI into their narratives, processes, and programs. Work however, still needs to be done. Mainstream green groups are taking a closer look at their role in EDI efforts—to ensure durable impact and stay relevant with their communities, officials, and funders.

With so many different groups thinking about EDI, there is no uniformity in how the three different concepts are employed. Below is an explanation of how equity, diversity, and inclusion—and related terms and concepts—can help us convey and understand deeper issues related to fairness, justice, and equal representation.

EDI TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

Equity refers to internal culture and external outcomes

An equitable society is one in which an individual's race, gender, ability, sexual orientation, or other marker no longer predicts, in a statistical sense, one's life outcomes. For the conservation movement, equity means that all individuals have similar opportunities to access and benefit from a clean and healthy environment and that no groups bear a disproportionate burden of impacts from pollutants or land degradation. Equity also means that all residents are able to meaningfully inform environmental and other decisions that impact where they learn, live, work, play, and pray.

There are so many different terms out there—how do I know which words to use without causing offense?

It is usually best to be as specific as possible when referring to a specific group and use the term that members use for themselves. When referring to an individual or a small group, the best practice is to ask what terminology they identify with.

Nonprofit groups like Audubon play an important role in creating the processes and programs that will lead to a fair and just society. To achieve equitable outcomes, nonprofits should promote justice, impartiality, and fairness within their procedures, processes, and distribution of resources. Tackling equity requires an understanding why certain demographic groups face unequal disparities within our society.

Diversity refers to people

We cannot have equitable outcomes if decisions and systems are not designed, approved, and implemented by the full spectrum of people impacted. Diversity refers to all the ways in which people differ, and it encompasses all the different characteristics that make one individual or group different from another. Diversity is about who is in the room and all the identities and groups that are represented. A broad definition includes not only race, ethnicity, and gender—the groups that most often come to mind when the term diversity is used—but also age, national origin, religion, disability, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, education, marital status, language and physical appearance. It also involves different ideas, perspectives and values.

For Audubon, diversity means having a mix of board members, volunteers, staff, and participants that provide a wide range of abilities, experiences, knowledge, and strengths due to their differences³. Creating teams who represent many types of difference is a lifelong effort as organizations and communities evolve and as we learn more about missing voices in our communities. The list below provides a list of some of the types of differences that should be considered when pulling together diverse teams:

- Age
- Past work experience, current employment status, and length of time in workforce. Also consider job sector representation (public service, business, nonprofit, healthcare, social service, etc.)
- Household or individual income levels
- Gender and sexual orientation
- Geographic context: rural/suburban/urban and population size
- Ability
- Language other than English spoken at home
- New Americans/refugees/undocumented residents
- Level of education
- Race/Ethnicity
- Veteran status

Inclusion is about processes

Inclusive systems are those that operate in a way that diverse individuals can participate fully in decision-making processes within an organization or group.⁴ Inclusion is about creating cultures and systems in which any individual or group is welcomed, respected, supported, and valued to fully participate in all activities, processes, and decisions. At their best, inclusive spaces are those in which power is shared across all groups in meaningful and appropriate ways.

Inclusive Chapters are those who take seriously the “belief that all people should feel that they are included in society, even if they lack some advantages.”⁵ While diversity is about who to bring to the table, inclusion is about how to ensure their voices are heard and valued. Finally, it is important to remember that while a truly inclusive group is necessarily diverse, a diverse group may or may not be inclusive.⁶

3 www.dictionary.cambridge.org

4 Taylor, D.E. (2016). *The Rise of the American Conservation Movement: Power, Privilege, and Environmental Protection*. Duke University Press.

5 Collins English Dictionary. © HarperCollins Publishers. www.macmillandictionary.com

6 Taylor, D.E. (2016). *The Rise of the American Conservation Movement: Power, Privilege, and Environmental Protection*. Duke University Press

This How-to Guide provides strategies for moving beyond diversity to also build inclusion and equity into Audubon chapters' internal processes and external activities and programs. The following is a brief list of some other terms and definitions that will be applied throughout this Guide.

Ethnicity and Race⁷

Considering how consistently “ethnicity” and “race” are discussed and debated the U.S., many find it surprising to learn both terms were created to achieve political ends and have no scientific basis. Historical analysis shows that Whites of European ancestry constructed and operationalized these concepts to support the enslavement, colonization, and oppression of black and brown people around the world. This can be clearly seen in how the U.S. government has tracked its residents over the years. The 1790 U.S. Census had three racial categories: free Whites, all other free persons, and enslaved people.⁸ The 2020 Census questionnaire will offer multiple racial sub-categories under five overarching headings: American Indian or Alaska Native, Asian, Black or African American, Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander, and White. The 2020 Census will offer two options for ethnicity: “Hispanic or Latino” and “Not Hispanic or Latino.”⁹

European academics first began to categorize humans into racial categories in the 1600s. Three racial classes were created by Germans in the late 1700s: Caucasoid, Mongoloid, and Negroid. Other categories—including Australoid and Capoid (Bushmen)—were added later to account for all the diverse types of people in the world. These categories were positioned in a hierarchy with Caucasoid (Whites) at the top. The “science” behind these categories and rankings was politically motivated and was used to support laws and practices that prevented certain groups (including Jews, later) from building wealth, owning property, and participating in elections and governance.

The word “ethnic” was originally used to refer to national affiliation. The term “ethnicity” was developed as a less politicized way to talk about groups without using racial terminology.¹⁰ In the 1960s, “ethnicity” referred to minority groups who held distinct cultural traditions and who came from certain geographical areas. Today, “ethnicity” is used when describing a group that is characterized by some combination of shared language, culture, religions, and/or history.

“Ethnicity” remains a fuzzy concept with no agreed upon definitions. This is demonstrated in the U.S. Census example mentioned above. The Census tries to lump everyone into at least one of five major racial groupings and offers only two ethnicity options: “Hispanic or Latino” and “Not Hispanic or Latino.”

While the concepts of “ethnicity” and “race” are socially constructed, members of racial groups face real impacts and have real experiences of living in a society built on racialized laws and stereotypes. As one way to take back power, racial and ethnic categories and stereotypes have been reclaimed and redefined by group members. We can see this evolution in language. Whites developed the term “negroids” and group members evolved from referring to themselves as “Negros” to “Blacks” and “African Americans” who wield “Black Power.”

What language do I use to refer to specific racial or ethnic groups?

It is best to be as specific as possible. Many people think of themselves in ways that are more contextual to their own experience. Folks may refer to themselves as Mexican-Americans rather than Latinx, as South Asian Indians rather than Asians, or from a certain tribe or band rather than Indigenous or Native American.

Use the language and terminology that group members use for themselves. If you don't know, ask. Showing a genuine desire to understand will be appreciated.

7 <http://www.biologyreference.com/Ar-Bi/Biology-of-Race.html>

8 <https://www.pewsocialtrends.org/2015/06/11/chapter-1-race-and-multiracial-americans-in-the-u-s-census/>

9 Document: Revisions to the Standards for the Classification of Federal Data on Race and Ethnicity Federal Register Notice October 30, 1997.

10 <https://consciousstyleguide.com/why-we-confuse-race-ethnicity-lexicographers-perspective/>

Language related to race and ethnicity continues to evolve. Terminology has shifted from “minorities” to “People of Color (POC)” and “Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC).” When trying to determine which words to use, keep in mind that the individual and the context matters.¹¹

It is best to be as specific as possible. Most people think of themselves in ways that are more contextual to their own experience than in broad categories. Folks may refer to themselves as Mexican Americans rather than Latinx, as South Asian Indians rather than Asians, or as a member of a certain tribe or band, rather than Indigenous or Native American. Use the language and terminology that group members use for themselves. If you don’t know—then ask. Showing a genuine desire to understand will be appreciated.

PEOPLE OF COLOR

People of Color (POC) has become a common term used when referring to individuals who identify members of the following groups:

- Asian/Asian American
- Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander
- Black/African American
- Native American/Indigenous
- Hispanic/Latinx (there is some debate on whether this group is considered an ethnicity, or a “race”)
- Multi-racial or multi-ethnic

The term BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color) is now being used to acknowledge the unique histories of African American and Indigenous people in the U.S. This document uses the term BIPOC since it is the most inclusive and distinctive term. Remember that language is not static—especially in areas where our collective understanding is shifting so rapidly—and chapters should be ready and willing to evolve in their language as times change.

It is very important not to label anyone—only use a term when a person has been open about claiming that identity. **Do NOT make assumptions by how someone looks.**

When in doubt, ask. If a mistake is made, offer a heartfelt and brief apology and try to do better next time. Nobody expects perfection – but everyone SHOULD be treated with respect.

Make an effort, do your best, and most people will sincerely appreciate your good intentions.

Gender Identity

The term “sex” is a scientific term used to refer to individuals who share the common physical and chromosomal characteristics of males, females, or hermaphrodites. “Gender,” however, refers to the socially constructed roles, behaviors, activities, and attributes that society has designated to individuals based on certain sex-based characteristics.

Mainstream U.S. society has historically recognized only two genders: male and female based on the genitals present at birth. This type of gender assignment assumes that a person’s body determines much of their life experience, social roles, and inner life, thoughts, and feelings. Many people never think about their gender identity because it matches their sex at birth.¹² However, many other people have feelings, thoughts, and ideas about themselves that do not match what society expects of them based on their bodies. They may have been born with a body doctors called “male” but have thoughts, feelings, and ideas that society associates with “women”—or vice versa, or somewhere in between. That internal sense of where one fits in the social construct of gender—regardless of one’s bodily characteristics—is called gender identity. One’s gender identity does not always correspond with their sex assigned at birth.¹³

U.S. society is beginning to understand that gender isn’t simply about chromosomes or anatomy, or rigidly enforced social roles—it is about who individuals know themselves to be, which is sometimes different than the sex or gender they were assigned at birth. The two-gender binary (male/female) has been the norm in most

11 <https://consciousstyleguide.com/why-we-confuse-race-ethnicity-lexicographers-perspective/>

12 <http://teentalk.ca/learn-about/gender-identity/>

13 <https://www.hrc.org/resources/sexual-orientation-and-gender-identity-terminology-and-definitions>

European traditions, but hundreds of societies around the world have long traditions of recognizing third, fourth, fifth, or more genders.¹⁴

Language in the U.S. is beginning to give names to different gender identities, such as male, female, cisgender, transgender, gender neutral, non-binary, agender, pangender, genderqueer, two-spirit, and third gender. An individual can connect with all, a combination, or other identities when it comes to gender. Remember that a person's gender is not indicative of their sexual orientation, which is defined separately.

Below are a few terms that have become commonly used to identify different gender identities:

Cisgender/Cis. This term is used for someone who identifies with the gender they were assigned at birth.¹⁵

Gender Queer: A term people use for themselves when they don't identify as entirely male or female. This term has been reclaimed by members as it was originally used as a slur.

Intersex. This term is used to describe a person who is born with a reproductive or sexual anatomy that doesn't match the typical definitions of female or male. The term intersex is not the same as transgender, although some intersex people do identify as such.¹⁶

Non-binary. Many people—including transgender people—identify as either male or female, which is referred to as the gender binary. However, there is growing recognition that there are gender identities that are non-binary, meaning they have a gender that blends elements of being a man or a woman, are neither, or have a gender that is different than either male or female. People whose gender is neither male nor female can use many different terms to describe themselves, with non-binary being one of the most common. These individuals may also refer to their gender identity as genderqueer, agender, bigender, or in other terms.¹⁷

Transgender/Trans. This term can refer to multiple different gender identities of those who do not consistently identify with the gender assigned at birth. A transgender woman refers to a person who lives as a woman but was born with male anatomy. A transgender man lives as a man but was identified as a female at birth. Some transgender people identify as neither male nor female, or as a combination of male and female.¹⁸

Two-spirit. This term used by some indigenous North Americans to describe those who fulfil a traditional third-gender ceremonial role.

The language around gender identity and sexual orientation confuses me. I am afraid of making a mistake and feel uncomfortable.

The language around gender identify and sexual orientation is shifting as we seek to develop words that acknowledge and reflect each person's identities.

As friends and colleagues, our goal is to respect and support our peers by using the language that works for them.

Mistakes will happen. Acknowledge them, apologize, and try to do better next time. **The most important point is to treat everyone with fairness, dignity, and respect.**

It is okay to have questions. Before asking a person what may be a personal or sensitive question, take the time to do your own research online, by reading books, or attending a training.

Most people are willing to explain when your questions come from a place of non-judgement and honest curiosity. Just be aware it can be exhausting to keep answering questions and your colleague may not be willing or able to respond.

14 http://www.pbs.org/independentlens/content/two-spirits_map-html/

15 <https://www.transstudent.org/definitions>

16 https://isna.org/faq/what_is_intersex/

17 <https://transequality.org/issues/resources/understanding-non-binary-people-how-to-be-respectful-and-supportive>

18 <https://transequality.org/issues/resources/frequently-asked-questions-about-transgender-people>

Gender language is adapting and changing in the effort to develop words that best reflect each person's gender identity. As friends and colleagues, our goal is to try and stay as current as possible and make a sincere effort to use language that respects and support our peers as they find language that works for them.

Research shows that these groups continue to suffer inequitable and unfair outcomes. As a whole, these groups tend to have lower wages, lower rates of promotion, higher frequency of rejected job applications, discrimination from housing rentals, lower rates of approved home and business loans, unequal access to healthcare, and/or the inability to vote. Members of the following marginalized groups are also more likely to be victims of discrimination, abuse, and assault:¹⁹

- Ethnic and racial minorities
- Individuals with cognitive or physical impairments
- Individuals who cannot read
- Individuals who do not speak English
- Individuals without a high school diploma
- Formerly incarcerated individuals
- Low-income individuals, particularly in rural communities
- Military veterans
- Senior citizens or those who appear elderly
- The homeless
- The unemployed
- Those who identify as LGBTQIA+
- Undocumented residents (most pay taxes but are barred from receiving any benefits)
- Women, non-binary, and transgender individuals
- Young people (minors and young adults).

Recently, the term “marginalized” has been questioned as it seems to perpetuate the idea that these groups are only victims and lack their own initiative and power. Sometimes these groups are referred to as “underserved” or “targeted.” The main issue is that in an effort to avoid racial or ethnic terminology, people are using “marginalized” or “underserved” when they are actually referring to BIPOC communities.

Whenever possible, name groups directly, using the terms they prefer. Only use terms such as “marginalized” when there are no other reasonable alternatives. Consider the context carefully, also, and take care not to use this language to perpetuate negative stereotypes.

Personal Pronouns

Society is beginning to understand and respect that many individuals do not fit into the male/female gender binary. In addition to the traditional gendered pronouns of he/his/him and she/her/hers, some people may prefer gender-neutral or non-binary pronouns such as:

they	them	their	theirs	theirself
ze	hir	hir	hirs	hirsself

When first meeting someone, or during a round of introductions, it is often best to ask: “What pronouns do you use?” or “How would you like me to refer to you?” If you forget, or make a mistake, simply acknowledge the error, correct yourself, and offer a quick apology. Sincerity is more important than perfection. Using the terms people use for themselves shows respect and acceptance and in no way diminishes your own values, beliefs, or preferences.

¹⁹ https://www.mnpsych.org/index.php?option=com_dailyplanetblog&view=entry&category=division%20news&id=71:marginalized-populations

Sexual Orientation

Sexual orientation refers to an individual's sexual, romantic, and emotional attraction and their own sense of identity based on those attractions.²⁰ Sexual orientation is distinct from gender identity, which is the internal sense of being male, female, or non-binary. The term LGBTQIA+ refers to: Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Two-Spirit (used to refer to trans), Queer, Intersex, Asexual/Aromantic, plus (+ is intended to encapsulate all other identities, including pansexual and omnisexual.)

Below are some widely used terms used to describe sexual orientation:

Asexual or Aromantic: Aromantic is a term some individuals use to describe their identity as someone who lacks feelings of romantic attraction. Asexual is a term some people use to describe their identity as an individual who does not have sexual feelings;

Bisexual: This term refers to a person who is attracted to both men and women;

Lesbian/Gay: These terms refer to women who are attracted to women (Lesbians) and men who are attracted to men (Gay). Some of these folks prefer to identify themselves as Queer or in other ways;

Omnisexual: This term refers to a person who is gender-inclusive and attracted to all genders;

Pansexual: This is a term, which refers to people who are attracted to others regardless of their gender and sometimes refers to themselves as gender-blind.²¹

Queer:²² This is a term, which was once used in a derogatory manner, has been taken back by some in the LGBTQIA+ community who use this term to refer to their own sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression which does not conform to mainstream societal norms. It is important to note this term is used by members of this community but is not always appropriate or respectful to be used by others—it can still be used as a hurtful slur in many contexts;

Questioning: This term may be claimed by someone who is exploring their sexual orientation or gender identity.

The language of sexual orientation is changing with our growing understanding and recognition that sexuality is a complex identity and many people do not fit mainstream norms. As friends and colleagues, our goal is to try and stay as current as possible and make a sincere effort to use language that respects and support our peers as they find language that works for them.

It is very important to only use a term when the person or group has been open about claiming this identity. Do NOT make assumptions—and do not assume that these identities are public knowledge. LGBTQIA+ peoples' employment, relationships, and lives can be put in danger with a few careless words.

When in doubt, ask. If a mistake is made, offer a heartfelt and brief apology and try to do better next time. Nobody expects perfection—but everyone SHOULD expect to be treated with respect. Just try your best and most people will sincerely appreciate the effort.

20 <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/basics/homosexuality>

21 <https://www.pinknews.co.uk/2018/03/15/what-is-lgbtq-what-does-the-plus-stand-for-and-is-anyone-left-out/>

22 https://www.cjr.org/language_corner/queer.php

Marginalized Groups

The term “marginalized” was first used in the 1970s to describe individuals and groups who have been systematically excluded from the full rights and benefits of citizens in U.S. society.²³

Below is a list of some of the groups that have been negatively stereotyped and historically barred from accessing full social, economic, governmental, or educational benefits and opportunities.

Dominant culture

The dominant culture in a society is the collection of commonly accepted language, religion, values, rituals, and social customs of the group that holds the most political and economic power and influence. An organization’s dominant culture is influenced by the standards and preferences and narratives created and maintained by those in leadership positions. The dominant culture of the U.S. is defined by the group of White Americans who have held power and maintained significant economic and political privileges over time at the expense of others. (This is sometimes referred to as White Supremacy Culture.)²⁴

Racism

Racism is a form of systematic oppression that intersects with other forms of oppression (e.g. sexism, heterosexism, classism and ableism. Racism in the U.S. is expressed—and experienced—in four primary ways:

Personally. This is the most common way we tend to think about racism—as specific acts between individuals or groups. Personal racism takes the form of language, assumptions, or decisions that reinforce the idea that one racial group is superior to another. Because economic and governmental power is held by Whites in the U.S., personal racism in this country’s context is about advancing the idea that BIPOC communities are inherently inferior to Whites. (There are arguments about reverse-racism of BIPOC communities against White folks, but we would argue that these acts would be better described as discrimination or bigotry—as these perpetrators are members of groups without historical power.)

Institutionally. Institutional racism refers specifically to the ways in which institutional policies and practices have historically and currently advantaged White and disadvantaged BIPOC communities. By institutions, we mean government agencies and offices, the real estate sector, educational institutions, the media sector, business law and practices, criminal justice policies and institutions, hospitals and healthcare facilities, etc. Examples of institutional racism include: Ivy League policies that give preference in admissions for children of alumni (considering BIPOC communities were not welcomed for decades) and agribusiness’ economic reliance on low-paying undocumented immigrant labor.

Culturally. Cultural racism refers the ways mainstream culture creates and perpetuates norms, values, beliefs and standards based on White culture to the detriment of BIPOC communities. Cultural racism is found in the many representations, messages and stories that convey the idea that behaviors and values associated with white people or whiteness are automatically better or more normal than those associated with other racialized groups. Examples of cultural racism is found in the following storylines: welfare queens (often assumed to be Black or Brown) are portrayed as a major threat while white collar fraud in the business community is costing the US hundreds of billions of dollars a year; and requiring people to speak English historically (Indigenous peoples) and today (people from Central and South America) as a way of deliberately devaluing and destroying other cultures.

23 <http://nccd.ca/glossary/entry/marginalized-populations>

24 Awake to Woke to Work. Glossary of Terms. <https://tinyurl.com/vd8t88d>

Internally. Internalized racism occurs when a person of color consciously, or unconsciously, accepts mainstream society’s racist views, stereotypes and biases of one’s own racial or ethnic group. Internalized racism occurs as a result of the cultural, social, and institutional racism that is embedded in U.S. society. Internal racism is manifested when BIPOC communities find themselves (knowingly or unknowingly) accepting and advancing racist ideas and thoughts about themselves—and their communities—while placing a higher value on the dominant culture.

Structurally. Structural racism in the U.S. refers to the historical, cultural, institutional and interpersonal dynamics embedded in this country’s policies, practices, and assumptions. White people, as a group, have received preferential treatment, special privileges, and unique access to power. At the same time, these systems have resulted in cumulative and chronic adverse outcomes for BIPOC communities. Structural racism is often invisible at first glance and is the underlying system that perpetuates institutional and interpersonal racism.²⁵

Ableism

Ableism refers to the social prejudice against and discrimination of people with disabilities. Like all forms of prejudice and discrimination, ableism can be both intentional and unintentional, and lead to the oppression of individuals with disabilities. According to the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, a person has a disability if they have a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities; has a record of such an impairment; or is regarded as having such an impairment.²⁶

Underrepresented Groups in Conservation

Most U.S. environmental organizations do not reflect the racial or ethnic diversity of the country. Research confirms that the mainstream conservation movement in the U.S. is made up primarily of White, upper middle-class individuals—with men holding most of the senior positions. Although BIPOC communities make up 38% of the U.S. population and constitute 29% of the workforce in science and engineering, they only make up about 16% of staff in environmental institutions. And while mainstream environmental organizations have significant numbers of female staff, very few are in senior leadership positions.²⁷

Environmental Justice

The Environmental Justice movement arose in response to racial discrimination in environmental policy-making and the unequal enforcement of environmental regulations and laws; the deliberate targeting of communities of color for toxic waste facilities; the official sanctioning of cumulative toxic pollutants in low-income and BIPOC communities; and the history of excluding BIPOC communities from the leadership of the environmental movement. The Environmental Justice movement is led by grassroots leaders who seek to address issues of environmental racism and injustice from shared values²⁸ and principles²⁹ that lift up local leadership, make space for people to speak for themselves, advocate for the self-determination of all peoples, and prioritize environmental efforts where low-income and people of color live, learn, work, play, and pray.

25 2004. Race and Public Policy Conference. “Structural Racism.” By Keith Lawrence, Aspen Institute on Community Change and Terry Keleher, Applied Research Center at UC Berkeley.

26 <https://www.nccj.org/ableism>

27 Taylor, D. (2014). *The State of Diversity in Environmental Organizations*. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan.

28 Jemez Principles of Democratic Organizing. <https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=1&ved=2ahUKEw-i3qrmn-rrnAhUFTt8KHZOABIYQFjAAegQIAxAB&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.ejnet.org%2Ffej%2Fjemez.pdf&usg=AOvVaw2V-qNP6Jt-OJtj3hXJvqzz4>

29 Principles of Environmental Justice. <https://www.ejnet.org/ej/principles.html>

TIPS REGARDING INCLUSIVE LANGUAGE

How we communicate, the words, narratives and images we use can help welcome others or push them away. We should prioritize language that does no harm—and does not create or perpetuate barriers for certain groups.

Some terms may not feel natural or comfortable to you, but using inclusive language is an important signal of acceptance and respect for the person you are speaking with.

Inclusive language seeks to engage all people with respect dignity, and impartiality.³⁰ Yet it is not always easy to effectively and appropriately employ EDI terms. It requires us to consider the implications of words and phrases that we may have used—or heard—for so long that the underlying meanings and original intents are no longer visible.

Here are a few things to keep in mind regarding inclusive language:

Never make assumptions about a person's identity. It may seem a person's race, ethnicity, gender, or sexuality is obvious based on their name, where they live, and how they look or present themselves. Remember that assumptions are often wrong and careless language can result in pain, trauma, embarrassment, and could even put people in real danger from hate groups or violent acts.

Ask directly or check in with trusted colleagues or friends. Knowing a person's name and pronouns is necessary for respectful and effective communication. Be sure to offer your own pronouns when you ask for theirs. People can change their names and pronouns over time, so be prepared for the possibility that the first answer you get might change. Race, ethnicity, and sexuality can be private and personal—think carefully about whether it is truly important for you to know before you ask. And if you ask—be prepared to share your own information as well.

Recognize our own privilege. Each person has multiple identities and there is usually at least one area in which we have some privilege (i.e., are considered “normal” or that fit into the assumed standard in today's society). Notice if you have no problem finding a bathroom that fits your gender identify; can easily find clothing, makeup, or hair stylists that fit your needs; are not expected to bring food to—or tidy up after—meetings; or can easily walk up the stairs to the meeting room and hear the presentation without any aids. Noticing areas of our own privilege—and how it feels when we fit in and can move forward easily— can help us gain more sensitivity and awareness when such benefits are not accessible to everyone.

Avoid using language that is disparaging or othering. Most of us sincerely try to use language that is respectful to all groups. These efforts are appreciated and mistakes usually do not cause offence when the speaker's overall actions and words are based on collegiality and respect. Here are a few tips to keep in mind: use “folks” or “friends” instead of referring to “ladies” or “guys.” Also be aware of what is really being expressed when the following words are used as adjectives: “lame,” “gay,” “hysterical,” or “thuggish.” Using some inclusive terms may not feel natural or comfortable to you, but is a very important signal of acceptance and respect for the folks you are addressing.

30 An Incomplete Guide to Inclusive Language for Startups and Tech. <https://open.buffer.com/inclusive-language-tech/>

Examples of affirmative terms to use vs. negative terms to avoid:

NEGATIVE TERMS	AFFIRMATIVE TERMS
A gay or a transgender	A gay/transgender person
American Indians	Most groups prefer to identify with their specific Nation or community. Use Indigenous Peoples, First Nations, or Native Americans for broader groups.
An Autistic	Child or person with autism
Arabs	Depending on the circumstance, it may be better to be more general (e.g. Middle Eastern people) or more specific (e.g. Saudi Arabians, or Northern African people)
Born female/male	Assigned female/male at birth
Caucasian	White people
Citizen	This has become a politically heated term. Try to use resident or community member instead.
Guys	Folks, people, all
He/him/his or she/her/hers for a broad group	Ask or use “they” if not sure
Homosexual	LGBTQIA+ for a broad category, or use the specific name the group uses for itself (e.g. Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Queer)
Impaired, crippled, handicapped, disabled	Person/people with disabilities
Mankind	Humankind
Minority or Non-white	People of Color (POC) or Black, Indigenous or People of Color (BIPOC). Some groups also use the term People of the Global Majority or Racialized Groups. When possible, use the terminology groups use for themselves.
Normal, healthy, able-bodied	Person without a disability
Oriental	Asians
Foreigners	People from other countries (be as specific as possible).
Poor person, impoverished person	Low-income
Preferred pronoun	Pronoun (preferred implies choice).

Inclusive language resource guides from journalist affinity groups

To learn more about how and when to use certain terms, the following journalism affinity groups offer the following resources:

- Society of Professional Journalists: Diversity Style Guide
<https://www.diversitystyleguide.com/>
- National Association of Black Journalists Style Guide.
<https://www.nabj.org/page/styleguide>
- National Association of Hispanic Journalists Style Guide.
<http://nahj.org/>
- National Center on Disability and Journalism Style Guide.
<https://ncdj.org/style-guide/>
- The Association of LGBTQ Journalists Style Guide.
<https://www.nlgja.org/stylebook/category/guidance/>

V. Why is EDI necessary for achieving Audubon's mission?

The United States' next generation is poised to be more racially, ethnically, and culturally diverse than previous residents. This change offers a wealth of untapped potential for bringing in new types of historical knowledge, differing perspectives, and skills to your chapter. Chapters should continue building skills to reach a younger and more diverse constituency. Just as biodiversity strengthens natural ecosystems, the diversity of human experience improves conservation efforts for the benefit of nature and all human beings. Conservation strategies are enriched and made stronger by the contribution of the experiences, perspectives, and values of diverse individuals and communities. Protecting and conserving nature and the environment transcends political, cultural and social boundaries, and so must Audubon in order to expand our network's reach and engage more people in protecting birds and habitat.

Respect, inclusion, and opportunity for people of all backgrounds, lifestyles and perspectives will attract the best ideas and harness the greatest passion to shape a healthier, more vibrant future for all of us who share our planet. The birds we are pledged to protect differ in color, size, behavior, geographical preference and countless other ways. By honoring and celebrating the equally remarkable diversity of the human species, Audubon will bring new creativity, effectiveness, and leadership to our work throughout the hemisphere.

It is people who must advance the level of conservation and restoration needed to address the increasing risks from climate change and current land-use practices, increasing investment and attention to EDI will be critical for Audubon's ongoing success. Embracing EDI as a part of your organizational values will make space for positive outcomes to flourish, whether in internal capacity building or community education, stewardship, or advocacy activities.³¹ Audubon must continue to represent and reflect that human diversity, embracing it in all the communities where we work, in order to achieve our conservation goals.

There are five key arguments that make the case for equity, diversity, and inclusion:

1. The economic case is based on the idea that organizations that tap into a diverse talent pool are stronger and more efficient.
2. The market case states that organizations will better work with their respective communities when they reflect the diversity of their constituency.
3. The results case is that diverse teams lead to better outputs.
4. The moral or social justice case that each person has value to contribute, and that we must address barriers and historical factors that have led to unfair conditions for marginalized populations.²⁷
5. The team-building case is that by bringing in more diverse leadership and participation, your team will be more interesting, innovative, fun, and will have more energy!

Businesses that invest in EDI show higher financial performance³² and have an increased competitive edge. They are able to hire and retain new talent, especially as millennials seek diversity and inclusion in workspaces.

31 National Council of Nonprofits. <https://www.councilofnonprofits.org/tools-resources/why-diversity-equity-and-inclusion-matter-nonprofits>

32 Why Diversity and Inclusion Are More Important Than Ever. <https://www.thiswayglobal.com/blog/diversity-inclusion-importance/>

Employees from a range of backgrounds foster new ideas and approaches, triggering more creative solutions that lead to measurable results.³³

The time and effort chapters spend in increasing EDI knowledge and skills will help them more effectively engage other groups and communities around shared interests in protecting and stewarding the natural habitats that birds and humans need to thrive. Here are some of the specific ways EDI will help advance chapter goals:

- **Building trust.** Chapters will be able to connect with residents about the issues that are important to them, showing that Audubon cares about their needs—not just our own.
- **Increasing engagement.** Community members who trust us, and who see their interests in our programs, are more likely to join and assist in chapter efforts.
- **Strengthening partnerships.** We can be more valuable partners when we have the knowledge and are trusted to share information with other organizations or coalitions that work in the community so that everyone’s work can benefit.
- **Improving programs.** The most effective programs take advantage of opportunities to meet community needs while also advancing goals related to bird conservation.
- **Developing messages that resonate.** Deeper knowledge and stronger community relationships will provide background and justification for grant proposals and other outreach materials.

WHAT DOES EDI MEAN FOR AUDUBON CHAPTERS?

Audubon has 446 chapters, plus 130 campus chapters in its network. These independent entities enable Audubon members and others to meet and share an appreciation of their common interests. They create a culture of conservation in local communities through education and advocacy, focusing on the conservation of birds, other wildlife and conservation of important habitats. Chapters contribute to science through monitoring and habitat work by providing data on the health of local bird species through Christmas Bird Counts, the Great Backyard Bird Count, breeding bird surveys, and other local monitoring projects. Chapters conduct an important part of Audubon’s local conservation efforts and are often the face of Audubon in many communities. Their effectiveness in reaching all community residents is important for Audubon’s overall brand recognition as well as for maximizing the impact and effectiveness of local bird conservation efforts.

Chapters report on their efforts on an annual basis through a survey administered through its Chapter Reporting System. Results from the 2018-2019 Chapter Survey gives us a current snapshot of chapter capacity and efforts:

Chapters mostly operate with small budgets and depend heavily on volunteers. The 2018-2019 survey results show that trend continues: of the 415 respondents, 61% have annual revenues under \$15,000 and only 57 chapters reported having paid staff. Nonetheless, chapters engaged over 42,000 volunteers [every year] who collectively donate 985,312 (almost 1 million!) hours of their time.

Results show that even chapters with very limited financial resources offer a broad range of services and programs for their communities. These span from environment-based activities (e.g. bird conservation, habitat restoration, and environmental advocacy) to people-based activities (e.g. bird walks, environmental classes and education, and social events.)

A significant number of chapters are already engaging in efforts related to diversity and inclusion—or have goals to do so—but without necessarily framing this work as EDI. For example, when asked to list up to three goals, seventy-four-chapter respondents referenced reaching under-represented groups in some way (hereby referred to as

33 <http://www.biologyreference.com/Ar-Bi/Biology-of-Race.html>

“EDI Goals”). The most frequently mentioned EDI goal was related to age diversity. Recruiting younger participants and board members is a high priority for many chapters. One chapter’s response regarding their goals gives an idea of the situation for many small chapters:

Goal 1: “Find a reliable replacement for our Bird Seed Sale Chairman, who is 86 and moving to a retirement home in Illinois next month. He has been providing the life blood (money) for the bulk of our operations,” and;

Goal 2: “Determine my replacement, as I am also 86 and running out of energy.”

A few chapters specifically noted goals to increase racial and ethnic diversity of their organization (board, staff, or volunteers) and/or their program participants. Expanding and broadening partnerships were also frequently listed as chapter goals.

SNAPSHOT OF EDI CHAPTER SUCCESSES.

Chapters are also incorporating EDI elements into their programs. Below are examples of a few EDI success stories:

- **Advocacy:** Worked with an African American community to advocate for their interests in the use of public lands.
- **Outreach:** Native American outreach to federally recognized tribes.
- **Trails and Gardens:** Healing garden and horticulture therapy for children and adults with special needs.
- **Habitat Restoration and Conservation:** Habitat restoration projects with diverse faith partners.
- **Other:** Disabled access program at the Natural History Museum.

Audubon’s 2018 EDI survey found that Youth Environmental Education and Youth Activities are the programs where chapters report the greatest success in connecting with under-represented groups. While individuals under the age of 40 are an under-represented group within Audubon, many chapters intentionally engage children and young people from diverse racial and ethnic communities. Chapters also provide programs to youth with disabilities. Here is one example regarding a newly formed Youth Outreach Committee:

“[we held our] first bird and nature walk for twenty 6th to 8th grade students ...diagnosed with ADD/ADHD or ASD. Research shows that time spent in nature can help improve academic performance, reduce stress, and provide physical benefits. With the help of [a local education enter] ... we enjoyed two hours sharing nature with children that deserve all we can give. We plan to hold more events in 2017-2018 and begin additional outreach nature events with Home School groups.”

Becoming more inclusive, diverse, and equitable requires significant adjustments in organizational culture, chapter operations, and individual skill sets. This work means confronting biases, recognizing difficult histories, improving cultural competency, and participating in difficult conversations. Progress is often incremental and can lead to “diversity fatigue”. Chapters are already taking these steps to reflect this country’s rich variety of perspectives. The following sections offer specific tools and strategies for chapters to move further along in their efforts to design, implement, and evaluate effective EDI strategies.

VI. How can we increase our EDI knowledge and skills?

EDI knowledge and skills (sometimes referred to as cultural competency) support a chapter's ability to welcome, value, and respect people of all cultures, genders, backgrounds, and ages. EDI knowledge and skills are necessary for chapters to produce equitable outcomes for all groups and communities.^{34,35}

The words “groups” and “communities” are sometimes used interchangeably to refer to:

- A specific geographic area, in terms of a city or town (e.g., Atlanta or Racine) or a certain neighborhood (e.g., Chicago's Lower West Side or Bronzeville)
- A group of people who have a shared identity (e.g., birders, LGBTQ, Afro-Latino, youth). These groups often transcend specific geographic boundaries.
- A group of people who have intentionally chosen to be in a relationship and are working towards a shared goal (e.g., conservationists, waterkeepers, land trusts, environmental justice communities, etc.). These communities exist at multiple scales: local, city, county, state, regional, national, and international.

Each individual belongs to multiple groups and communities based on geographic location, personal identities (e.g., age, gender, race, ethnicity, ability, sexual orientation, etc.), and interests or goals. Groups and communities experience cities, institutions, and landscapes in different ways. Group norms, languages, practices, beliefs, and priorities arise in response to their lived realities over time.

Below are some categories to consider when seeking to understand how groups engage, perceive, and respond to man-made and natural environments, and how they interact with other groups in the same spaces: ³⁶

Geographic distribution of people: Who makes up the community (in terms of age, income levels, race and ethnicity, marital status, education, number of people in a household, primary language, etc.)? Where are these groups geographically located? Are there certain neighborhoods or areas that have higher concentrations of older folks or those from certain races or ethnic backgrounds? Are there wealthy parts of town? Poorer areas? Who lives in these areas?

Local history: What is known about the town or area's history? Which groups are considered the “founders”? Are certain groups missing from traditional history and folklore? Which groups held power and resources? How can this history help explain current relationships, decisions, assumptions, and politics?

Residential, community, and business spaces: Where do people currently live, work, play, and pray? Where are the jobs? How does the quality and location of infrastructure (such as roads, bike lanes, and public transportation) connect or disconnect certain parts of town?

Distribution of public spaces, parks, and environmental factors. Where are places of historical and cultural significance? Which ones are well-known and maintained? Where are important landmarks? Where are the parks, libraries, and transportation hubs? How are environmental

34 Understanding Cultural Competency in Experiential Environmental Education Programs: A report from the Cultural Competency Assessment Project. https://naaee.org/sites/default/files/understanding_cultural_competency.pdf

35 Cultural Relevancy Resource Guide. <https://www.calandtrusts.org/cultural-relevancy-resource-guide/>

36 <https://www.audubon.org/magazine/september-october-2011/facing-future>

concerns (such poor air quality, street flooding, or loss of bird habitats) and environmental benefits (parks, sanctuaries, recreational areas) distributed across your geography? Which groups are positioned closest to areas of environmental concern? Which groups have the easiest access to environmental benefits?

Institutions and community leaders: Who holds political and economic power in the area? Are certain families, businesses, or groups represented in government, politics, or decision-making? Are any groups missing, or under-represented? How do power differentials make a difference in whose voices are heard in government and other decisions?

These questions are intended to spur thinking and learning within chapters. Asking these questions—and beginning to find the answers—give chapter leaders knowledge from which to build their EDI skills and set EDI goals.

STEPS TO BUILD EDI KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS

Here are some ways to increase your understanding of different cultures, communities, and groups in your area:

Create a safe, secure, and supportive environment where Board/volunteers/staff/members can learn together.

Create time and space during meetings where folks can raise sensitive questions related to issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion. Set ground rules for these conversations so that everyone speaks from their own experience, good intent is assumed behind each comment, and that participants come to the conversation with open minds and hearts, not with their minds made up. Everyone should take responsibility for their own learning and not expect representatives of the under-represented group to do all the teaching and explaining.

Understand significant or compelling racial and/or cultural history connected to the properties you own, steward, or connect to through your programs and events.

Know how important local bird habitats are connected to the histories of Indigenous, Black and other significant communities and groups. You will likely be surprised that many bird havens are also culturally important for groups who traditionally lived and subsisted off the land. These histories often highlight women's leadership in the conservation movement.

If you conduct bird walks or stewardship activities on public park land, you are likely to uncover a history in which Native peoples and others were pushed out to “protect and preserve” the wildlife,³⁷ certain racial groups were not allowed to access or use the space, or where lynchings, rapes, or other crimes occurred that targeted specific groups. The practices of common generations seeking to preserve and protect wilderness and natural areas has been in conflict with many of the indigenous peoples and other cultures and communities that live off the land. Learning these stories and incorporating them into your educational programs will strengthen your chapter's efforts in building community relationships.

Understand unintentional impacts of your program or event, both historically and recently. There need not be malicious intent for harm to occur. Take time to think about ways certain groups may have been left out or ignored in the past.

Being open and honest about the complex history of the public spaces each chapter seeks to support and preserve will aid to build trust and create a fuller picture that is inclusive of the people Audubon is aiming to connect with its work.

37 Dr. Dorceta Taylor, *The Rise of the American Conservation Movement: Power, Privilege, and Environmental Protection*.

Participate in anti-bias and anti-racism trainings or workshops.

Understand and recognize how unintended biases influence interpersonal interactions and decision-making process. It is useful to start at an individual level—understanding oneself before trying to “fix” your team or others.

Read books and watch documentaries and movies that are written and produced by members of other groups.

Learn about the differences in lived experiences of different groups, particularly in relation to natural spaces, schools, employment, and the criminal justice system. Pay attention to how differences in culture, language, experience, age, sexual orientation, and ability can contribute to assumptions, misunderstandings, and conflict between groups.

Participate in events and celebrations hosted by other groups.

Opportunities for learning include cultural celebrations (e.g., religious holidays, designated “history months”, etc.), music and artistic performances, speakers and workshops, and other public events. Partner with other nonprofits and community organizations and actively engage peers in conversations about these topics. Section V will discuss outreach to diverse groups for membership and programs³⁸

38 Ten Things You Should Do to Promote Cultural Competence. https://www.childwelfare.gov/pubPDFs/resources/KS_CulturalCompetencyTraining2.pdf

VII. How can we build meaningful relationships and partnerships with people and groups who are very different from us?

Successful EDI efforts require both personal and organizational relationships. Organizational relationships require strong personal connections with others. This section offers suggestions on how to build diverse and inclusive networks for yourself and your chapter.

INDIVIDUAL RELATIONSHIPS

Each chapter leader or volunteer can begin building relationships with leaders from different communities. Invite a partner, community member, or new to meet for coffee. Be ready to truly listen—and to open up and share your own stories. Look for ways to share personal and chapter resources (expertise, connections, etc.), with these new colleagues to begin building meaningful partnerships. Learn about their dreams, hopes, and visions for the community. Look for possible areas of shared work. Focus on building trust—which can take time—before making any requests. Leave the door open to continuing the relationship even if there is not an immediate opportunity for partnership.

Prioritize relationships with well-connected individuals who are respected for the roles they play. Look for ways to develop relationships and partnerships with community leaders, organizations, and agencies. Are there venues for you to attend or explore to find out who are natural community leaders? Are there organizations that currently have relationships with the community that you can connect with? Which other agencies or organizations are working on similar issues that you should be partnering with?

ORGANIZATIONAL RELATIONSHIPS

Chapters already spend significant efforts conducting community outreach and engagement as a part of events, projects, and programs. This section is intended to support your abilities to build relationships with the full breadth of community members so everyone benefit from your programs and contribute towards bird stewardship and conservation efforts—thereby leading to results that are good for birds and equitable for people. Community engagement and community outreach are two separate, but related concepts:

Community outreach is about increasing awareness and understanding of your mission, vision, and values by those in your service area. Outreach happens when you share information about your programs, resources, and services through social media posts, tabling at local events, and other means.³⁹

Community engagement is about building strong and sustainable relationships and partnerships between the chapter and other community members. Engagement refers to an ongoing process of connecting the chapter's programs with the needs and interests of the communities you work with. Your community members can engage with the chapter in a number of ways, including as members or volunteers, participating in Bird Walks and other programs and events, and in responding to surveys or helping develop new initiatives.

Building relationships through effective outreach and engagement can help the chapter:⁴⁰

39 Exploring Community Outreach: Programs and Strategies. <https://online.grace.edu/news/human-services/community-outreach-programs-strategies/>; Programming Librarian: A website of the American Library Association Public Programs Office: <http://programminglibrarian.org/blog/defining-community-engagement-and-outreach>

40 Collective Impact in Neighborhood Revitalization Part I: Engagement and Building Trust. <https://www.collectiveimpactforum.org/blogs/32226/collective-impact-neighborhood-revitalization-part-1-engagement-and-building-trust>

- Tap into local wisdom and knowledge of land use and human activities that impact bird habitats, as residents are in fact the experts on what is happening in their neighborhoods;
- Bring local residents into the design and implementation of bird-friendly solutions, thereby increasing their personal and collective investment in long-term success;
- Bring in new voices so chapter programs are designed and conducted in ways that help meet individual and communal needs and priorities, to increase relevancy and influence in your area; and,
- Build the chapter's network of relationships leading to a wider array of possibilities and increases your people-power to create longer-term and broader benefits for birds and their habitats.

HOW ARE CHAPTERS ALREADY REACHING OUT?

Data from the 2018 EDI Survey helps us see how chapters are already framing and implementing community outreach to underrepresented groups. When asked to report on the demographic groups that were reached out to for their programs and activities, chapters reported the following:

Age: 83% of chapters have taken specific steps to reach youth (those under 18 years old). Just over half (54%) made an effort to reach young adults (ages 18-24) and 49% tried to reach adults (ages 25-54). Only 32% noted specific efforts to reach older adults and seniors who are aged 55 and older.

Income: Just over 70% of chapters report taking specific steps to reach participants with annual incomes under \$20,000 (the very poorest community members). Eighty-seven percent (87%) of chapters made an effort to reach those with slightly higher levels of income (\$20,000-\$50,000 per year).

Gender and Sexual Orientation: Nearly all chapters (91%) take steps to reach out to women and just over half (57%) try to reach LGBTQIA+ individuals.

Race/Ethnicity: Chapters are inconsistent in how they reach out to specific racial and ethnic groups. Some of these differences are related to variances in the types of diversity and representation within the communities they serve. Eleven percent (11%) of surveyed chapters reach out to Native American or Indigenous community members; 65% to Blacks/African Americans; 60-63% to Hispanic/White and Hispanic/Non-White communities, respectively; 26% to Asians; 10% to Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islanders; and 41% to Multi-Racial individuals.

Additional categories: Nearly half (48%) of chapters take steps to connect with individuals with disabilities; 21% to veterans, 62% to those whose primary language is not English, and 28% to immigrants or refugees.

The survey gave chapter respondents an opportunity to expand upon, or clarify, their responses to the pre-defined categories above. A few offered insights into why some Chapters may not be reaching out to various groups:

- ◆ “I am the new chapter president. I put a diversity statement on some of our literature. We are just beginning to talk about diversity. I have it on our next agenda. I do have youth programs.”
- ◆ “We don't try to reach under-represented groups. Our focus is on habitat protections for shorebirds and inland bird populations. Support comes from people who care, who donate, who volunteer and we make no special appeals for under-represented groups. The people who support us may be under-represented, but no one stands out.”
- ◆ “While we didn't specifically target individuals with disabilities in our field trips, we have now included information on what parts of the trip are accessible (i.e. birding on a boardwalk). Also for one of our events, when an attendee indicated he was bringing his special-needs daughter

who is wheelchair-bound with limited muscle function, we adjusted the trail and classroom set up to ensure she could fully enjoy the program.”

- ◆ “We are a chapter in a predominantly rural or small city area and struggling just to survive at all. We don’t have any outreach for diversity other than to get younger people to join. There is a significant indigenous history here but only bare remnants of the original people, the Chinooks. It would be wonderful to have a relationship with them.”
- ◆ “We have made small inroads in reaching out to children of all ethnicities and races. We believe that they are key (the future) and that they may bring their parents along to join us, as well.”
- ◆ “There are very few non-white people in our very rural territory.”
- ◆ “Aside from one presentation at an assisted-living facility, our chapter has not reached out specifically to under-represented groups.”

Below is a list of partners that chapters report building successful relationships and partnerships:

- Business and chambers of commerce (local farms, waste management, nurseries, etc.)
- Boy scouts/Girl scouts
- City or County Departments (e.g. libraries, parks and recreation, others)
- Conservation partners (environmental nonprofits, land trusts, etc.)
- Faith-based institutions (churches, mosques, synagogues, temples, etc.)
- Neighborhood and place-based groups and nonprofits (block clubs, community development corporations, local gardening groups, etc.)
- Schools, community colleges, & universities (public and private), including those with agricultural and environmental programs, and identifying any Historically Black, Tribal, or Women’s colleges and universities in your area.)
- Senior centers
- State Agencies (Natural Resources Agencies—including parks)

KEY STEPS FOR BUILDING INDIVIDUAL AND ORGANIZATIONAL RELATIONSHIPS

Acknowledging past harms and be public about your EDI intentions and values.

The longer a chapter has been in existence, the more likely it has taken part in, or stayed silent about, events and practices that excluded or disadvantaged certain groups or communities. Some actions that were commonplace in previous decades (such as promoting all-male leadership) we now recognize as unfair and harmful.

Understand and acknowledge how the chapter may have overlooked—or even discouraged—participation from certain groups over the years. There is also a chance that some well-intentioned programs to protect bird habitat resulted in negative consequences for certain community members (for example, by making it harder for hunting or gathering on protected lands and contributing to food insecurity for some families). And while chapters intend to create a welcoming environment, it’s necessary to be mindful of the specific barriers which prevent certain groups from participating, and intentional about how to breakdown those barriers.

It may seem easier to let bygones be bygones and simply focus on a chapter’s current good intentions and efforts, but publicly acknowledging difficult moments in the chapter’s history is a critical step towards building trust with community members. In addition, being open and transparent about your equity, diversity, and inclusion goals sends a strong signal that a chapter is committed to a new approach that truly welcomes and includes all others.

Bringing in diverse community voices into updating or developing your Values Statement (as discussed in Section IV) is a good starting point. Once you have a Values Statement that fits your needs, take every opportunity to share it with your communities—on your website, via social media, noted on your pamphlets and written materials, etc.

Listen with humility.

Once a chapter goes public about your equity, diversity, and inclusion priorities and begins to acknowledge past harm, it won't be long before someone questions your current commitment to doing things differently. Particularly in communities where there have been decades worth of distrust and miscommunication, leaders may be publicly called out on how the chapter's past or recent choices had negative impacts on certain individuals or groups. This will feel embarrassing, humiliating, and horrible- but please do not disengage and retreat to the safety of your own group! Such difficult confrontations are an opportunity to walk your talk and demonstrate your commitment to this work and respect for your community. First, listen and acknowledge the experiences of others who have been hurt in the past. You can save explanations for another time.

Being open to difficult conversations—and listening with empathy rather than jumping to your own defense—can help break through tensions to build honest relationships with folks that may be very different from what was status quo in the past. There will always be disagreements, but you will be able to find points of agreement and mutual interest only when you move past difficult shared histories. Pursuing this approach of listening with humility—while not easy or comfortable—will put a chapter in the best position to build a strong and powerful constituency for birds with groups who have not traditionally been a part of conservation efforts.

Seek and value local knowledge.

Each chapter has valuable knowledge about local bird species and their preferred habitats. Local residents may not think of themselves as birders, but will have other types of information that is related to healthy bird populations- such as where vacant properties are located, how and when people spread weed killers and fertilizers on their lawns, which species come to neighborhood bird feeders, and the stories about how families and tribes have historically hunted and gathered on local lands.

Inclusive engagement happens when individuals can participate with chapters in an equal relationship in which information is shared in both directions, as opposed to the feeling that they are viewed only as receptacles of knowledge that is provided by bird experts. Residential neighborhoods are not always valued in the same way as “pristine” natural areas, but they are important corridors and refuges for bird populations. Through Bird Friendly programs, these community spaces can be improved to support native bird populations when information is received as well as shared and when priorities are set in partnership with local residents.

Use photography and art related to birds and nature to bring people together.

Many chapter leaders and members share their love of birds and nature through photography, painting, poetry, and other types of art forms. Birdhouses, gardens, quilts, and other crafts offer other means of artistic expression. The wonder, magic, and beauty of birds and wildlife captured in these ways can resonate deeply with people of all ages and backgrounds. Look for ways to share your team's arts and crafts with others. Plan outings to attend and support the artistic and cultural celebrations of other groups.

VIII. How do we align EDI values with Audubon conservation goals?

The vision, mission, and values statements guide chapter behaviors and decisions. Each statement has a different purpose:

VALUES STATEMENT

The values statement identifies the core principles that guide the chapter and define its culture. These stated values can serve as a compass for chapter members, volunteers, and leaders. A values statement can guide decision-making and establish a standard against which actions can be assessed. Look for opportunities to align values with EDI principles and goals. For example, the values statement could include language that specifically welcomes all the various identities represented within chapter's communities.

VISION STATEMENT

The vision statement looks forward and creates an image of the ideal community and conditions the chapter wishes to achieve. When developing or revising your vision statement, consider the following questions. What are values that you would like to name and lift up related to who is welcome to participate and how different perspectives are included? What conduct should your staff, board, volunteers, members, and participants uphold? What conduct is unacceptable?

MISSION STATEMENT

Audubon has an overall mission statement that offers a concise explanation of the organization's reason for existence. Each chapter can adapt this mission to describe its own purpose and overall intention. The mission statement supports the vision and serves to communicate purpose and direction to members, volunteers, and leaders. Consider your mission statement in terms of relevance to communities in your area. How do diverse community residents and partners feel about your mission? Does it energize and motivate them? Is the language appropriate and reflective of the current social context and realities?

The National Audubon Society protects birds and the places they need, today and tomorrow, throughout the Americas using science, advocacy, education, and on-the-ground conservation.

EDI STATEMENT

An EDI statement (sometimes referred to as a diversity statement) drills deeper than a values statement in explaining how a chapter's commitment to equity, diversity, and inclusion advances the chapter's mission and vision. Audubon has a comprehensive EDI Statement on its website, which is featured in Section II.

The process of developing an EDI statement helps leaders, members, and participants develop a shared understanding of what equity, diversity, and inclusion mean for the chapter and why living these values is critical to making progress to protect birds and bird habitats. This is also an opportunity to connect the chapter's mission with EDI goals and objectives.

The EDI statement should be developed through a collaborative effort from a mix of Board members, staff, volunteers, members, and possibly participants who represent different communities and stakeholders from the chapter's area.

Creating or refreshing Values, Vision, Mission, and EDI Statements

Most chapters already have one or more of these statements already in place. It is helpful to regularly review and update these as times change. Revisiting a chapter's statements every 3-5 years is recommended. Connecting these updates with your strategic planning processes would be ideal.

Spending time to revisit—or develop—chapter values, vision, mission, and EDI statements helps identify what is important for each chapter. These efforts provide opportunities to reflect on how each chapter can best work within their area's unique geographic area. Chapter statements should keep in mind each area's sociodemographic makeup, geographic distribution of people, physical landmarks, place-based impacts of environmental benefits and harms, institutions and leaders, and community history.

Stating a chapter's values, vision, mission, and EDI commitments and goals helps others to understand each chapter and what it wants to accomplish. These statements can help engage members and partners around a shared common purpose and approach. Audubon has released a Workbook for Developing Your Chapters' Vision, Mission, and Strategic Roadmap for success. Please reference this workbook, which can be found on the EDI page of Audubon Works, when developing your chapter's statements.

IX. How can we integrate EDI values into chapter culture?

The National Parks Service defines culture as a “system of behaviors (including economic, religious, and social), beliefs (values, ideologies), and social arrangements.”⁴¹ Organizational culture sets the tone for the way chapter members and participants treat each other, how decisions are made, and what constitutes acceptable attire, language, and work habits. Organizational culture is a powerful force that is an unwritten rulebook that establishes “the way things are done here.”

Each chapter has its own unique organizational culture. Chapter founders and early leaders play a significant role in defining current organizational culture. It may have taken decades to cement in the chapter’s organization culture—so changes will take concerted time, attention, and energy. One place to start is in examining how the existing culture fits with the values, vision, mission, and EDI statements. Here are some questions to start with:

- Who holds the power to make decisions? How is this power shared with others? Are there certain groups that are missing from decision-making tables?
- Who is trusted within the chapter? Who is considered as having “expertise”? Are there certain types of knowledge, experience, or expertise that are valued above others?
- Do all Board, staff, and volunteers feel comfortable raising questions or offering critiques? What happens when there are disagreements? Are there clear processes in place for how to raise concerns?
- Do all Board, staff, and volunteers feel they are treated fairly? Does everybody in the same role have access to the same information? Is there sufficient transparency in how decisions are made, and by whom?

These questions can serve as a starting point for lifting up elements of internal culture that are invisible to long-time members but may have unintended consequences for certain groups or newcomers. This reflection process can help chapters identify internal culture elements that are barriers to EDI efforts so adjustments can be made as needs and contexts evolve.

Below are some important concepts to consider regarding the chapter’s organizational culture.

Transparency

A culture of transparency takes shape with leaders who take care to show openness, communication, and accountability and encourages this in the attitudes and behaviors of their team members.⁴² Transparency fosters an environment of trust because team members understand why decisions are made and they know what others in the organization are doing. The absence of a transparent atmosphere can foster insecurity and distrust, ultimately leading to a divide between decision-makers and others. A culture of transparency supports a fair and secure workplace setting, where all team members feel equally valued and have the freedom to share information and build authentic relationships.

To support transparency within your chapter (and with external partners), consider these best practices by leaders:

41 <https://www.nps.gov/orgs/1209/what-is-cultural-anthropology.htm>

42 Why A Transparent Culture Is Good For Business. <https://www.fastcompany.com/3036794/why-a-transparent-culture-is-good-for-business>

- Being public about decisions and impacts—particularly when mistakes are made.
- Sharing knowledge and information broadly within the chapter.
- Soliciting feedback from those at all levels within the chapter.
- Being open to questions.
- Treating everyone fairly.
- Sharing of yourself—appropriately sharing what makes you tick.

Sharing decision-making authority and addressing power dynamics

While some decisions must be made by leadership without full participation, most decisions benefit when a broad array of perspectives are considered. A shared leadership power model shares and builds both power and influence by broadly distributing responsibilities across an organization.⁴³ Below are some practical steps to aid in improving power dynamics within your chapter.

- Encourage team members to express their thoughts, even when they are a bit raggedy.
- Do not micromanage others—encourage everyone to action within their sphere of responsibility.
- Create safe spaces to practice new skills and discuss new ideas.
- Rotate roles in meeting facilitation, decision making, and public presentations.
- Support “good enough for now, safe enough to try” decisions so your chapter can promote creativity and learn by doing.⁴⁴
- Value dissenting ideas and opinions.
- Share ownership and credit for decisions and actions.

⁴³ Pearce, CL et.al. 2009. Where do we go from here? Is shared leadership the key to team Success?

⁴⁴ <https://blog.crisp.se/2017/11/03/michaelgothe/consent-decision-making-how-to-take-effective-decisions-collaboratively>

X. How can our programs include and learn from diverse participants?

Projects, programs, and events are most successful when stakeholders are active in the entire programming process: from identifying the need, developing a solution, implementing, and evaluating outcomes. Many chapters are already finding effective ways to include and engage diverse participants, particularly through Bird-Friendly Communities, Climate, Water, Coasts and Working Lands programs. The following strategies overlap with building relationships and other EDI efforts described in previous sections:

Planning from EDI perspective

As a matter of practice, chapter programs should align with the vision, mission, values, and EDI statements or principles (see Section VIII). Alignment with EDI values ensures that chapter programs and events accurately reflect the needs and interests of partners, participants, and communities. Chapters should:

- Budget for resources needed to include all groups (translation, ADA accessible venues, etc.)
- Develop goals and processes for conducting equitable outreach, participation, and leadership of diverse community representatives.
- Conduct evaluations to see where progress is made and where additional effort is needed.
- Look for ways to increase connectivity to the Audubon network. Recruit diverse participants (and possibly offer financial support) to attend state Audubon meetings, and/or the Audubon Convention.

Maintain a presence in various neighborhoods and communities.

Are there community-sponsored events that you can participate in and that people will already be gathering for? Does the public regularly see chapter representatives at all types of events? When attending community events, are Audubon representatives easily recognizable by chapter shirts or hats?

Once you have built trusted relationships, make sure key individuals from those groups are represented at each stage of the program or event development process. Regularly review participation to make sure all communities are represented.

Create a welcoming atmosphere.

While a chapter may have the intention to be welcoming and inclusive of all groups, your sincerity may not be visible to those you seek to include. Take steps to ensure individuals from all groups and communities feel welcome at chapter programs and events.

Creating a welcoming and inclusive atmosphere requires continuously keeping an eye out for unintentional—and invisible—barriers to participating in the chapter perceived by those of different ages, backgrounds, genders, races, ethnicities, socio-economic statuses, sexual orientations, and abilities.

Meetings should start with introductions and sharing of personal pronouns. Set ground rules and expectations related to acceptable language, process for sharing ideas and concerns, and confirmation that all voices will be welcomed.

Consider who facilitates meetings and presents programs.

Support EDI goals by ensuring there is diversity in facilitators and presenters. Be aware when events and meetings are dominated by one group—be it men, White folks, older folks, or another group of insiders. Make intentional efforts to share space and develop leadership with individuals from under-represented groups, such as BIPOC communities, young people, and those with disabilities. Having diverse speakers also helps draw participants from their own networks, thereby increasing the reach of chapter programs and events.

Offer guidance to presenters on your chapter's EDI values and expectations, which could include being mindful of the images they use in slides and the pronouns they use.

Plan to address conflict.

Become more proactive about recognizing and resolving conflicts that can occur when different cultures and groups intersect. Create a safe space where anyone can speak out when they see intolerance or inequities occurring.

Offer food and refreshments.

Food is a great way to cross cultural boundaries! As a host, offering delicious food is a way of showing that you respect and care for the people you've invited. In many cultures, it is an insult to invite somebody to your home or office and not provide refreshments of some sort. Not only should some type of food and drink be offered whenever feasible, pay attention to what you are providing. Spend money to support a local business or home caterer rather than the standard grocery chain options of pre-packaged cookies or vegetable trays.

When you can, take advantage of opportunities to share your own food culture and heritage with others. Make sure you are aware of religious and cultural food restrictions and try your best to accommodate these at ALL events—not just ones for those specific groups.

Make sure your meetings and events are accessible to all.

There are many ways to ensure your programs are accessible. Choose meeting and event locations that will be welcoming to those with mobility restrictions. Also, consider the following best practices:

- Use microphones whenever possible to accommodate those with hearing impairments.
- Engage sign language or other language interpreters when audience members would benefit.
- Offer free child-care to allow for engagement and participation of younger families or caregivers.
- Hold events in neighborhoods and community spaces that are accessible and comfortable for under-represented groups.
- Hold events near public transportation routes (buses, trains, etc.). Offer transportation or travel stipends when possible.
- Schedule activities and events during times of the day that allow participation from as many different groups as possible.
- Have appropriate outdoor clothing and equipment on hand to lend to participants.
- Acknowledge that certain groups of people find remote areas to be unsafe or uncomfortable, due to violence or threats faced by women, LGBTQIA+, and BIPOC communities walking alone or in small groups.

- Offer scholarships to young professionals, college students, and those with financial constraints to increase access to chapter field trips and outings.

Consider accessibility in the areas you steward

When developing or improving gardens and trails, look for ways to support those with mobility restrictions. Ramps and other pathway accommodations can be just as useful for parents pushing strollers as for young adults with injuries, or even older adults with canes or wheelchairs. Also, adults and children with Autism, ADHD, or other disorders may particularly benefit from the healing properties of nature but may need special supports to participate in group activities.

Develop inclusive communications strategies.

Communication is a form of engagement. Advancing equity, diversity, and inclusion requires thoughtful and intentional use of words, images, ideas, and framing in communications. In addition to using inclusive language and terms (as discussed in Section IV), chapter materials should be representative of the different groups and communities in the area. When developing flyers, brochures, websites, and social media posts—look for opportunities to:

- Bring in diverse perspectives from within the chapter into communications planning process.
- Reflect on how your words are likely to be perceived by the groups you seek to engage. Test your message with community representatives before going public.
- Be transparent about your EDI intentions and be proactive in admitting mistakes.
- Frame your issues through the priorities and needs of those you aim to connect with.
- Avoid jargon, technical terms, and acronyms. Use language that “feels real” to your community members but is also authentic to your own culture.
- Use as many communications channels as appropriate (e.g., social media, newspapers, pamphlets or handouts, door-to-door canvassers, tv or radio spots, etc.). Reach out to ethnic newspapers or radio stations, and make sure your materials are translated accurately in the relevant language.
- Pay attention to who is crafting and disseminating messages. Support writers from under-represented groups to contribute to different narratives and perspectives related to birding and conservation.
- Seek partners to help disseminate messages, such as schools, churches, or other community groups.
- Provide opportunities for input. Offer several ways for your community or audience to ask questions, offer comments, and relay general feedback.
- Assess whether your communications strategy is achieving intended outcomes.

Develop pathways for receiving and addressing feedback.

Providing opportunities for participant feedback is especially important when engaging across differences in culture, race, income and other identities. Offer a variety of mechanisms for public and private input, including: post-program evaluations (paper or online), opportunities for submitting comments by email, or sharing concerns or issues directly with a designated Board member, staff, or volunteer.

XI. Board, Volunteer, and Staff Recruitment

To make progress on EDI, chapters need to bring on more diverse Board, volunteers, and staff.

VOLUNTEER RECRUITMENT

Volunteers choose to donate their time, expertise and dedication to Audubon and bring important benefits to the organization. Volunteers are, on average, worth \$24.14 an hour to their nonprofit organization⁴⁵ and volunteers are more likely to make a financial donation.⁴⁶ Below are a few things to keep in mind for the recruitment and retention of diverse volunteers, including advisory board members:

Pay special attention to board composition: Board leadership is a very visible symbol of how EDI values are put into practice. Prioritize diversity in Board representation, based on the relationships built with under-represented groups (see Section VII). Some ideas include designating a spot on your board for a local college student and prioritizing recruitment of certain types of community members (such as faith leaders or community-based organizations).

Align motivations with assigned tasks: For example, some young volunteers are motivated by building their resumes or gaining professional experience. Developing internship programs or other opportunities to address this desire would put chapters in the best position to recruit younger volunteers. There are likely similar ways to develop volunteer opportunities that align your chapter's needs with the volunteer's interests.

Adjust language: The word "volunteerism" is often used to describe formal volunteering or donating time to an entity in a supervised setting. Informal volunteerism refers to when people help one another as friends or neighbors. This type of volunteerism is prevalent in communities of color. When working in immigrant and diverse communities, consider using words beyond "volunteer" such as "help," "support," "benefit," or "give." Use words that speak to a person's sense of community and individual identity.

Offer food: For students and others with limited resources, food is a critically important consideration when deciding when and if to volunteer. Make sure to provide food that meets all dietary restrictions of your group.

Plan for childcare: Offer free child-care at volunteer events.

Meet them where they are: Whenever possible, hold events in the community. It makes volunteering that much easier.

Consider transportation challenges: Providing transportation and offering travel stipends may be necessary to help certain volunteers attend meetings and events.

Embrace skills-based opportunities: Skills-based volunteers are people who bring a specialized skill set, often one they would typically be paid to perform. This is may be particularly important as a way to offer local immigrants an opportunity to provide their expertise when they are unable to find paid work in the fields they practiced back home.

Remove barriers: Certain groups can face barriers to volunteering. Consider adjusting chapter practices related to:

- **Background checks:** These requirements can deter some folks who distrust or fear the government. Conduct background to only when it is completely necessary (such as working with

45 <https://independentsector.org/news-post/value-volunteer-time/>

46 <https://www.fidelitycharitable.org/docs/volunteering-and-philanthropy.pdf>

children, for example) and ensure there are meaningful volunteer opportunities that do not require a background check.

- **Flexibility:** There may be cultural or language barriers that prevent regular attendance. And when someone is a caretaker for either children, the elderly, or others with disabilities, they may be called away at the last minute. Make it okay for volunteers to have other priorities.
- **Exclusive policies:** Review all of your chapter's volunteer policies and look for any exclusive policies and languages. For example, requiring a car or driver's license may automatically exclude certain folks.

STAFF RECRUITMENT

For those Audubon chapters with staff, the process of outreach and recruitment of new staff provides an excellent opportunity to introduce the chapter to others and demonstrate your true commitment to EDI values.

Application process. A job description outlines the responsibilities of the position and the skills, experience, and abilities needed to complete the job effectively. It also communicates the values of your organization. Before releasing your next job posting, take the time to assess how any this position can advance EDI goals and how to signal expectations and responsibilities within the job description. Aim to have diverse representation on the hiring committee.

Here are a couple other points to consider during the application process:

- Evaluate job description for biases, such as gender, class, racial, ethnic, etc. Pay special attention to eliminating gendered keywords such as “nurturing” (often associated with women) or “assertive” (historically rewarded in men and discouraged in women).
- Requirements related to educational background, particularly advanced degrees, could be biased against individuals who have relevant professional experience. Also, name a wide range of academic fields that could provide relevant professional experience for the position for which you are hiring.

Outreach. Identify the diverse talent markets are in your area (ex. universities, community centers, faith centers, etc.) and look for ways to spread job announcement through these institutions to reach under-represented groups. Below are additional ways to focus your outreach efforts:

- Use community newspapers and news websites run by under-represented groups (including Latinx or African American newspapers or LGBTQIA+ magazines).
- Leverage multicultural centers or cultural studies departments at local colleges and universities.
- Engage partners that represent under-represented communities and are based in diverse communities.

RETAINING DIVERSE BOARD MEMBERS, VOLUNTEERS, AND STAFF

Even when brought on with the best of intentions, team members of backgrounds that are different from the majority of your chapter (whether by age, gender, race, ability, or other identity) can feel isolated and left out. Make every effort to avoid this outcome for the people you've worked so hard to recruit. Make sure to:

Support your new colleague. Be open to learning from your new team member. Seek to understand their perspective and worldview. Be willing to engage in uncomfortable topics and to receive and provide clear feedback.

Build EDI knowledge and skills. Foster an environment that supports both individual and group learning with your new colleague. Avoid putting specific individuals in the position to be the sole educator on difficult topics such as race, sexuality, disability, etc.

Understand how assumptions, traditions, and “this is how we always do it,” show up in the chapter spaces. Consider how your processes and norms might look and feel to fresh eyes. Take steps to ensure every team member can effectively participate and contribute—and that differing viewpoints are heard and valued. Look out for when status quo decisions or practices value and uplift certain voices over others.

Proactively recognize and address conflicts that can occur when different cultures or identities intersect. Establish a process for conflict resolution that is culturally appropriate for your team. Empower everyone to speak out when they see biases or discrimination occurring. At the same time, make sure that everyone is speaking for themselves—and not attempting to speak for others.

Model and encourage self-care: Taking care of your own mental, emotional, and physical health is important for all chapter members and leaders. Conservation work is tiring and EDI work can be difficult. Create an environment that encourages volunteers, staff, and partners to take time to attend to their health and well-being. If they take care of themselves, they will be more productive in the work that needs to be done.

XII. How can we track our EDI progress?

Easy and useful measures to track diversity and inclusion efforts and outcomes can help Audubon team members stay on track. Tracking EDI progress is most helpful when it clearly connected to the advancement of the chapter’s mission and goals. Below are steps for evaluating your EDI progress⁴⁷.

- Define which EDI goals you will monitor.
- Identify a few appropriate and useful baseline metrics. (See list of metrics options below)
- Set targets and measure progress.
- Assign responsibility and accountability. Who is responsible for tracking and measuring progress? Who is accountable for making sure the metrics are reviewed and incorporated into future actions?
- Share what you’ve learned! While it may seem you aren’t making enough progress—or you are embarrassed by some mis-steps—sharing your intentions and progress with your communities (not just funders) shows your true commitment to this work and helps you build trust and support.

Deciding on what to measure is not an easy task. Think of the list below as a buffet of options and take only what might be most compelling and useful. Focus on the aspects of EDI progress that will help you make changes and course correct as needed. Collecting data simply for the sake of funders or to check a box is not a good way to spend limited time and energy.

⁴⁷ Meaningful metrics for diversity and inclusion. <https://cultureplusconsulting.com/2018/10/16/meaning-metrics-for-diversity-and-inclusion/>

Example EDI metrics to track:

- Representation of diverse viewpoints and backgrounds within your board, volunteers, staff, and partners.
- Board, staff, and volunteer participation in EDI trainings and workshops.
- New organizational relationships with diverse groups.
- Training and skills development of your board, volunteers, and staff.
- Level of volunteer and staff engagement with EDI efforts.
- Staff and volunteer feedback through surveys or other means.
- Visitor, participant, and partner feedback through surveys or other means.
- Examples of how your programs are addressing equity or justice concerns for the communities you work with.
- Programmatic growth or impact with diverse communities and groups.
- Increased grant funding for your work with diverse communities or groups.
- Number of writers from under-represented groups to contribute to your website, blogs, or other materials.
- Positive press or public recognition of your EDI successes (honestly, this rarely happens– but make sure to celebrate if your EDI work is being noticed!)

The most important take away message is to make sure to go beyond tracking numbers when measuring EDI progress. It is easiest to rely on race and gender diversity metrics to show success, but progress around equity and inclusion can't be easily quantified. Consider and measure ways to know if members and participants feel included, respected, valued and heard. Think about tracking what actually will help the chapter foster an inclusive organizational culture and address inequities and injustices related to bird protection and habitat conservation.⁴⁸

XIII. How can I raise funds for EDI?

Funding and support for EDI work is not easy to come by and can take significant creativity and effort. Below are some options for partnerships that can bolster your chapter's EDI efforts:

National Audubon Society. Audubon offers grants, training programs, and consultation to help you raise funds for your EDI work.

Individual donors. These can be the most important and long-standing funding relationships for local groups. Your volunteers are the most likely to make financial contributions. Remember to intentionally acknowledge

48 11 Lessons We've Learned as Equity, Inclusion and Diversity Consultants in the Outdoor, Conservation and Environmental Sector. <https://blueskyfundersforum.org/connect/blog/11-lessons-we%E2%80%99ve-learned-equity-inclusion-and-diversity-consultants-outdoor-conservation>

individual donors who give stretch gifts (at whatever level is significant for them). Regular check-ins and invitations to events are the best way to keep these relationships alive.

Universities, colleges, or other public or private institutions. While there may be some grant money here, you are most likely to start with in-kind donations (help with printing, free rooms to host your event, etc.). Take advantage of all the willing hands and institutional resources that may be used to support your own events and programs.

Local businesses. This is where board relationships may help. Businesses are most likely to fund your work if there is an alignment of the chapter's priorities, messages, and audiences with theirs.

Local or community foundations. These are the foundations that are most likely to invest in your work. Also, larger foundations like to see local support before they step in.

Corporate foundations. These types of foundations—such as the Home Depot Foundation—often make grants or support events in the communities in which they have a location. Pay attention to any marketing or branding requirements related to these grants, such as displaying a corporate banner at your event.

Private or national foundations. These grants generally require a lot of effort over long periods of time, but sometimes the hard work pays off. As a rule, larger foundations don't frequently support locally based work, so these are not the foundations to invest the greatest amount of time or energy.

Government Grants (federal, state, or local). Look for opportunities to partner with larger nonprofit organizations. Unless the chapter is very well-staffed and resourced, the application and reporting requirements are often too onerous for small chapters to handle.

XIV. Conclusion

An immense opportunity stands before those of us in the conservation movement related to equity, diversity, and inclusion. Today our nation has a population of approximately 100 million people of color, many of whom support environmental issues at a higher level than their white counterparts. For example, an exit poll for a 2002 California multi-billion dollar bond issue for water quality and open space protection revealed 77 percent of African Americans, 74 percent of Latinos, 60 percent of Asians Americans, and 56 percent of White people approved the measure.⁴⁹ With this reality, we have more opportunities than ever before to bring in people with new perspectives, backgrounds, and experiences into Audubon's work.

Most chapters already spend significant efforts on EDI. This How-to Guide is intended to support and strengthen your abilities to engage and include the full breadth of community residents so everyone can see themselves as members of a bird friendly community, benefit from your educational programs, and contribute towards bird stewardship and conservation efforts—thereby leading to results that are good for birds and equitable for people.

49 Diversifying the Conservation Movement. https://cdeinspires.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/12/diversifying_conservation.pdf

XV. Appendix A. Resources

EDI HISTORY OF CONSERVATION MOVEMENT

<https://www.audubon.org/magazine/september-october-2011/facing-future>

Taylor, D.E. (2016). *The Rise of the American Conservation Movement: Power, Privilege, and Environmental Protection*. Duke University Press.

ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

<http://www.ejnet.org/ej/principles.html>

https://theavarnagroup.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/Gould_et_al-2018-Conservation_Letters.pdf

IMPLICIT BIAS

<https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/takeatest.html>

RACE AND RACISM

Biology of Race. <http://www.biologyreference.com/Ar-Bi/Biology-of-Race.html/#ixzz6DoB3U3Mc>

National Association of Black Journalists Style Guide. <https://www.nabj.org/page/styleguide>

Race Forward. <https://www.raceforward.org/videos/systemic-racism>

<https://consciousstyleguide.com/why-we-confuse-race-ethnicity-lexicographers-perspective/>

The Diversity & Inclusion at Third Sector New England developed a step-by-step guide to “Achieving Diversity and Inclusion in the Workplace.”

<https://chroniclevitae.com/news/2175-a-note-from-your-colleagues-with-hearing-loss-just-use-a-microphone-already>

Acknowledgement of Native Lands: https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B_CAyH4WUfQXTXo3MjZHRC00ajg/view

<https://theavarnagroup.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/Guide-to-tough-conversations.pdf>

<https://www.communityplanningtoolkit.org/sites/default/files/Engagement.pdf>

GENDER IDENTITY AND SEXUAL ORIENTATION

The Association of LGBTQ Journalists Style Guide. <https://www.nlgja.org/stylebook/category/guidance/>

<https://transequality.org/issues/resources/frequently-asked-questions-about-transgender-people>

<https://www.transstudent.org/definitions>

<https://everydayfeminism.com/2014/09/what-is-privilege/>

<https://lgbt.wiscweb.wisc.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/175/2016/07/LGBTCC-Gender-pronoun-guide.pdf>

DISABILITIES

National Center on Disability and Journalism Style Guide. <https://ncdj.org/style-guide/>

UNDERSTANDING COMMUNITY NEEDS

Cultural Mapping Toolkit: https://theavarnagroup.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/cultural_mapping_toolkit.pdf

<https://ctb.ku.edu/en/table-of-contents/assessment/assessing-community-needs-and-resources/describe-the-community/main>

INTERNAL DOCUMENTS (MISSION, VISION, VALUES, EDI STATEMENTS, ETC.)

<https://donorbox.org/nonprofit-blog/nonprofit-mission-statement/>

<https://ctb.ku.edu/en/table-of-contents/structure/strategic-planning/vision-mission-statements/main>

<https://www.diycommitteeguide.org/resource/vision-mission-and-values>

<https://bloomerang.co/resources/templates/diversity-inclusion-and-equity-policy-template/>

RECRUITING AND RETAINING DIVERSE VOLUNTEERS AND STAFF

https://diversity.berkeley.edu/sites/default/files/recruiting_a_more_diverse_workforce_uhs.pdf

<https://www.tsne.org/sites/default/files/Achieve-Diversity-StepByStep-Guide.pdf>

https://www.usdn.org/uploads/cms/documents/usdn-equity-in-recruitment_hiring_retention.pdf

<http://theconversation.com/why-environmental-groups-need-more-volunteers-of-color-75370>

HOSTING EQUITABLE MEETINGS AND INCLUSIVE PROGRAMS

You can visit this resource for more detail on religious food restrictions: <https://thrivemeetings.com/2018/01/religious-dietary-restrictions-guide/>

<https://theavarnagroup.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/Inclusion-Tips-for-Program-and-Field-Staff-Jan-2018-1.pdf>

http://training.hr.ufl.edu/resources/LeadershipToolkit/transcripts/Identifying_and_Avoiding_Interview_Biases.pdf

MEASURING AND ASSESSING EDI PROGRESS

<https://grantspace.org/training/getting-ahead-of-the-curve-with-diversity-inclusion-and-equity/>

D5 Coalition: <http://www.d5coalition.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/DEI-Self-Assessment-10.28.13.pdf>

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/mp/diversity-and-inclusion-guide/#program>

<https://medium.com/awaken-blog/how-to-measure-inclusion-quantitatively-free-resources-and-research-data-for-d-i-advocates-47206a916005>