

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Strategic Plan 2023 - 2025

Adopted December 2022, Revised May 2023





Oregon

Tina Kotek, Governor



Department of
Consumer and
Business Services

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

May 2023

To all Department of Consumer and Business Services employees, stakeholders, and community partners,

Equity is a core value throughout DCBS. We are passionate about building and sustaining a diverse and inclusive working and engaging environment for all employees, stakeholders, and community partners. We strongly believe every employee on our team enhances our diversity by exposing us to a broad range of ways to understand and engage with the community, identify challenges, and to discover, design, and deliver solutions.

As a Latino immigrant who lived in Central America and the United States, I am sensitive to the challenges that underserved and underrepresented communities face. Through this experience, I have become aware of how gender, race, and socioeconomic status influence opportunities and outcomes, and how this hinders the diversification of a workforce.

Consequently, over the past seven years, I have become resolute to act in creating an environment that is more inviting towards all people residing in Oregon, especially members of underrepresented communities.

Together, with the members of the Diversity Equity, and Inclusion Council and all DCBS employees, we have created and continue to work in sustaining an inclusive workplace. We take actions to improve retention of women, racial/ethnic minorities, people with disabilities, and veterans; remove barriers to hiring and mentoring; enhance specific educational opportunities for managers and employees; announce training and job opportunities to all employees; hold diversity spotlight events to collaboratively create spaces for colleagues and partners to learn about and celebrate dimensions of the many identities; and build collaborative relationships with our community partners around the state.

I have been, and will continue to be committed, to working to build a more diverse and inclusive workforce with everyone working together.

Sincerely,

A. Veronica Murray
AA/EEO/DEI Manager

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Our mission

To protect and serve Oregon's consumers and workers while supporting a positive business climate.

Who we are

The Department of Consumer and Business Services is Oregon's largest consumer protection and business regulatory agency. The department administers state laws and rules to protect consumers and workers in the areas of workers' compensation, occupational safety and health, financial services, insurance, and building codes.

DCBS staff members are committed to carrying out the department's statutory responsibilities and fulfilling our mission and goals in a manner that serves the needs of the public, the businesses and professionals we regulate, and our workforce.

We value

- Respect
- Integrity
- Service
- Excellence

Additionally, we recognize the importance of diversity and inclusion, expertise, personal responsibility, collaboration, effectiveness, accountability, customer service, and effective communication in accomplishing our mission.

Our goals

The DCBS DEI Strategic Plan has four fundamental goals to advance its mission for the next three years and beyond:

- Protect consumers and workers in Oregon.
- Regulate in a manner that supports a positive business climate.
- Becoming an employer of choice. We understand that the Department of Consumer and Business Services has reached several milestones in its DEI work and that more can and will be done.
- Be accountable to the public we serve, with excellent service to our customers.





Summary

This document sets out the DCBS DEI strategic plan. This builds upon the previous plans with an evolving and improved focus on several overarching areas – workforce diversity, workplace inclusion, employee engagement, community engagement, and how we hold ourselves accountable.

Workforce diversity – With nearly 30 percent of our current workforce eligible to retire in the next five years, we have a challenge and an opportunity to strategically plan for a culturally competent and diverse workforce.

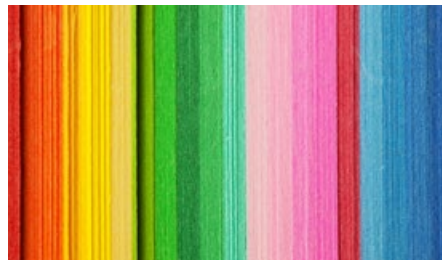
Workplace inclusion – It is imperative that leaders are purposeful in including others who have different views and experiences. We continue to strive in creating a culture of belonging that values and appreciates all people.

Employee engagement – We strive to create a workplace where employees can be their authentic self and are empowered to use their voice to offer ideas and express views, which, in turn, leads to growth and innovation.

Community engagement – One size does not fit all in engaging with different communities. Each community needs individualized approaches that include listening, meaningful engagement, and building collaborative relationships, so that we can meet each community's needs.

We are accountable – As an agency and individuals, we will hold ourselves accountable to removing barriers, centering historically marginalized voices, and advancing the goals of this plan through transparency. DEI success will be measured based on quantitative measures, as well as qualitative factors, including our commitment to provide all people with equitable access to our programs and services.

The following pages include objectives and strategies for the above overarching areas to achieve our aspirational goals. As an agency devoted to continuous improvement, DCBS commits to revisiting and updating this DEI strategic plan on an ongoing basis to identify new meaningful, actionable, and measurable approaches to advance our DEI goals. DCBS recently adopted a new Affirmative Action Plan and is currently undergoing a process to update the agency strategic plan, a process that has been informed by this DEI strategic plan. Once the strategic plan is complete, DCBS will revisit this DEI strategic plan to make further adjustments that will be informed by our experiences and the voices of our employees and the communities we serve, as well as to bring it into alignment with the agency's affirmative action and strategic plans.



Purpose

The DCBS Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Strategic Framework for 2023-2025 includes measurable actions that are designed to help fully integrate diversity, equity, and inclusion in every action, to promote and practice social justice and fairness for underserved and underrepresented communities, ensure decision-making is intentional, and enhance organizational cultural change while recognizing future workforce challenges.

This effort is the result of identifying and assessing our strategic priorities, goals, and outcomes necessary to help support the agency's diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) framework. Also, at DCBS, leadership, managers, supervisors, and employees assume direct responsibility for implementing the agency DEI strategic plan. A prominent part of our agency's culture needs to be the individual and collective responsibility to promote equitable opportunities and services for all.

Milestones in diversity, equity, and inclusion

2022

Milestone 6

- Implemented a Community Engagement Plan. To gain an informed assessment of the community's needs, DCBS invited communities for feedback sessions in June 2022.
- Hosted quarterly virtual career fairs with an in-person event scheduled in the fall of 2022.
- Implemented the of financial education sponsorship program.
- Shared inclusive language and equity lens.
- Virtual meet and greets held quarterly with staff members representing communities of color to network and share career, community, and agency involvement opportunities.
- Developed weekly wrap-up of DEI-related news, trainings, and information that is emailed every Wednesday to employees.



2019 through 2021

Milestone 5

- DCBS received DEI awards from Blacks in Government.
- Employee Services hired a talent management person.
- The training format was changed to more interactive sessions with an average of 10 people per session.
- Crucial Conversations was implemented in 2019 with more success in 2020-21 as a virtual option was added, increasing the average attendance to 44 people per session and more than 800 for the Oregon Historical Society event.



2018

Milestone 4

- Employee Services hired a new training and development/content organization specialist.
- DEI survey sent to all employees.
- Facilitated a series of DEI workshops.



2017

Milestone 3

- Created internal/external DEI website.
- Implemented Diversity Corner and monthly heritage celebration and lobby display.
- Employee Services implemented robust onboarding and internship programs.
- DEI policy and DEI Council policy adopted.



2016

Milestone 2

- DEI program manager hired.
- DEI training developed with Employee Services.
- Agency hosted first job fair.
- DEI Council established and agency director joined as the chairperson.



2015

Milestone 1

- Became members of Partners in Diversity.
- New interview platform introduced – Interview Stream.
- DCBS Rapid Response Recruitment methodology implemented to remove bias from the process.
- Implemented “blind” review of applications.





Workforce diversity and inclusion

Planning is a key part of our overall workforce diversity. Having the road map, facts, and data to make informed decisions is vital to proper workforce planning.

The agency has developed a stronger strategic workforce planning process and model to support leaders in using the opportunities that arise from employee turnover. Measuring and analyzing our demographic data helps us achieve more diverse workforce objectives. Workforce strategies allow for a more intentional approach to outreach, recruitment, and retention solutions that will address the current workforce changes



Workforce diversity overview

Within the next five years, nearly 30 percent of our current workforce will be eligible to retire. While not everyone eligible will immediately retire, the agency is facing both a challenge and an opportunity to strategically plan for a workforce that is highly competent and culturally diverse.

- We continue to size up our existing talent and foresee our staffing needs for the immediate future and for the long term to minimize anticipated retirements.
- We recognize that quotas don't automate inclusion. We are taking an honest look at employee experience, deliberately creating an environment that promotes inclusion on a daily basis.
- As the country continues to grapple with systemic racism and its consequences, we are exploring an assessment of our systems and processes to find any bias in which applicants and staff members are not provided equitable services or resources.



Workforce diversity strategies

- Update position descriptions to include DEI principles and strategies.
- Create a virtual interview training program to help applicants with the virtual interview process and for staff members assisting with this to remove bias from the process.
- Use the data and resources provided by Employee Services and the diversity, equity, and inclusion office to receive, consider, and interview more candidates from diverse communities. Use the baseline goals established by the department's affirmative action plan to measure outcomes.
- Improve the resources the agency provides employees during onboarding. Examples include:
 - » Access to employee resource groups and professional networks.
 - » Host DCBS DEI office resources and events.
 - » Articulate commitment to new employee's success.
 - » Receive intentional support from direct supervisors and senior leadership.
- Advocate for the use of alternative experience for agency positions as a part of the minimum qualification considerations.
- Have collaboration with the diversity, equity, and inclusion office, Employee Services, and the collective bargaining process to effectuate this change.
- Expand our network at career fairs and outreach events for communities of color, veterans, women, people with disabilities, and high school and college students. Involvement includes community partnership, targeted job fairs, veterans, and students.

Inclusive workplace

A diverse agency is not necessarily an inclusive agency. Leaders need to be purposeful about including others who see things differently from their view. For this reason, DCBS continues to strive in creating a culture that values and appreciates all people for their individual differences and experiences.

Creating such an inclusive culture is not difficult, but it does require everyone's involvement. There is no diversity without inclusion and no inclusion without equity.

Workplace inclusion strategies

To give our employees a memorable experience, we must have actionable priorities of onboarding, inclusive internship, training and development, employee engagement, communications of DEI goals, and measure progress by:

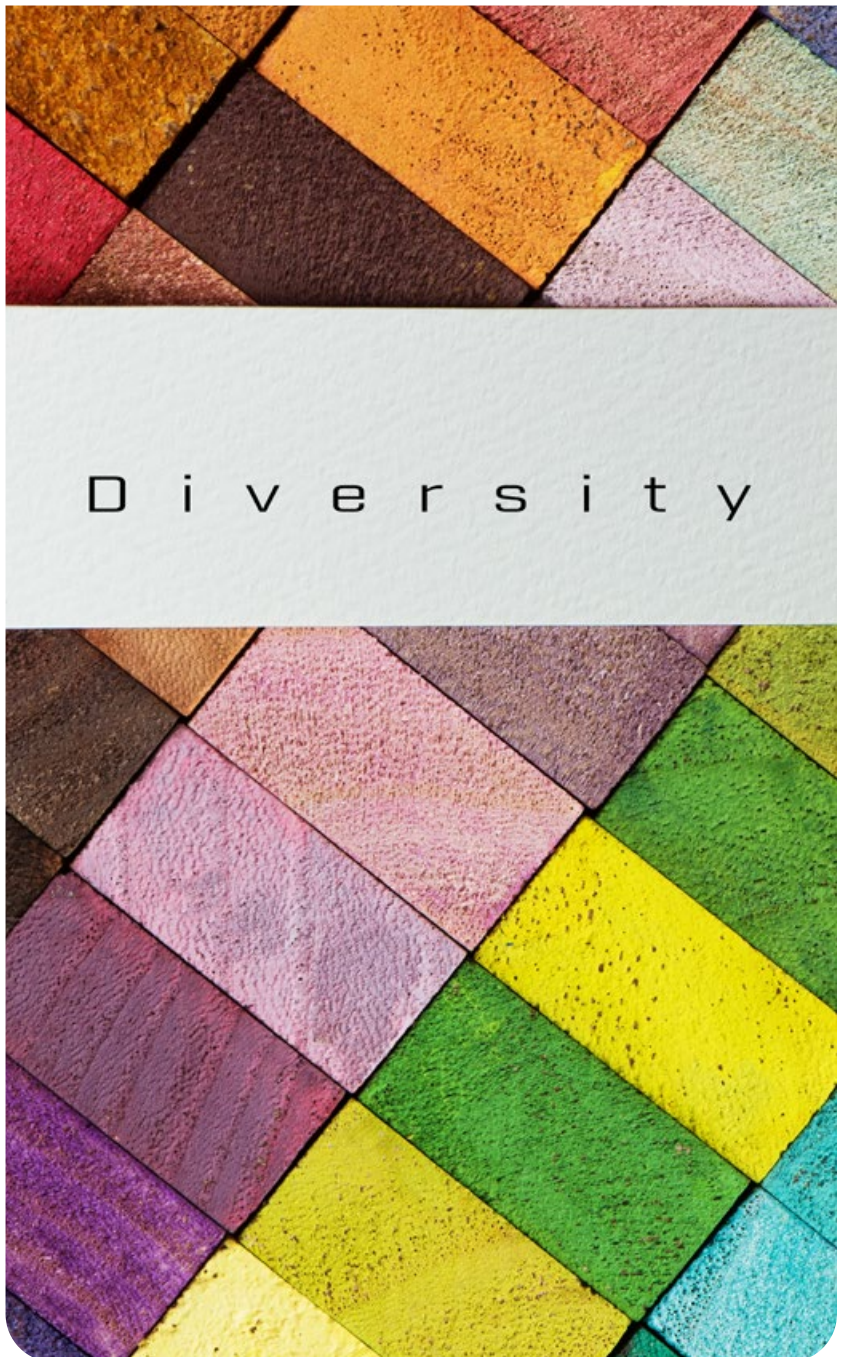
- Committing – from all division leadership and employees – to DEI principles and incorporating them into employee communications, meetings, and daily activities.
- Updating employee performance review questions and ratings to recognize employees and managers for applying inclusion and equity into their daily activities.
- Enhancing the internship program from the perspective of each section within the division. Look for ways to:
 - » Contact student groups at universities and community colleges.
 - » Create internship cohorts.
 - » Review funding and compensation to ensure it provides a living wage for interns.
 - » Encourage remote to reduce transportation barriers.

- Looking for more ways to accommodate people with disabilities.
- Assessing awards and updating them to reflect DEI principles – Identify ways to measure it.
- Assessing the retention and promotion of underserved and underrepresented employees. Also, this is designed to promote employees seeking new opportunities in higher positions to create their individual development plan.
- Having management commit to identifying development opportunities for diverse employees to build appropriate skills to help them meet their current and future career goals within the agency.
- Including DEI principles as part of transition and succession plans to embed them into the future structure of the agency.
- Facilitating DEI trainings as effective tools for employees to identify their own unconscious bias in the workplace and develop cultural competency for creating an inclusive workplace where employees from all backgrounds, identities, faiths, and orientations are aware of and embrace each other's differences.

To build an inclusion-based culture, it is essential to allow new employees to complete an initial new-hire orientation process, as well as learn about the organization and its structure, culture, vision, mission, and values.

Employee engagement

At DCBS, employee engagement is the opportunity to strengthen the mental and emotional connection employees feel



toward the work they do, their teams, the organization, and the communities we serve.

Employee engagement is about understanding one's role in an organization and being energized and enthusiastic about where employees fit into its purpose and objectives.

Employee engagement is having a voice to offer ideas and express views that are taken into account as decisions are made. Employee engagement is a key differentiator when it comes to growth and innovation. It allows for a better understanding of the agency's needs.

Successfully advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion requires direct engagement from administrators, direct reporting to the director or the deputy director, and holding all employees of the agency to the same accountability. The DEI initiative is not the sole responsibility of one person.

We all can demonstrate our commitment in different ways. One is by holding each other accountable for the success and failure of the DEI initiative's mission and goals by implementing reporting and metrics of accountability.



Community engagement

As a regulatory agency, we know that one size does not fit all when it comes to community engagement. Despite the breadth of the DCBS mission, we have learned that interacting with communities is as individual as the communities with whom we interact.

When building collaborative relationships, the Department of Consumer and Business Services believes it is important to know a community's most urgent needs so they can be prioritized.

Our engagement is intended to:

- Support innovation and help people from underserved and underrepresented communities enter the market, grow their business, or obtain a license.
- Promote choices and access for Oregon consumers and businesses by supporting the success of industries in the economic sectors we regulate.
- Use a variety of approaches (regulation, enforcement, education, consultation, direct service delivery, etc.) in the most appropriate combinations to achieve results.
- Use technology and other tools to exchange information easily and conduct business.
- Measure results achieved by our programs and approaches and re-evaluate the programs and approaches to find further improvements.





- Continually improve our cost-effectiveness and ensure that our services provide value to consumers, workers, and businesses.
- Evaluate, develop, and maintain appropriate levels of human, organizational, financial, and other resources necessary to carry out our responsibilities.
- Continue to improve the organizational culture and employee engagement of the agency.
- Never be satisfied with the status quo.
- Provide tools that allow our employees, stakeholders, and communities to use and visualize DCBS data to chart the progress toward equitable outcomes, which is crucial for strengthening accountability and credibility.
- Continue to empower underserved and underrepresented communities to have a platform and the chance to speak in their own voices.

Each community needs individualized approaches that include listening and shared values. We know that we may not get things correct the first time, but are committed to keep going back and doing better. Due to the nature of our regulatory business, not all programs allow public participation in our decisions; however, we strive to promote positive relationships between the divisions and all of Oregon's communities.

Engagement strategies

We are committed to increasing our engagement efforts moving forward, and we also understand that we need to be thoughtful and deliberate in how we engage. For example, before we engage with a community on an issue, we will:

- Provide easy-to-understand information describing who we are, what we are doing, and what we want to do.
- Provide the information far enough in advance before any meeting to enable a more informed discussion.

DCBS will continue to use traditional methods of reaching underserved and underrepresented communities (e.g., through community partners and advocacy groups).

We plan to interrupt the institutionalized process of business as usual by using an equity lens, engaging directly with communities and individuals in nontraditional ways we have not typically used in the past. This may include facilitating meetings with stakeholders without agency employees in the room so stakeholders can have a more open discussion.

DCBS plans to work with stakeholder groups to find more creative ways to directly reach individual people so community organizations do not have to be the only ones passing on information, which will provide us with the opportunity to hear directly from the people affected by our programs.



- Intentional dialogue: Collaborate to build understanding across cultural differences and community needs.
- Community building: Bring people together to learn about community needs.

We are accountable

In addition to quantitative measures, diversity, equity, and inclusion success should be measured, and rewarded, based on qualitative factors we are committed to provide all people with equal access to our programs and services. Our employees will treat all people with dignity and respect and will not discriminate on the basis of age; ethnicity; gender; gender identity; military status; language differences; nationality; parental status; physical, mental, and developmental abilities; race; religion; sexual orientation; skin color; socio-economic status; work and behavioral styles; and the perspectives of each person shaped by that person's nation, experiences, and culture.



Also, we plan to put together a toolkit and provide it to underserved and underrepresented communities that addresses how individuals can do business with the agency. Finally, we plan to use social media in a more focused way to share with communities the work we do, the help we offer, and the job opportunities we have.

We anticipate using five different types of community engagement:

- Public education: Engaging communities in person and virtually to share information and resources about the services we provide at DCBS and ways that we can help improve the lives of Oregonians.
- Direct services: Deliver services or resources to an individual, group, or the community as a whole; and provide support for events.
- Assisting with solutions: Collaborate with communities on specific needs (e.g., wildfires and housing).
- Build stronger relationships between employees and stakeholders who serve diverse communities. This can start by regular attendance at functions and seeking advice and expertise related to DCBS priorities.
- Collaborate and implement strategies with divisions, Employee Services and the DEI office to increase the current 18.6 percent demographic of people of color, people with disabilities, LGBTQ, women, and veterans who are invited for an interview and offered employment opportunities by using technology for removing bias from the applications process.
- Prioritize nondiscrimination in legislative concepts, rules, and bulletins. Look closer at:
 - » Implicit bias



- » Appeals and prior authorizations
- » Divisions' legislative concepts
- Continue to evaluate and align DEI initiatives with organizational strategies, agency vision, objectives, and culture to build trust among employees.
- Develop a mentorship program with an emphasis for people of color, people with disabilities, LGBTQ, women, and veterans.
- Support the participation of all employees in the DEI Council, educational workshops, and cultural events.
- Keep a workplace where all employees feel comfortable bringing their true selves to work is key to supporting them to stay, thrive, grow, and contribute at DCBS. As a result, employees would exhibit an attitude of respect, courtesy, and cooperation toward all employees and the public we serve.
- Improve support of equitable educational programs to underserved communities by all division.
- Provide DEI workshops to all staff members, including continuing online training and virtual crucial conversations, which have proven successful with higher attendance than in-person events.
- Consider creating a survey on board diversity and procurement practices of our regulated entities.
- Identify opportunities to provide sponsorships or grants to nonprofits for financial resilience and equity programs for underserved communities.
- Communicate equity goals and measure progress.
- Look for ways to improve diversity on advisory bodies and committees, and adding DEI principles to new and existing charters.
- Build trust to underserved and underrepresented communities by being responsive to their requests and delivering what has been promised.

Our stakeholders and employees crave transparency. For this, we need to continue regularly sharing our progress on the DEI strategies and initiatives, which provide a call to action for everyone to fully engage. While progress toward diversity, equity, and inclusion are typically mid- to long-term goals, we must be intentional about socializing and celebrating short-term milestones and choosing to be transparent about our agency. Also, choosing transparency tells our stories internally and externally.



Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

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