



DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION (DEI) ACTION PLAN

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Guiding Vision

To be an organization that reflects our community, welcomes and serves all equitably, and operates with transparency and accountability.

[Bend Park and Recreation District](#) (BPRD/the district) values are rooted in connecting community to nature, to recreation and to each other. Our purpose is to foster healthy, enriched lifestyles by providing exceptional parks, trails and recreation services. These services play a vital role in the health and wellbeing of our community.





Why DEI?

We strive to be leaders in our community, and we understand that leadership cannot come without self-examination and humility. As part of that self-examination, we acknowledge that our efforts to provide exceptional service fall short for some members of our community and staff. We recognize the social inequalities that have long existed and continue to exist both locally and globally. Many people in our community continue to be underserved, underrepresented and excluded.

It is our responsibility to celebrate diversity, be inclusive and accessible, and to reduce inequalities. We are determined to practice our values in our work and have those values be reflected in our programs and amenities. We are committing to take a deep and thoughtful look at our internal policies, practices and the services we provide to identify how we can improve.

Our DEI Journey

Working towards becoming a more diverse, equitable and inclusive organization has no finish line. We will dedicate resources to continually make progress. The initiative is part of our journey to ensure equitable access to safe and welcoming programs, services and facilities in the community. We understand this course will require conversation, collaboration and openness to change. We expect that this change may not always be comfortable. It will take time and we will make mistakes—and we are fully committed to engaging in this process of growth and service. We are holding ourselves accountable to do better.

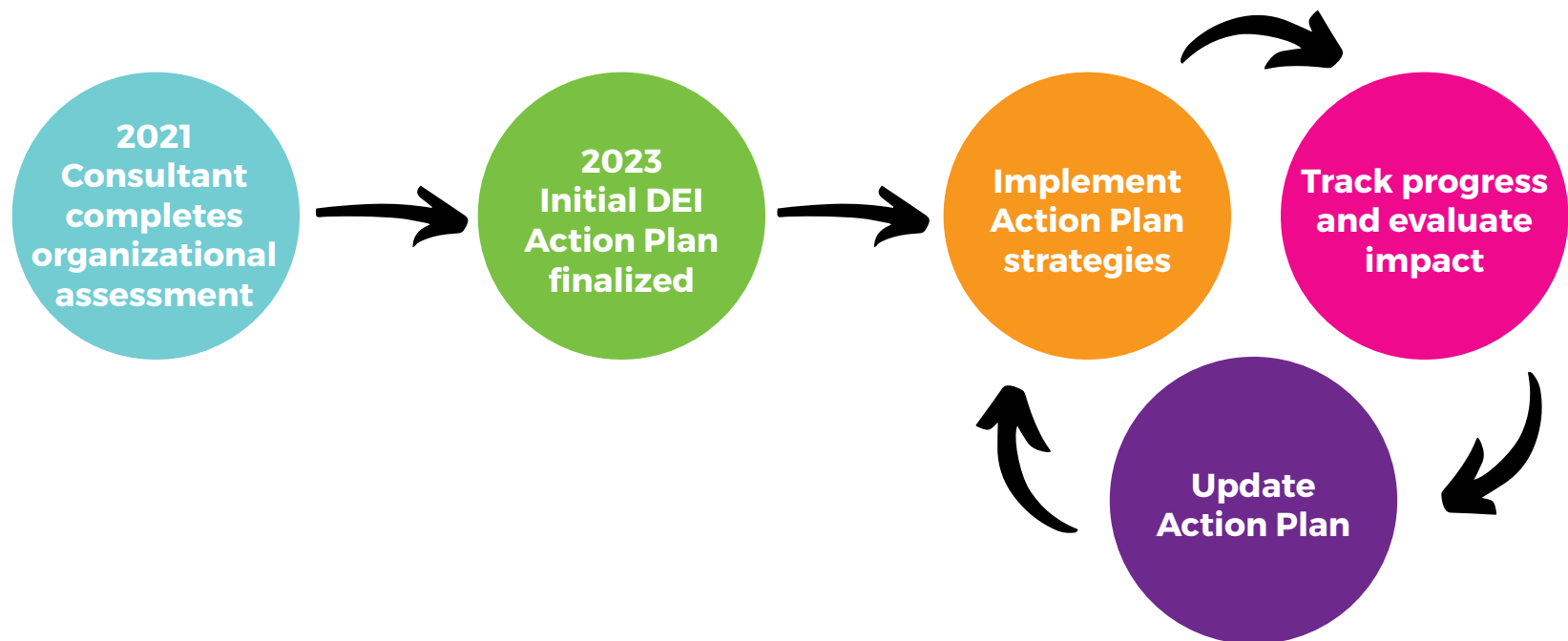


DEI Initiative

The [DEI initiative](#) is a work in progress that builds upon itself to infuse equitable practices into every aspect of our culture and service. Sometimes it takes the form of a significant, stand-alone effort. Other times, it is an examination and adjustment of a current practice.

While there have been DEI practices incorporated into the district's work for years, the first step in this intentional initiative was to hire a consulting team with expertise in DEI to conduct an [organizational assessment](#) in 2021. The assessment helped us understand the community and employee views of gaps in our service. It also included the consultant's recommendations to improve our DEI efforts and recommendations to establish a baseline to measure against. Along with feedback from staff and community outreach, the assessment report is the foundation for the action plan.

The next significant step in the initiative has been the development of the action plan, which will serve as the roadmap for implementation. The action plan details the steps to improve DEI in the provision of our programs and services and the operations of our parks, trails and recreation facilities.



Celebrations and Spotlights

We do not want to be complacent and rest on the generally positive feedback we receive from staff and the community. We know there are places we can improve. However, we do want to acknowledge efforts and celebrate some of the great work happening throughout the district. We believe these celebrations energize, inspire and give us the opportunity to build upon positive steps already taken. Celebrations remind us that DEI is everyone's work. The spotlights in Appendix A illustrate some of the ways DEI shows up in the work we do.



Action Plan

The action plan has been developed using a variety of inputs and perspectives. The recommendations from the consultant's organizational assessment serve as the foundation but other factors were considered as well. Staff input, community input, feasibility and efforts already underway in the district were taken into consideration in development of this plan.

This plan is intended to be both aspirational and achievable. It is a way for us to stay focused on our priorities. We recognize that there are DEI efforts occurring throughout the district that are not captured in this plan. We know there may be opportunities that arise in the future that were unknown at the time this plan was written. The plan allows for flexibility and adjustment along the way.

Action Plan Structure

The action plan is organized by three overarching objectives. Under every objective are a handful of strategies and tactics. Each strategy and tactic will be measured in a way that is appropriate for the effort. The results will roll up together to monitor the overall progress toward the objective. Some actions from the [2019-2024 Strategic Plan](#) crossover with the strategies and tactics in this plan. To avoid duplicating efforts, items that are tracked through the strategic plan are noted with an asterisk. Any wording in italics associated with a Strategic Plan action is a slight modification to the language to make it relevant to this plan. However, the action will still be tracked through the Strategic Plan.

The tracking will be managed by the DEI workgroup, but they will not be solely responsible for the implementation. Responsibility will be shared across the district and be integrated into our work. The workgroup will be responsible for keeping track of the progress made toward the goals. Tracking will be updated quarterly and be summarized and reported annually.

Objective 1

Incorporate DEI practices and philosophy into district values and priorities

Strategy:

Establish shared language and values

Tactics:

- Adopt agency-wide definitions for DEI-related terms.
- Add equity to district values.
- Develop patron-use expectations for parks, trails and facilities.
- Develop agency-wide demographic data collection methodology for patrons and staff.



Strategy:

Improve access to and participation in recreation program opportunities

Tactics:

- *Increase knowledge of and access to the [district's scholarship program](#).
- *Evaluate the effectiveness of the needs-based assistance policy and plans and adjust as necessary.
- *Improve registration processes and technology to address registration challenges and *make it more equitable*.
- *Invest in targeted programming that minimizes barriers for low-income populations.
- *Evaluate and prioritize additional barriers to participation.

Objective 2

Strengthen internal workplace culture to prioritize and integrate equity into all aspects of our work

Strategy:

Provide learning and development opportunities to improve DEI competencies across all levels of the organization

Tactics:

- Provide baseline training to develop foundational concepts for all staff.
- Prioritize training for supervisors, managers and directors.
- Provide ongoing, role-specific training.
- Facilitate training for Board of Directors.

Strategy:

Strengthen the workplace environment to encourage recruitment and retention that is reflective of the community

Tactics:

- *Recruit to new audiences.
- *Collect and analyze data to inform and improve employee retention strategies.
- Identify support needs for staff who have been historically excluded.

Strategy:

Demonstrate the importance of DEI to BPRD staff

Tactics:

- Make DEI information and resources easily available to all staff.
- Formalize the DEI workgroup into a committee and establish representation across departments and levels of the organization.



Objective 3

Collaborate to advance equity in our community

Strategy:

Intentionally build and strengthen relationships to better serve the community

Tactics:

- Identify opportunities to engage and build relationships with people in our community who have been historically excluded.
- Identify strategies for greater engagement with, and acknowledgment of, Native American Tribes that are indigenous to Central Oregon.
- *Create stronger and more meaningful partnerships with other governmental agencies, *non-profits and community organizations*.
- Share consistent updates on DEI progress with the community.

Strategy:

Serve community members in languages other than English

Tactics:

- Identify, prioritize and obtain resources necessary to increase Spanish language services across the district.
- Offer more in-person interpretation and bilingual communication in Spanish.
- Provide accommodations for accessible communication sources for people with disabilities.
- Identify languages anticipated to need resources and services in the future.





Appendix A: Spotlights

Our goal is to weave DEI into the fabric of everyday culture at BPRD, not to have it siloed as a separate effort. The spotlights section is not intended to be an exhaustive catalogue of district-wide DEI efforts, but rather examples of work being done across departments, so that we can learn from and celebrate each other.



Spotlight On: Expanded Outreach and Bilingual Engagement

BPRD prioritizes [Latino outreach](#) with community connections, building trust, fostering awareness of opportunities available to the community and provides translation and interpretation services. Seventy-one percent more Spanish-speaking families were newly served over the past three years, in large part to in-person outreach: 37 events (2019), 11 events (2020) and 24 events (2021). As a collaboration between Community Relations and Recreation, we prioritize translating and sending Spanish language newsletters to BPRD households and efforts increased six-fold in two years.

Additional efforts have been made to expand who we are serving, including:

- Reserving spots for summer registration to make sure families who have technology challenges and language barriers make it into programs.
- Assigning bilingual staff to help with registration to our Spanish-speaking families.
- Planning seasonal and other outreach events with community partners focused on serving underrepresented and marginalized communities.
- Hosting Fun on the Fly, which offers free recreational activities on-site, in different neighborhoods to break down transportation and financial barriers.
- Offering Discover the Outdoors, our summer outdoor program for kids 11 to 15 years old.
- Offering bilingual written materials and meeting interpretation for park project outreach.
- Providing bus and van transportation for participants to programs and events.
- A [Spanish language Facebook account](#) was created, and has garnered 595 followers and there have been 105 Facebook Live video posts and 28 Facebook events since March 2021.





Spotlight On: Summer Free Family Pass

In summer 2022, the district offered a free summer family pass to targeted families. This free pass was possible thanks to the Oregon Community Summer Grant from the Oregon Association of Education Service Districts. These passes were made available to families with a BPRD scholarship in addition to the many new families our outreach team visited in low-income neighborhoods and communities. The passes allowed families to recreate together for free at [Juniper Swim & Fitness Center](#), [Larkspur Community Center](#) and [The Pavilion skating rink](#). Dozens of families that had never visited a BPRD recreation center were able to experience our amenities for the first time.

Households served: 289
Total Individuals: 1,240
Total visits: 3,701

Spotlight On: Roller Pride, June 2022

BPRD hosted our first annual Roller Pride event on June 10, 2022 at The Pavilion. The goal of the event was to create a safe and family-friendly space for queer people and allies. We partnered with Out Central Oregon and the Central Oregon Community College LGBTQIA Student group to provide a 3-hour event that included roller skating, a dance floor, DJ, and cornhole. We had 650 people attend the event with approximately 40% being under the age of 18 (of that group most were between the ages of 10-18). We had a number of parents thank us for providing a space for their kids to feel welcome and free to be themselves. This event has led to the planning of an afterschool group in the spring roller season for queer high school students and allies after overwhelming feedback that it was a positive space for teens who identify as LGBTQIA+.



Spotlight On: BPRD Stewardship Program

The [Park Stewardship](#) program provides park visitors with information and resources and fosters appropriate park rules, making parks and trails safer for all to enjoy. The Steward team leads with an education-first approach, utilizing tools such as bilingual handouts and positive incentive giveaway items, and is responsible for enforcing all park and facility rules. The Stewardship Team is comprised of a Manager, two year-round full-time Park Stewards, two seasonal Park Stewards, and a contracted security day officer.

The team strives to be equitable in our approach to rules and safety. All Stewards and security day officers complete an eight-hour training course in empathy-driven enforcement. This training is specifically catered to park staff that works with individuals experiencing houselessness. The organization that created this virtual training is the Homeless Training Institute, which provides access to a variety of courses in its catalog.





Spotlight On: Alpenglow Pedestrian Bridge

During the design for [Alpenglow Community Park](#), the district's extensive 1.5-year public outreach process, which included close coordination with neighboring property owners like Bend La-Pine Schools and the City of Bend was integral to developing connections and access to the park and adjoining school district property. One result of that public outreach was the prioritization of safe pedestrian facilities to access the park and adjacent facilities like the recently opened Caldera High School and future middle school.

Multi-modal and universal access to Alpenglow is achieved by its two pedestrian bridges (over the BNSF railroad to the west and over the irrigation canal to the north), wide multi-use paths, a future CET bus stop and ample parking. These amenities provide an enhanced transportation corridor for students and park users and connectivity to the [Larkspur Trail](#) and [Central Oregon Historic Canal Trail](#). There are roughly 600 homes and nearly 1,500 people who live on the west side of the railroad tracks within a five minute walk of the railroad pedestrian bridge, and new developments are in the works for the area so that number will only grow in the coming years.

Spotlight On: Affordable Childcare Options

To help address the critical childcare deficit when schools closed during COVID, BPRD offered a crucial all-day program to 700 students in distance learning at school. The program's focus was to serve low-income families and families of responders to the pandemic. This program was the largest in the state by hundreds of participants. The program was a lifeline for working families and was created in less than a month in partnership with the school district. Sixty-five percent qualified for scholarship and 1 in 5 were new patrons to BPRD, including 10% Spanish-speaking participants engaged through extensive Latino outreach.



Spotlight On: Community Health Efforts

BPRD staff and volunteers assisted vaccination efforts for 10,000+ people as a weekly location for county-administered COVID vaccinations as well as a host site for a FEMA 4-day clinic. Annually, a community flu shot clinic with county health became a drive-through offering in 2020 and continues to draw a large attendance. Staff also tended to loneliness and isolation concerns for mental wellbeing. Staff and volunteers made more than 200 calls to senior center patrons for wellness checks during the COVID lockdown.



Spotlight On: Therapeutic Recreation (TR)

One in five Americans have or will develop a disability in their life. BPRD has been providing [Therapeutic Recreation programming](#) since 1980. Including youth with disabilities into recreation programs exposes children to peers with diverse abilities, needs, modes of communications, etc. and teaches them how to be accepting, understanding, and raises their overall emotional intelligence.

The support BPRD provides to youth with disabilities promotes equity for the families involved, not just the youth. Parents can rely on high quality care for their children. Bus and van transportation is provided for participants to many of TR's programs and events. This is a great example of giving people and families the extra support they need so they lead a happy, successful life.



Therapeutic Recreation programs include:

- Kids Inc. Inclusion Services – TR staff work with afterschool Kids Inc programs to offer extra support to students with disabilities, allowing them to be successfully involved in the afterschool program.
- Summer camps specialized for youth with disabilities. TR staff are involved at a high ratio so that we can meet the needs of any participant.
- Adult Programs – Adult Programs run year-round in the evening so that participants can work jobs during the day. Participants range in age from 18 to their 70's. Programs reflect many of the recreation programs offered to the general community, including work-out groups, cooking class, arts and crafts, swim nights, game nights, hiking clubs, walking clubs, rafting trips, trivia nights, and much more.



Spotlight On: Human Resources (HR) Recruitment

In May 2022, HR began researching the process of adding optional demographic questions on job applications to start better understanding hiring and recruitment efforts. In June 2022, HR added two demographic questions to the job applications, one about race/ethnicity and the other about gender. It was key to keep this information voluntary and confidential from hiring managers as well as the HR specialists in charge of recruitment so that decisions are not influenced by this information.

HR works with Community Relations to make sure job advertisements contain images with a diverse group of employees and patrons. Our goal is to accurately depict what our workforce looks like and to show a more representative picture of the patrons we work with. Similarly, we use multiple mediums to communicate opportunities to a wide audience.

Since outreach is part of HR efforts, we attend a variety of events to connect with community members. We've gone to events like the Health Fair at Larkspur Community Center and the Latino Community Association grand opening; we've attended career fairs for COCC, OSU-Cascades, WorkSource Oregon, Campfire, and Heart of Oregon; and have partnered with outreach specifically to help with their Community Celebrations and Informational Nights, like the Winter Activities Informational Night at Deschutes Children's Foundation.



Spotlight On: New Event Rentals in Parks Policy

There is a myriad of benefits that come with hosting [events in parks](#). Benefits include bringing art and cultural opportunities to the community, celebrating occasions and causes, recognizing historically significant places and people and connecting people to each other and our community.

The board approved the new Event Rentals in Parks policy which replaced two older administrative policies that guided shelter and park rentals as well as public event processes and procedures. The goal of creating a new policy is to better serve our growing and changing community by finding the balance between providing open park spaces with hosting both private and public events in the parks.

The procedural changes resulting from the policy will allow for a greater variety of renters to be able to rent outdoor spaces. We also hope that smaller event organizers have the opportunity to host events where limitations on locations, the capacity of event days and fees have previously prohibited them from doing so, ultimately increasing access to the benefits that go with community gatherings.



Spotlight On: Increased Accessibility in Parks and Facilities

In 2017, the district prioritized [improving accessibility](#) throughout parks and facilities. The work started with a district-wide inventory and evaluation of assets. The facility maintenance team then implemented quick and inexpensive improvements. Minor adjustments meant the difference between following the intent of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) to fully meeting the ADA Standards for Accessible Design. Individually, the changes were small but collectively they made a significant improvement to accessibility throughout the district.

ADA improvements are now included in asset management and several large-scale facility renovations have been completed, including Hollinshead barn and kitchen, Aspen Hall restroom and Shevlin Park Trail renovations.

Appendix B: Definitions

Diversity: Human differences, such as: ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, age, socio-economic status, (dis)ability, religious or spiritual identity, national origin, political beliefs, etc.¹

Equity: To treat everyone fairly. Takes into consideration the various systemic oppressions certain social groups face when seeking to render justice.¹

Inclusion: Creating a culture where all people feel respected, accepted, and valued.¹

Historically Excluded: Individuals with disability, lower incomes, people of color, individuals identifying as Hispanic and/or Latino/a, LGBTQ+, transgender/non-binary/gender non-conforming and individuals with any other identity that is not part of the dominant culture. This exclusion is systemic and impacts anyone not holding the majority of power, privilege and social status.

LGBTQ+: An acronym for “lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer.”²

¹ <https://www.orpa.org/page/dei-glossary>

² <https://www.nrpa.org/siteassets/hrpa-equity-language-guide-10-21-2021.pdf>