



Natural Resources Council of Maine Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Justice Team Charter

The Natural Resources Council of Maine recognizes that to fulfill its mission to protect the nature of Maine, the organization must promote ideas on how to confront systemic oppression in all forms in Maine. Since 2017, NRCM has been actively working on diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice and understands that we must make this work part of our organizational culture. We have created a public [Vision Statement](#), and are maintaining a DEIJ Team of staff, board, and NRCM Rising members to identify DEIJ-related objectives and to ensure the organization is carrying them out.

The Team is fundamentally different than other committees and teams at NRCM. While most teams focus on advancing our advocacy and philanthropy work, the DEIJ Team works toward an organizational culture where advancing diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice is central to our internal policies and external programmatic work. Our composition of staff, board, and NRCM Rising members is also unique.

Team Responsibilities

- Provide input and advice to the CEO and Management Team (mteam) regarding projects and policies (internal & external) related to diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice.
- Help to drive, engage, evaluate, and support the implementation of equity and inclusion throughout the organization. Encourage all organizational members to talk to each other and to the DEIJ Team about DEIJ issues.
- Participate in DEIJ-related internal dialogue and trainings and provide all staff and board members with related resources, training opportunities and DEIJ consultants as needed.
- Create opportunities for staff, board, and Rising to provide input on Team activities, such as periodic surveys and open team meetings.
- Submit a budget annually to mteam to fund DEIJ-related opportunities.
- Convene monthly meetings to set and monitor objectives and discuss trainings, learnings, and tactics.
- Identify actions that require implementation and initiate a review process that will provide key performance indicators for accountability.
- Commit to diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice values in our programmatic work. Work with program directors to a) ensure progress has been made to meet the DEIJ goals outlined in their current work plans and b) ensure they incorporate clear and measurable DEIJ objectives in their work plans for the following year.
- Provide mteam with charter revisions and other items for approval when required.

Approval by mteam is standard practice and method across the organization and will be needed at times by this Team. The Team recognizes that the power differential created by

this process has the potential to create a dynamic antithetical to the values of diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice. In the event of a grievance between the DEIJ Team and mteam, the DEIJ Team co-chairs and mteam will meet to discuss the point of disagreement. If no resolution is found, and upon consensus of the DEIJ Team, the Grievance Policy should be followed.

Team Membership

The DEIJ Team recognizes that people are at the center of DEIJ work. NRCM intentionally and expressly values the individuality, passion, innovative thinking, risk taking, and transparency inherent in, and necessary for, the personal growth and organizational change that our DEIJ efforts seek to achieve. This Team operates with a growth mindset and should be a safe space. Being vulnerable, making mistakes, and taking risks is a sign of growth and will be encouraged and supported.

The Team shall have between seven and nine members, comprised of the following NRCM stakeholders: two members of the Board of Directors, one Rising Leadership Team member, one member of mteam, and three to five staff members. If there are gaps in stakeholder representation, the Team will strive to fill them, recognizing participation is voluntary.

Annually, the current Team staff members and Rising member will ask for volunteers as space allows. The board members on the Team will be selected by the Board Chair. The Team will decide on the ongoing make-up of the staff and Rising volunteers.

Team membership is voluntary and available organization-wide, regardless of title or department. Members must be willing and able to provide a few hours a month of Team-related work and advocate to keep equity and inclusion as priorities at NRCM.

The Team will strive to have all departments represented in Team membership. Though Team members are encouraged to share department-specific information they are not expected to speak on behalf of their departments. Rather, members should bring their individual insights and expertise to Team discussions.

Members will select two co-chairs for the DEIJ Team, with at least one being a staff member.

When members step off or term off the Team, an exit interview will be conducted either in writing or with one of the co-chairs to glean ideas for improving the Team's work.

Terms

Each term will last one-year with the option to renew for one additional term. Vacancies will be filled as they arise, ideally from the same department the departing staff came from or where department representation is missing.

Transparency

Transparency is integral to achieving the stated goal of engaging the organization in advancing DEIJ values. The Team will act to increase transparency in deliberate ways, including, but not limited to:

- The co-chairs will provide updates at most monthly All Staff meetings to communicate across the organization about the work of the Team.
- Quarterly, a member will attend a meeting of the mteam to discuss equity priorities, goals, and progress, and where help from mteam is needed.
- The DEIJ Team will write a report on the team's activities for bi-monthly board meeting packets. At times, the Team will have a presentation or training for the board or the Rising Leadership team.
- The Team will post meeting notes in a public place within two weeks of each meeting. Decisions made at the meetings will be included in the notes and marked as a decision item. Notetaking will rotate among Team members and note takers should capture notes with record keeping in mind and make public an abbreviated anonymized version.
- The Team will advertise its open meetings on the appropriate public calendar(s).

Meeting Structure

Team meetings will occur at least once per month for two hours with additional meetings scheduled when necessary. Team meetings are open to NRCM staff, Rising, and board members for the full length of the meeting. The meeting will always begin with up to 30 minutes for members and guests to share resources, comment, and ask questions.

Decisions will be made via consensus. Where consensus cannot be achieved, the Team members will cast votes anonymously.

Ground Rules

The DEIJ Team is dedicated to creating a safe space for learning, growth, and transformative change. In this space, we seek to withhold judgement, to listen with open hearts, and to ensure all views and experiences are valued equally. Recognizing that DEIJ work comes to life in our interactions, we set the following ground rules as a guide to Team meetings:

Diversity

- Recognize that our individual backgrounds and differences make us stronger as a group.
- See the "way we've always done it" as a tool to inform, not dictate. There is a diversity of ways to get a job done.

Equity

- We are equals. Everyone's voice will be valued in the conversation, no matter their status in the organization.

- Question and challenge problems and processes, not individuals

Inclusion

- Listen respectfully to observations and ideas contributed by others. Leave space for others to voice their point of view.
- Presume positive intent and be mindful of impact.
- Speak from your own experience and perspective; leave space for other lived experiences and perspectives.

Justice

- When discussing meetings with people who did not attend, don't speak for other members. Describe your impression, from your perspective.
- Be willing to ask - and be asked – WHY?
- Be accountable to yourself and others for your words and actions.

Review

This charter will be reviewed and revised by the DEIJ Team at any time Team members agree changes are needed. Mteam approval is needed for final charter revisions. To be inclusive of all views, the NRCM staff, NRCM board and NRCM Rising Leadership Team will be provided a comment period in which they may offer input or feedback on any part of the charter or make suggestions for additions to the document. Input may be in writing via survey or email or may be given verbally to any Team member. A comment period will be offered any time the charter is reviewed or revised.

Approved April 2, 2021