



Employee Development, Diversity, & Inclusion Attribute



Garden Workbook:



**Climate &
Sustainability
Alliance**

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Introduction

The Employee Development, Diversity, and Inclusion Attribute is focused on creating an equitable, accessible, diverse, and inclusive work culture where all individuals are valued, respected, and appreciated. Gardens are encouraged to go through our self-assessment process and consultative peer review to determine strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities to address Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Accessibility (IDEA) issues within your organization.

The Association (its leadership, board, and staff) want to make every attempt to thread inclusion in all we do, and we take this work very seriously. The following is the result of rigorous peer review and revision, recommendations from our Board Appointed IDEA Committee, and represent diverse perspectives and expertise from our membership. Most importantly, this Workbook reflects a journey that in many ways has just begun and will remain a living document. We ask for and welcome feedback, as one of the goals is transparency in all steps. Please engage with us - your voice, experience, and perspective is important.

The Association is committed to creating an equitable, diverse and inclusive culture where the contributions of all community members are valued, respected and appreciated. The Association also seeks to encourage and support its members in creating this same culture within their own institutions.

United Nations Sustainable Development Goals

The Public Gardens Sustainability Index is intended to share examples of how gardens are contributing to specific SDG goals and to inspire gardens to advance their own garden programs to further the mission of their institution while connecting to local, national, and global sustainability efforts. This Index is a first step guide on how to “get started” with implementing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) from 2015. It aims to help gardens of all sizes and governance models understand the SDG Agenda, to start an inclusive dialogue on SDG implementation, and to prepare SDG-based local or national development strategies (or align existing plans and strategies with the goals).



Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.



Women are still underrepresented in managerial positions. In the majority of the 67 countries with data from 2009 to 2015, fewer than a third of senior- and middle-management positions were held by women.



Gardens need to work to ensure immigrant workers and students from all over the globe are afforded equal opportunities to learn and participate despite language and cultural barriers.



Why Does it Matter?



Race/ Ethnicity

By 2065, only 46% of the population will be white, with no racial/ethnic group being considered a majority



Ability

One out of four American adults identify as having a disability



Age

Millennials have recently overtaken Baby Boomers as America's largest generation



Veterans

In 2016, 7% of American adults were veterans, who have a variety of transferrable skills



LGBTQ+

An estimated 3-5% of Americans identify as LGBTQ+ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer)



Immigration

13.5% of the American population is foreign-born and beginning in 2030, migration will become the driver of population growth



Diversity & Inclusion Goal 1: Identify and adopt a culture and value system that understands, respects, and promotes diversity and inclusion in all aspects of the institution.

Key Performance Indicator (KPI)

a. Garden promotes its efforts to support inclusion, diversity, equity, and accessibility (IDEA).

Outcomes

a. Garden has written values and goals that state its desire for an inclusive and diverse work environment and has policy or plan for how it will address diversity, Garden also formulates a diversity and inclusion focus group, committee, or task force to elicit feedback and ensure IDEA goals are being met.

Suggested Strategies



Develop IDEA committees/groups comprised of people across age spans, abilities, ethnicities, departments, personalities and include persons in leadership positions. Group supervisors need to be supportive of group activities, so that group members can be committed to working well together, empowered to enact the garden's priorities, and have the initiative to take leadership roles. Decisions should be made by committee/group consensus (Diversity.1.a).



IDEA initiatives are most successful when they become a part of an organization's vision, planning, and business strategies. Taking IDEA into consideration when creating organizational goals, strategic plans, business models, and institutional vision encourage participation at all levels of staff, as well as communicate the importance and benefits of an inclusive workplace (Diversity.1.a).



Share the garden's results with both internal and external stakeholders in annual reports, board meetings, membership meetings, volunteer newsletters, conferences, and other communication opportunities. If your garden has IDEA policies or statements make them visible online and that these are easily accessible to all employees and volunteers. It's important to demonstrate to all stakeholders that their feedback, time, participation, and efforts have combined to increase IDEA in the organization. Being open with the results of demographic surveys, employee surveys, diversity reports, and satisfaction surveys will encourage further participation and contributions. Make sure to emphasize that this is a never-ending and continuous process of learning, sharing, re-evaluating assumptions, and self-examination that will go a long way to the future of the garden as a relevant, engaging, and sustainable site (Diversity.1.a).



Hold facilitated workshops/meetings and discussions on IDEA for all departments, staff, and volunteers. (Diversity.1.a).





Diversity & Inclusion Goal 1: Identify and adopt a culture and value system that understands, respects, and promotes diversity and inclusion in all aspects of the institution.

Suggested Strategies Continued



While organizations with fewer resources may find it challenging to hire a consultant or facilitator, there are many conferences, workshops, and online webinars (distance learning) dedicated to the subject all over the country, and paying for a staff member to participate and report back is an alternate way of gaining information. Research colleges in the area with a focus on social justice or urban affairs – many graduate programs have professional outreach projects that could aide a smaller organization in training its staff on topics of inclusion. Other possibilities are social or community-based nonprofits in the area dedicated to supporting marginalized groups (Diversity.1.a).



It is important that staff members who are officially involved with IDEA (committee, surveys, training) receive the support they need to succeed. This includes financial support, staff and time from the organization, additional necessary resources, as well as emotional and professional support from colleagues and leadership (Diversity.1.a).



The Smithsonian Office of Facilities and Engineering and Operations (OFEO) recognizes that while a strategic plan is an essential tool to help guide work, the department's true success is dependent on the willingness of employees to be creative, provide quality work, and commitment to serve over 25 million visitors and over 12,000 staff each year. With so much of the plan hinging on the performance of employees, including those of the Smithsonian Gardens, the OFEO has prioritized the cultivation of a highly motivated and dedicated workforce as a primary goal within the strategic plan itself.

- The first objective associated with this goal is foster an organizational culture that is fair, inclusive, and team-orientated by understanding and addressing real and perceived equity issues, clearly defining performance expectations and measures of success, and making business processes transparent and involve diverse representatives of the workforce in their design.
- The fourth objective is to foster a flexible, dynamic, and knowledgeable workforce. This will be accomplished by conducting strategic staffing reviews to ensure recruitment of employees with skill sets that align with mission needs, increasing cross-training of staff to provide diverse learning opportunities, and recognizing and rewarding innovation and creative problem-solving.



Diversity & Inclusion Goal 2: Recruit, retain, and recognize a diverse workforce within your institution.

Key Performance Indicator (KPI)

- a. Garden develops effective practices for recruiting and hiring boards, employees, and volunteers that IDEA principles are core components of the process.
- b. Garden recognizes accomplishments (salary, benefits, award) of board, employees, and volunteers.
- c. Garden develops effective practices for retaining employees and volunteers that ensure IDEA principles are core components of the process.

Outcomes

- a. Garden engages a consultant/expert to provide training for staff on diversity/unconscious bias/inclusion, requires interviewing at least one woman and member of underrepresented minority group, includes one woman and member of underrepresented minority group at interview panels, and selects candidates based on factors beyond education.
- b. Garden compensates and promotes staff based on performance. Garden ensures employees have equal opportunities to advance skills,
- c. Garden adopts flexible work arrangements (part-time, remote, etc.), has a safe support space with strong HR, holds inclusive staff meetings, and regularly reviews and updates policies for time off.

Suggested Strategies Continued



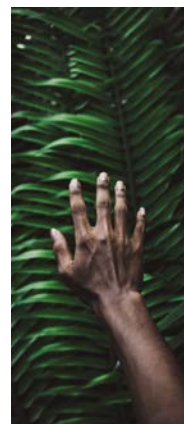
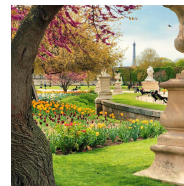
Hiring processes should: 1) Recognize the value of cultural competence, 2) Accept equivalent experience in place of formal education for positions that do not require it, 3) Prioritize diverse perspectives as a benefit to the organization, 4) Encourage and state on job applications that any and all are welcome to apply, including those with differing abilities. People with disabilities should not be discriminated against and an organization should be open to them applying for any position that is advertised at a competitive wage, 5) Be transparent with salary range, 6) Provide clear job expectations and evaluation methods, 7) Include clarity in the ways to achieve a promotion or raise (Diversity.2.a).



The board should demonstrate best practices such as needed consensus for decisions, democratic processes for voting on organizational direction and planning, and term limits so the board evolves and is open to new perspectives (Diversity.2.a).



It is important that staff members who are officially involved with IDEA (committee, surveys, training) receive the support they need to succeed. This includes financial support, staff and time from the organization, additional necessary resources, as well as emotional and professional support from colleagues and leadership (Diversity.2.b).





Diversity & Inclusion Goal 2: Recruit, retain, and recognize a diverse workforce within your institution.

Suggested Strategies



Share the garden's results with both internal and external stakeholders in annual reports, board meetings, membership meetings, volunteer newsletters, conferences, and other communication opportunities. If your garden has IDEA policies or statements make them visible online and that these are easily accessible to all employees and volunteers. It's important to demonstrate to all stakeholders that their feedback, time, participation, and efforts have combined to increase IDEA in the organization. Being open with the results of demographic surveys, employee surveys, diversity reports, and satisfaction surveys will encourage further participation and contributions. Make sure to emphasize that this is a never-ending and continuous process of learning, sharing, re-evaluating assumptions, and self-examination that will go a long way to the future of the garden as a relevant, engaging, and sustainable site (Diversity.2.b).



Once hired, it is important to continue to develop and support employees of marginalized or underrepresented groups. Studies show that isolation and emotional fatigue are sources of early burnout, especially in people of color working in largely white organizations. Offering opportunities for leadership mentoring, professional training and workshops, or committee participation can help diverse employees continue to succeed (Diversity.2.c).



Diverse employees, by nature, require diversity in organizational benefits and work-life balance. Equally important as official guidelines and policy is that organizational culture respects, understands, and empathizes with differences in language, dress, physical appearance, non-traditional schedules and leave, and recognizes them as legitimate. For some aspects such as religious wear, mobility assistance devices, and cultural norms, this can be addressed through cultural competency workshops and discussions. Offer flexible work hours/remote days for those that have special circumstances such as single parents, those with long commutes, or others with non-traditional schedules, and holidays. (Diversity.2.c).





Diversity & Inclusion Goal 3: Establish IDEA best practices that shape and impact the workforce, the workplace, and the community.

Key Performance Indicator (KPI)

- a. Garden develops effective practices for tracking and reporting diversity of staff, volunteers, and board (if applicable).
- b. Garden provides public programming opportunities that are inclusive, equitable, and accessible to diverse demographics.
- c. Garden determines metrics to hold leadership staff accountable for implementing IDEA strategies and benchmarking success.

Outcomes

- a. Garden documents who attends pivotal meetings/who is involved in high-level decision making. Garden also tracks promotion demographics and regularly survey staff satisfaction of IDEA principles.
- b. Garden has diversity/inclusion program for training youth, offers after school programs, provides transportation passes/flexible schedules, and advertises for positions to appeal to diverse workers.
- c. Garden sees an increase in minority representation at all levels, a decrease of discrimination complaints, an increase in employee satisfaction from surveys, and an increase in number of trainings on IDEA principles.

Suggested Strategies



In order to evaluate the efficacy of IDEA initiatives, it is necessary to conduct internal organizational assessments covering behavior, attitude, and perception. Using an anonymous employee opinion or engagement survey to solicit feedback on diversity and inclusion efforts is the first step, and the surveyors should be prepared for both positive and negative critical feedback. It is recommended that those who conduct or facilitate the training are also those who evaluate the results and to approach the process in stages. Large scale surveys and evaluation can be a challenge for small gardens with fewer staff. In this case, it may be beneficial to have an outside party conduct staff engagement surveys and collect employee feedback on IDEA initiatives (Diversity.3.a).



While organizations with fewer resources may find it challenging to hire a consultant or facilitator, there are many conferences, workshops, and online webinars (distance learning) dedicated to the subject all over the country, and paying for a staff member to participate and report back is an alternate way of gaining information. Research colleges in the area with a focus on social justice or urban affairs, many graduate programs have professional outreach projects that could aide a smaller organization in training its staff on topics of inclusion. Other possibilities are social or community-based nonprofits in the area dedicated to supporting marginalized groups (Diversity.3.a).



Diversity & Inclusion Goal 3: Establish equity, diversity, and inclusion best practices that shape and impact the workforce, the workplace, and the community.

Suggested Strategies Continued



Recognize that different diverse groups reflect different challenges and different levels of progress. For example, the public garden field has improved leadership diversity in gender, but still lacks diversity in race, ability, as well as open support for LGBTQ+ employees (especially transgender and non-gender conforming) (Diversity.3.a).



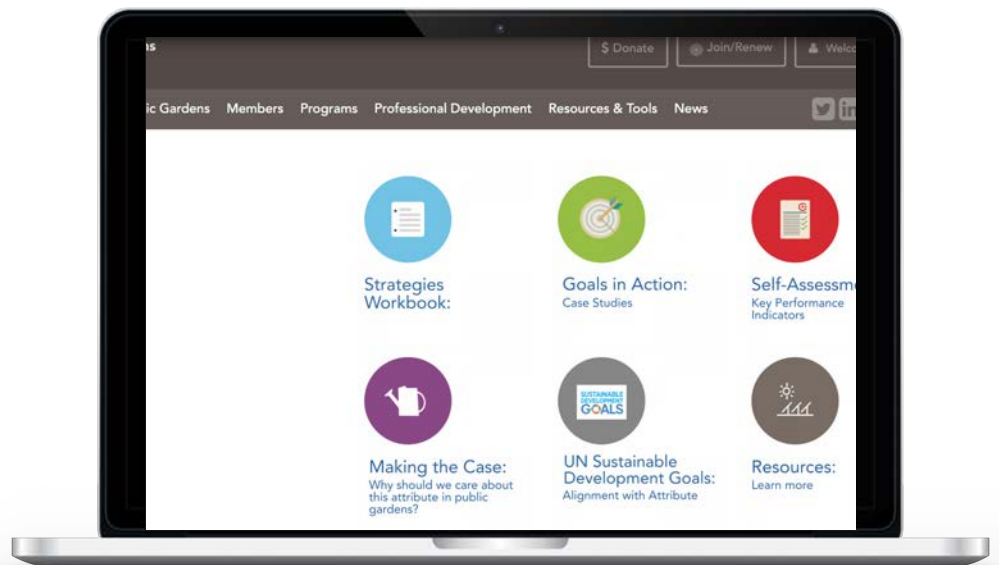
Desert Botanical Garden's goal of furthering their progress in the three R's (Recruitment, Retention, and Recognition) is embodied by their Cultivating Excellence Program, an initiative designed to develop employees and support inclusion. Initiating and continuing new practices in workplace culture are a central aspect of the program: listening to employee voices, suggestions, concerns, and feedback. One example of an employee-driven initiative was a pay-for-performance evaluation system. This new program was a direct result of meetings with each department and the Executive Director. Another example, under the "Recognize" branch of the program, gathered staff feedback in order to create consistent staff gatherings that celebrate individuals, garden accomplishment, and milestones.





FOR MORE INFORMATION

Visit the sustainability index attribute pages for more case studies, resources, and a self-assessment!



<https://www.publicgardens.org/sustainability-index/attributes/employee-development-diversity-and-inclusion>