



PRACTICES TO ADVANCE OUR DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION VISION

BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

The Society of Family Planning recognizes that institutionalized, exclusionary, and oppressive systems such as racism, sexism, classism, ableism, nationalism, heterosexism, cisgenderism, and other discriminatory practices are barriers to the full participation of all contributors to the field of family planning.

We acknowledge the interconnectedness of these oppressive systems.

We also intentionally center and lead with anti-racism, recognizing deeply-rooted and pervasive structural racial injustices and that an anti-racist praxis connects multiple marginalized communities allowing for broader equity impacts for all.

To achieve the Society’s vision of just and equitable abortion and contraception informed by science and to ensure that this vision is actualized for the benefit of all, we must work together to intentionally address and incorporate values of diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) in everything we do, from how we govern the organization to the implementation of our programs.

Starting in 2018, with the launch of our first strategic plan, we began to direct attention to addressing DEI across all aspects of the Society, with a focus on oppression based on racial and ethnic identity. This included: 1) adoption of the Society’s [DEI Vision statement](#); 2) documentation of and reflection on practices implemented to change how we work to advance our vision; 3) [aggregation and reflection on self-reported racial and ethnic identities of staff](#), Board members, and program participants; and 4) evaluation of how self-reported racial and ethnic identity impacts experiences within Society programming (forthcoming). Collectively, we intend for these efforts to advance us towards **servicing as an organization accountable to addressing systemic racism and the root causes of inequality**.

This report is focused on the second effort described above—the documentation and reflection of practices currently implemented in the work of the Society to advance our DEI vision, with a focus on practices to move us towards being accountable to addressing systemic racism. This report is one part of our ongoing organizational transformation work related to advancing our DEI vision and aims to facilitate an ongoing conversation with staff, Board members, Society members, and partners.

PROCESS FOR DOCUMENTATION OF PRACTICES TO ADVANCE OUR DEI VISION

In 2020, we began to document and reflect on practices implemented with the intention to advance our DEI vision. This work included structured discussions among staff, Board, and members of the Society, with particular time dedicated to this work by the DEI Committee. Concretely, at the invitation of the DEI Committee, we mapped current and planned practices into a theory of change that connects this concrete work with the “north star” of the Society’s DEI vision.

After mapping, we launched routine learning conversations to reflect on how we were implementing the practices, what was working, what was not working, and what we would recommend to others iterating on these practices. This allowed us to quickly institutionalize some practices that appeared to be moving us towards our goals, discard those which did not appear to be beneficial, and develop new practices as we identified gaps.

KEY TENSIONS WE HOLD

In developing, documenting, and improving these practices, we found ourselves holding the following key tensions:

- We set an intention to habituate new practices, making them an integrated and ongoing part of our work. At the same time, we quickly learned that meaningfully integrating new practices takes more time and resources than we had anticipated.
- It is past time to address the toxicity of systemic oppression and urgency can be a threat to deep, thoughtful, and sustained work to address DEI. As such, our pace around these efforts is guided by:
 - Attention to the potential harms of inaction or inappropriate and/or superficial action;
 - Attention to our ability to sustain change; and
 - Knowledge that there is no shortcut to the deep relationships and sustained practices that are essential to our collective progress on DEI.
- Efforts related to DEI are anchored by four different groups within the Society: the staff, Board, members, and partners. Two related tensions emerge in this context:
 - These groups all have different capacities to move this work forward, as well as different expectations about what this shared work includes and what “success” looks like. We are working to become comfortable in leading with confidence that our effort requires meeting people where they are and growing together, even when (or especially when) it is uncomfortable and these groups disagree.
 - These groups also share responsibility for advancement of this work. This diffusion of responsibility means there is no key “owner” of DEI efforts or “decider” of priorities. Instead, we have relied on personal and group accountability. This has led to both a high level of commitment to the work and some lack of clarity on roles and responsibilities.
- It can feel like we must focus first on change at the personal, interpersonal, or organizational levels before moving towards external change. However, we have embraced “both and” thinking (as described [here](#)), believing we must concurrently advance internal and external practices as they hold the potential to reinforce and reify one another.

SUMMARY OF PRACTICES TO ADVANCE OUR DEI VISION

We have developed over 100 practices to advance our DEI vision, many of these created in partnership among staff, Board, the DEI Committee, and other members and partners of the Society. Here, we summarize some of these practices, using the DEI Vision as an organizing structure, and focusing on practices aligned with moving us towards being accountable to addressing systemic racism.

- Diversifying membership and leadership includes:
 - Naming lived and/or professional experience responding to systems of oppression and commitment to our DEI vision as a key skill set for staff, Board, and other leadership positions within the Society;
 - Creating standards for participation in our community, and a process for reviewing and resolving violations of those standards;
 - Paying people for their time and expertise in a timely way, with clear attention to how institutionalized racism shapes compensation and payment processes;
 - Removing unnecessary barriers to membership (such as needing a referral from a current member) and elitist member categories (ie, “Junior” and “Full” members);
 - Reducing the cost of membership to mitigate financial barriers to participation;
 - Dedicating significant financial resources and staff time towards reducing financial barriers to participation in all Society programming with an eye towards in-depth support (eg, offering support for both travel and childcare to attend meetings); and
 - Aggregating and reflecting on self-reported racial and ethnic identities of staff, Board members, and program participants.
- Convening inclusive spaces among and across identity groups includes:
 - Supporting Special Interest Groups (SIG) through the provision of convening spaces at our Annual Meeting, supporting year-round virtual meetings, supporting SIG chairs by covering their membership dues and Annual Meeting attendance;
 - Hosting a BIPOC lounge at our Annual Meeting; and
 - Assessing and responding to experiences in participating in Society programming with a focus on differences in experience by self-reported race and ethnicity.

- Supporting research that centers people whose access to care is constrained by systems of oppression includes:
 - Integrating DEI values statements into all funding opportunities;
 - Requiring positionality statements in research proposal submission to the Society;
 - Providing career development funding for mid-career scholars of color that is reviewed by and selected by other scholars of color;
 - Building the capacity of program participants to investigate and respond to racism through the development of Research Practice Supports designed to respond to challenging areas of research practice for family planning researchers, such as working intentionally with race and ethnicity in quantitative analyses;
 - Providing resources for community-based and other partners to lead and participate in research; and
 - Monitoring the racial and ethnic composition of all groups engaged in our competitive funding opportunities, such as applicants, peer reviewers, and awardees.
- Ensuring all people have access to evidence-informed and person-centered abortion and contraception includes:
 - Establishing relationships with organizations that prioritize supporting learners and healthcare professionals that identify as Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC);
 - Increasing visibility and career interest in the Complex Family Planning Fellowship (CFP) among BIPOC trainees through focused outreach;
 - Providing mentorship matching for CFP applicants with an eye towards matching by race and ethnicity, if desired by the applicant;
 - Prioritizing the development of clinical guidance and continuing education that is related to DEI Vision;
 - Working to ensure clinical guidance and continuing education explicitly addresses the impact of systemic racism on different populations; and
 - Assessing and responding to racial and ethnic differences in who leads clinical guidance and continuing education.
- Championing diverse voices from across the community to implement policy and practice change includes:
 - Providing trainings on building a racial equity lens into scholarship, policy, and practice;
 - Offering community care and restoration workshops, with a priority and focus on the experiences of BIPOC members;
 - Providing trainings on working as “an only” within academic and medical institutions, and mentoring with DEI at the forefront; and
 - Joining colleague organizations and signing on to ACOG’s collective action plan outlining steps the family planning community will collectively be championing to address racism.

- Aligning the organization's resources to be in service of our strategic plan and DEI vision includes:
 - Convening the [DEI Committee](#), which has been a critical driver of efforts focused on DEI, notably crafting the DEI Vision statement as well as other Society statements related to racial oppression. This group also serves as a space for collaboration between the Board, staff, and the Society's membership;
 - Developing accountability towards the DEI vision through the establishment of DEI goals for every individual on staff and every program at the Society;
 - Integrating reflection on DEI into Board and staff meetings;
 - Increasing visibility of DEI work in all public communications;
 - Providing routine training for staff on DEI, and requiring all people managers to receive training on equitable hiring, promotions, and retention practices with the [Management Center](#);
 - Creating job descriptions for Society staff that reflect [requirements](#) and [must haves \(not preferences or traditions\)](#), and that transparently name salary for the positions;
 - Providing robust benefits to all staff including: compensation above the market, 100% of individual premiums for medical, dental, vision, short- and long-term disability, and life insurance; individual career development opportunities; productive workspace stipend, support for remote work; flexible schedules; 24 days/year of paid time off which increases with tenure, 11 paid holidays, abbreviated Friday schedule in July, paid family leave; 401K with matching contribution, and more.
 - Conducting an annual, internal climate survey; and
 - Assessing and responding to progress towards meeting the following indicators:
 - No racial or ethnic disparities in who applies for jobs and receives job offers, as measured by application and hiring data over time.
 - No racial or ethnic disparities in salaries, as measured by salary data over time.
 - No racial or ethnic disparities in who receives promotions, as measured by promotions data over time.
 - No racial or ethnic disparities in who exits the organization, as measured by exit data over time.
 - 100% participation in routine staff-wide and manager-specific equity trainings.

NEXT STEPS

Documenting and reflecting upon our organizational practices is one step towards realizing our DEI vision. These practices serve as structural supports, advancing us towards serving as an organization that is accountable to addressing systemic racism and the root causes of inequality. Practice improvements are always necessary to redress long-held practices that reify systems of oppression and we commit to continuing to assess the impact of our current practices and identify other practices that are needed. We hope this report serves as an invitation for staff, Board members, Society members, and other partners to reflect upon these practices, integrate them into their own work, and join us in shaping where we go next.

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