

America's Service Commissions (ASC)

Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (JEDI) Plan



JEDI Guiding Statement


America's Service Commissions (ASC) will create an equitable and inclusive environment through learning, advocacy, and training in its internal work and with the network of state and territorial service commissions, their programs, and other stakeholders in order for national service and volunteering to grow and thrive in a manner that is reflective of the communities in which it serves.

ASC is committed to listening and learning as we move forward on the path to justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion. ASC will use our position as a national membership organization to work towards the goal that all people have access to service opportunities and are included in the leadership, development, and implementation of those opportunities. We will take action and advocate for policies that will advance equity across race, gender, disability, age, class, and geography. We will do this through continued dialogue, training, coaching, feedback, and empowering voices that are often silenced to speak. We will hold ourselves accountable to operate outwardly and inwardly as a learning organization that strives to be actively anti-racist and inclusive. We will prioritize the professional development and learning of our staff, board, and members to build the knowledge and skills to support our goals for justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion. We will amplify other voices when it is not our voice that needs to be heard, we will expect growth from each other and our membership, and we will put the learning into action as we advance towards being advocates and allies.

ASC's JEDI Plan Progression

ASC released its initial JEDI plan (starting on page 5 of this document) in early 2021 after the development of the plan by its staff team through training and technical assistance in 2019 and 2020. Some highlights of the work we have advanced since the original plan was released include but are not limited to:

- Facilitation of our JEDI Work Group for commission staff to share related work at their commissions and inform ASC JEDI activities
- ASC job board guidelines require salary ranges to reinforce equity in hiring practices.
- Facilitation of the ASC BIPOC Affinity Group for commission staff
- Creation of the ASC Inclusive Language Guide
- Creation of a Land Acknowledgement and practice for in-person events
- Use of image descriptions on social media and captioning for ASC virtual meetings and video recordings on YouTube
- Released guide for Allowable Member Activities for Racial Equity
- Set expectations for TTA Directory members on partnering with ASC
- Developed extensive document on Barriers to National Service and Recommendations to Make National Service More Inclusive and Equitable provided to the AmeriCorps agency via its DEI panel and public comment, and continued advocacy on related topics
- Advocated for DACA recipients to be eligible for ASN, and increased living allowance and cost per MSY via CORPS Act, ARP, BBB, and regular appropriations
- Advocacy to reduce barriers related to match and improve fixed amount grants
- Facilitation of demographic survey for ASC presenters
- Hosted several learning opportunities on topics related to JEDI during ASC trainings and learning communities
- Submitted several public comments to AmeriCorps in recent years that recommend changes that would improve equity, diversity, and inclusion



In 2022, ASC significantly expanded its staff team and identified JEDI priorities that ensure all ASC staff have responsibilities around advancing the organization's JEDI goals in the strategic plan and organization value of equity.

The original JEDI plan outlines the continued overarching intentions and goals of ASC's JEDI work. The following are areas of work ASC staff plan to focus on in 2023 and beyond to further meet the JEDI plan.

1. Continued personal and professional development around issues of justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion for the ASC staff, board, and network

- a. ASC will launch a custom national service justice training, which will be available for all members of the ASC network.
- b. Continue prioritizing JEDI relevant content during ASC convenings, national service trainings, and learning communities
- c. ASC will provide further training for its network on JEDI topics relevant to volunteer engagement.

2. Organizational and network culture

- a. ASC will develop an accountability practice to hold its staff, board members, and network accountable for subtle acts of exclusion.
- b. ASC leadership will further its learning around becoming an anti-racist organization and identify further action areas around organizational budget and financial practices.
- c. Membership principles reflecting JEDI guiding statement
- d. ASC will expand access to affinity spaces for members of its network that have marginalized identities.
- e. Pipeline and network leadership development with a focus on developing future leaders that reflect the diversity of the network


- f. Continue to revisit ASC professional development and benefits
- g. Continue to refine new member onboarding with a focus on inclusion and belonging

3. ASC will improve its communication and resource development practices.

- a. Improve language accessibility and inclusion for written and verbal communications.
- b. Ensure that ASC’s website is fully accessible, whether by updating our current site or by developing a new one.
- c. Ensure that all ASC videos have captions and/or subtitles enabled. This includes videos that are posted online as well as videos shown at in-person events.
- d. Develop checklists, frameworks, processes, etc. to assist staff in reviewing their own work and ensuring it meets ASC’s JEDI standards.
- e. Ensure visual collateral represents/depicts a variety of physical appearances.
- f. Build a “culture of philanthropy” that is reflective of and aligned with the statements and values that guide ASC’s JEDI statement.
- g. Make the focus of ASC fundraising community-centric, and follow the 10 principles of community-centric fundraising.

4. ASC will make national service resources more accessible.

- a. Providing training and technical assistance and facilitating lessons learned for changes to grantmaking practices
- b. Further our efforts to advocate to the AmeriCorps agency on reducing barriers for grant applicants and AmeriCorps members, including reducing barriers in the application process, monitoring, and addressing root causes to issues rather than being rigid in disallowance or noncompliance

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- c. Public policy priorities will reflect ASC's JEDI priorities.
 - d. Develop resources on AmeriCorps member benefits and emergency funds

5. ASC will improve accessibility and inclusion of its training opportunities.

- a. Ensure diverse representation of our network as part of training opportunities.
- b. Ensure attendees feel welcome and included at ASC events.
- c. Staff checklist for using before and during events and presentations including considerations around climate impact
- d. Prayer, quiet, and nursing parent rooms available during conferences
- e. Have an assessment process to collect feedback internally and externally on events and training opportunities pre and post event

ASC staff will work to incorporate one or more of these priorities into its annual staff planning and strategic plan milestones, so each staff member has one or more JEDI focused activities. The above priorities will be a focus for at least the next two years with accountability from the ASC JEDI Work Group, ASC Membership Committee, and ASC Board of Directors.

General Policies and Practices

JEDI-Aligned Communications: Ensure ASC’s JEDI statement and values guide and inform all communications — including websites, videos, newsletters, social media, reports, press releases, internal communications, promotional materials, advertisements, photography, presentations, opinion pieces, legislative testimony, meetings of all kinds, and speeches.


- All communications and marketing materials produced should reflect the vision for diversity, equity, and inclusion and include people of all ethnicities, gender identities, sexual orientations, religious affiliations, abilities, ages, and geographic regions in a way that makes no assumptions about the receiver of the communications.
- Develop a checklist for staff to use and reference to confirm this alignment before we share, publish, speak, or present things on behalf of ASC.

Messaging and Language: Review ASC messaging and language for any potential hidden, coded, or clear red flags that are or could be construed as biased, racist, or non-inclusive (ex. “we’re looking for Board members who are a ‘good fit,’” “manpower,” etc.)

- Removing gendered language from forms that we have control over and advocating for the removal of gendered language in forms that we do not

Materials and Publications: Make a dedicated effort to feature photos and imagery that highlight the diversity of national service in ASC publications, presentations, and online presence so that everyone “sees themselves” in ASC materials.

- A bank of pre-vetted images and visual content that meet ASC’s JEDI standards will be used for all materials and publications and available to others in the network. It will be updated each year.
- Ensure materials can be accessible to people with hearing or visual impairments and in multiple languages as appropriate, etc.



Amplify All Voices and Equitable Representation: Seek to empower the individuals, organizations, and communities we feature/profile through the amplification of their authentic voice and situation.

- Avoid stories that perpetuate the narrative that we (AmeriCorps, national service, commissions, states, ASC, others) are “saving” the community instead of being a supportive partner or stakeholder working with others.

Become a Learning Organization and Advocate

- Create transparent project plans to lessen the “sense of urgency” and invite feedback from the entire team to increase the implementation of JEDI priorities.
- Adopt practices of a Learning Organization (i.e., culture where mistakes are learning opportunities) and incorporate them into team norms and culture.
- Revisit ASC values within the strategic plan process and develop membership principles.
- Share resources via Basecamp and encourage discussion amongst commission staff. Pose questions to the commission network and challenge them to select an area and make change within their own organizations:
 - Does your commission staff reflect the community that you are serving?
 - Does your AmeriCorps program staff reflect the community that you are serving?
 - Do your AmeriCorps members reflect the communities that you are serving?
 - Do your outreach efforts to bring in new programs or members reflect the communities that you are serving?
 - Are there communities that your commission, programs, and members are not serving?

- Are you reexamining your outreach and grantmaking policies to expand the net of organizations that consider AmeriCorps?
- Are there policies that exist in your program, commission, state, at the federal level that make it challenging for BIPOC people to become involved as members, staff, commissioners.

ASC Job Board and National Service Talent Pipeline

- Foster and encourage a climate where job postings are equitable in that they 1) include clear equal opportunity employer (EOE) statements and 2) salary ranges to encourage fair and equitable pay based on job description/title and not on applicant demographics. Require these two things on all job postings and establish standards for all postings.
- Develop the service/commission talent pipeline tool and related training to support the field in thinking about hiring practices using a JEDI framework.

Network Culture

Actively work to ensure all ASC members feel included and welcomed at ASC events and initiatives, even if they are new to our field or bring a different experience than others.

- Implement new training techniques such as assigned seating, collaborative icebreakers, hosting group social events for all, etc. to encourage ASC members to meet new people and change the culture of “cliques” within our network.
- Learn and practice facilitation techniques to draw out the lesser-heard, newer, or less vocal voices within our network at meetings and events.
- Revisit our Training and TA Plan and assess how we can make it more accessible/inclusive. Develop a similar “new member” orientation/onboarding plan to help provide consistent support to new network staff.

- Inform ASC members of our commitment to these principles to improve the state service network with a goal of equity and inclusion to get member buy-in.


Normalize pronoun use: Add pronouns to e-signatures and in other forums where names are visually presented (i.e. name badges, etc.)

Speakers and Leaders: Actively seek to recruit and reach out to more diverse ASC/States for Service leaders and guest speakers to be part of ASC's work, including the Board, association members, public policy advocates, and committee/workgroup members.

Training

Facilitate trainings (by bringing in qualified presenters) to speak on various issues related to becoming actively anti-racist and inclusive in the areas of:

- Commission staff make-up
- Grantmaking practices
- Being an AmeriCorps program and challenges that specifically and differently impact those operating in low socioeconomic status communities, communities of that are majority BIPOC, rural vs. urban communities differently
- Being an AmeriCorps member and challenges that specifically and differently impact members who are LGBTQIA+, low socioeconomic status, BIPOC, various generations differently
- Ensuring that inclusive training topics are woven into material presented on a variety of subject areas, and that specific tracks for learning in more depth are available at our Regional Trainings, Leadership Convening, and Learning Community Calls.



Create standards for anyone working with ASC as a trainer, presenter, speaker, facilitator to ensure that their verbal words, written text, and messaging is held to an anti-racist, anti-gendered, and anti-ableist standard.

Include a recognition of tribal lands in ASC trainings (in-person and webinar) based on the geographical location of where the presenter is located or a nation-wide recognition statement.

Policy

- Conduct an analysis of national service programming to provide recommendations to policymakers on how to make AmeriCorps and other national service programs more equitable (i.e. increasing benefits by x amount)
- Work to get funding appropriated by Congress to invest in inclusion strategies in support of JEDI statement/goals. Specifically, funding for inclusive marketing, recruitment, training and technical assistance as well as, resources to support evaluation and learning.
- Work to include inclusion as a priority in any reauthorization legislation for National Service in support of JEDI statement/goals.



Accountability Practices

Develop a tool to regularly track our progress in the areas of Anti-Racism, Disability Inclusion and Advocacy, Gender Inclusion, Class, Age, and Geography.

- This tool will track our engagement with new voices and new subject matter that aligns with our JEDI goals.
- We will track the ASC Board, committees, speakers, and training event representation against Census data to see how our work aligns and reflects the country and our JEDI goals.

Holding ourselves and our membership accountable to being actively anti-racist and inclusive every day. Ensure that our published Guiding Principles are updated and reflective of our desire to being anti-racist and inclusive.

Seek out and attend conferences/trainings/presentations that are specific to equity and inclusion.

Establish within ASC and/or broader national service a racial injustice or DEI type workgroup to engage more voices in action steps. Also, invite feedback and reflection on progress.

Anti-Racism


Goal: ASC will adopt practices of a Learning Organization and work to eliminate white supremacy culture and model this for the national service network through training and technical assistance.



ASC will embed anti-racist training/activities in our work — utilizing appropriate descriptors in written and verbal communications, annual Board training, annual staff training, workshops at regional conferences, sessions at annual ASC Leadership Convening.

Develop agreed-upon statements, quotes, and language ASC can use and adapt quickly to communicate publicly regarding our belief in anti-racism and that Black Lives Matter.

- Posting our anti-racist message to our website or our finalized organizational statement.
- Prioritize training on anti-racism for the ASC staff and network in 2021 by facilitating additional webinar and in-person trainings on these topics.



Establish within ASC and/or broader national service a racial injustice or DEI type workgroup to engage more voices in action steps. Also, invite feedback and reflection on progress.

Share resources with commissions to assist them in listening, learning, and leading in addressing systemic racism.

Facilitate trainings (by bringing in qualified presenters) to speak on various issues related to becoming actively anti-racist in the areas of:

- Commission staff make-up
- Grantmaking practices
- AmeriCorps programs serving BIPOC communities
- Supporting AmeriCorps members that are BIPOC
- Ensuring that anti-racist training topics are woven into material presented on a variety of subject areas, and that specific tracks for learning in more depth are available at our Regional Trainings, Leadership Convening, and monthly Learning Community Calls

Create standards for anyone working with ASC as a trainer, presenter, speaker, facilitator to ensure that their verbal words, written text, and messaging is held to an anti-racist standard.

Addressing White Supremacy Culture

- Review White Supremacy Culture at Work as a staff and have a discussion about areas that may be problematic for ASC and opportunities for improvement.
- Model how we are assessing and challenging white supremacy culture by providing these opportunities and discussions as part of ASC trainings and other learning forums.



Increase Representation for Indigenous Communities

Include a recognition of tribal lands in ASC trainings (in-person and webinar) based on the geographical location of where the presenter is located or a nation-wide recognition statement.

Disability Status


Goal: ASC will work to eliminate ableism in its own practices and model this for the national service network to ensure national service is accessible to people with disabilities.



ASC will ensure that individuals of all abilities have access to the work of ASC — ensuring accessibility of in-person events for individuals with limited mobility, including image descriptors on public-facing communications (website, newsletter, etc.), use of appropriate audio and visual resources for individuals with hearing impairments.

ASC will review its website and online presence with an accessibility expert/consultant to ensure ASC’s online materials are fully accessible to those with visual or other disabilities (screen-readers, high contrast/large font, etc.)

- Make sure all pages of our website are fully accessible.
- Make sure any posts to social media are fully accessible.
- Make sure that any distributed materials/presentations are fully accessible.



Review event agendas, planning committees, materials (programs, name tags, signs, etc.), content, spaces, and layout from the lens of accessibility and equity to ensure all people will be able and comfortable to participate.

- Dedicate extra time and financial resources for this upfront (build into conference committee work plans, set aside money for reasonable accommodations, leave extra time but start thinking about this early in event planning mode, etc.)
- Make accessibility a top priority in venue searches and RFPs.

Professional Development and Institutional Knowledge

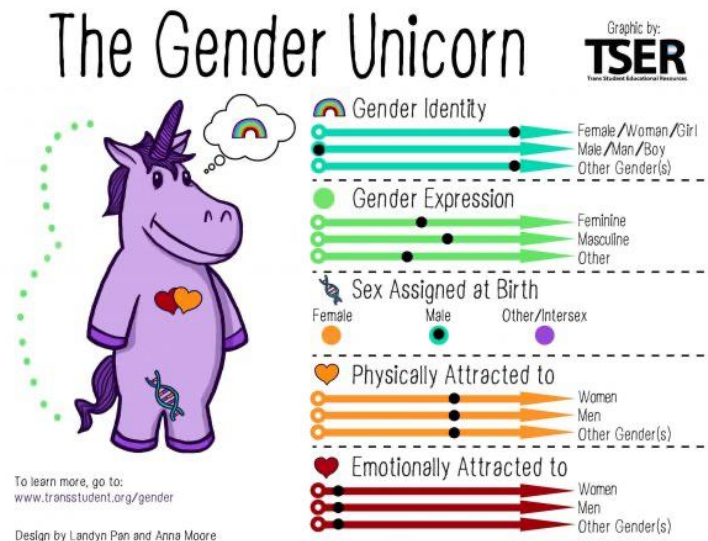
- Utilize ASC professional development to access training in one area related to disability inclusion per year and provide information to ASC on how to implement tools that will make training, webinars, and other resources more accessible to people with disabilities.

Commit to providing better training/support around core technologies used by ASC (Basecamp, GoToMeeting, etc.) to ensure all ASC members feel able to access our resources and information, regardless of tech know-how or ability.

Create standards for anyone working with ASC as a trainer, presenter, speaker, facilitator to ensure that their verbal words, written text, and messaging is held to an anti-ableist standard.

Gender Identity and Sexual Orientation

Goal: ASC will work to create a culture welcoming for all regardless of sex, gender, orientation, or expression.



Facilitate trainings for commissions and programs especially focusing on challenges for AmeriCorps members and volunteers that identify as LGBTQIA+.

Create standards for anyone working with ASC as a trainer, presenter, speaker, facilitator to ensure that their verbal words, written text, and messaging is held to an anti-gendered standard.

ASC will create an inclusive environment for individuals of all sexual orientations and gender identities — use of pronouns in e-mail signatures and videoconferencing, use of pronouns in event registrations, identifying gender-neutral restroom facilities at events, include networking exercises and/or seat assignments at in-person events, encourage new commission staff and commissioners to engage in our committee/working group work

Socioeconomic Status

Goal: ASC will work to eliminate socio-economic barriers for individuals and groups of people that historically have challenges accessing or participating in national service and volunteering to increase equitable access to national service and volunteerism.



Facilitate trainings for commissions and programs especially focusing on 1) recommendations for working in partnership with communities with limited access to economic mobility, and 2) strategies to support AmeriCorps members and volunteers with access to economic mobility

ASC will pursue policies that ensure that national service opportunities are not available exclusively to well-resourced organizations or individuals with economic privilege — provide training to state commissions regarding grantmaking/capacity-building practices, pursue/advocate policy changes to increase the living allowance and other benefits for members, assist commissions/programs in identifying solutions for recruiting members from marginalized communities.

Age

Goal: ASC will work to create a culture welcoming for all regardless of age especially focusing on opportunities to engage young people and older adults.

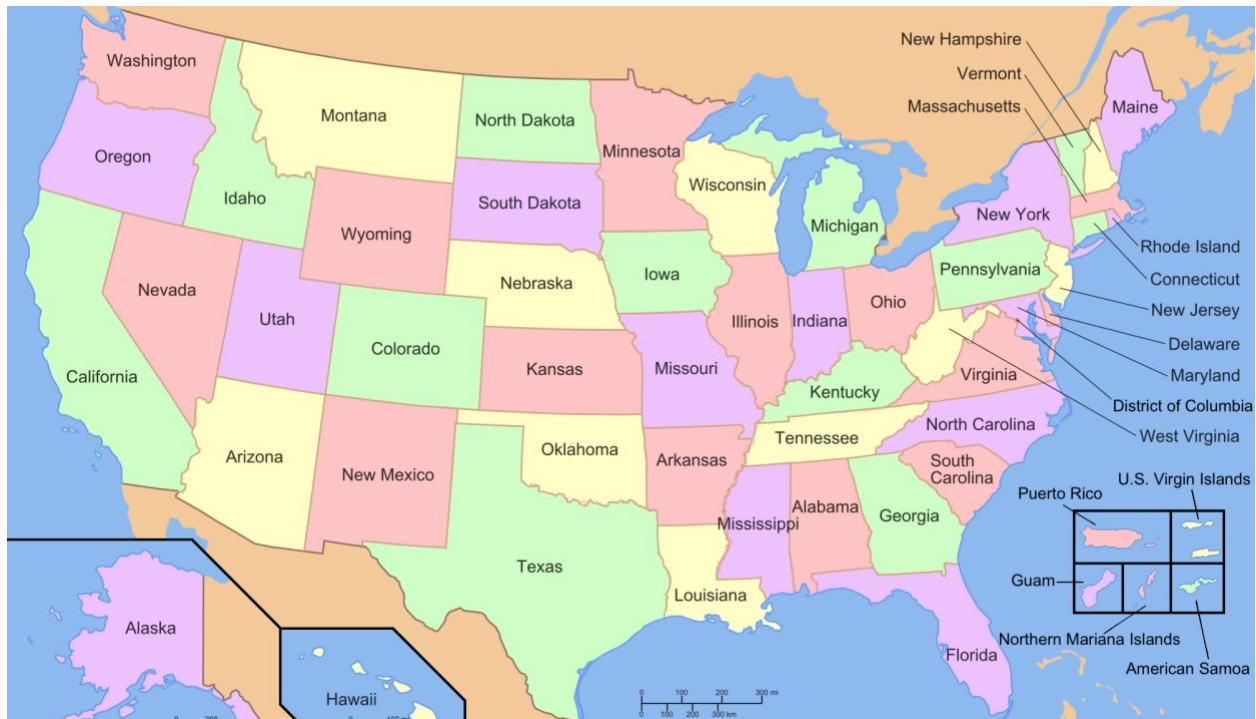


Facilitate trainings for commissions and programs especially focusing on the value of engaging different generations in service, especially focused on youth, young adults, and older adults.

ASC will create an environment where age does not equal expertise or the lack thereof, and that all generational perspectives are included — advance current ASC talent pipeline work, include networking exercises and/or seat assignments at in-person events, encourage new commission staff and commissioners to engage in our committee/working group work, ensure that presenters for webinars and in-person sessions are representative.

Geographic Location

Goal: ASC will work to create a culture that recognizes the strengths in each of our member states and territories and does not place greater value in one locality over others.




Facilitate trainings (by bringing in qualified presenters) to speak on various issues related to becoming actively inclusive in the areas of:

- Differences and/or challenges to operating an AmeriCorps program in different geographic settings

Being aware of language when referring to our network as just “states” so as not to be exclusive to Puerto Rico, DC, and Guam.

ASC will ensure that its work reflects the perspective of all regions of the country as well as rural, suburban, and urban communities — include networking exercises and/or seat assignments at in-person events, encourage new commission staff and commissioners to



engage in our committee/working group work, ensure that presenters for webinars and in-person sessions are representative.