



Northwest Area
Foundation

Reducing Poverty. Building Prosperity.

DEI Progress Report

AUGUST 2021



DEI Progress Report

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This DEI Progress Report is an internal document that captures the first four and a half years of NWAFF's intentional DEI journey, from 2017 to mid-2021. It tells the story of how we started, what some of the major milestones have been, where we are now, and what should inform our DEI journey going forward. It also provides institutional memory for new staff and Board members. The report captures significant progress of the Foundation's DEI journey and the opportunity ahead of us if we are willing to go further and deeper.

The report is divided into four parts and includes a number of attachments.

Part 1: How We Got Started

Part 2: Overview of Our DEI Journey—Major milestones from 2017 to 2021

Part 3: Current Assessment—Where are we now?

Part 4: Learnings to Affirm for the Future

Attachments:

- DEI Timeline—List of Activities
- Staff-generated DEI Progress Reflections Jamboard
- DEI Multiyear Plan Progress Form (as of June 2021)

My hope is that the DEI Progress Report makes us feel proud of what we've accomplished and that it energizes all of us to continue on our intentional DEI journey because our grantees and priority communities are counting on us. In addition, the report provides tangible examples for us to influence and bring others along within the broader philanthropic field.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Margie Andreason".

Margie Andreason
DEI Manager
August 2021

PART 1: HOW WE GOT STARTED

Before Our DEI Journey

Many activities created fertile ground for the Foundation's *intentional* and *organization-wide* DEI journey to sprout from in 2017:

- **Mission Investing:** In 2004, NWAf began using mission investing to address persistent gaps in capital to seed and grow businesses in our region. In 2014, NWAf expanded its commitment to mission investing, dedicating another \$10 million to program-related investments (PRIs) and an additional \$30 million to mission-related investments (MRIs). This \$40 million represented roughly 10 percent of our assets. Activating this portion of the asset base in pursuit of mission was seen as an important complement to NWAf's grantmaking.
- **Indian Country Commitment:** In 2012, the Foundation made an explicit public funding commitment that 40 percent of our grantmaking and PRIs would go to Native-led organizations.
- **Vendor Policy:** In 2013, the Foundation first created a mission-driven vendor policy. This helped spur conversations about DEI in NWAf's spending power. We've revised it twice since then (in 2017 and 2019), sharpening its focus on NWAf's priority communities.
- **Theory of Change and Strategy Map:** In 2015 and 2016, the Foundation became more intentional about articulating and acting upon the intersection of race and poverty that lies at the heart of NWAf's mission. The Theory of Change and the Strategy Map reflect this sharper focus by identifying our "**priority communities**" (Native Americans, people of color, immigrants, refugees, and people in rural communities).
- **Learning Summits:** Prior to when our learning summits focused on our DEI journey, we instituted the practice of taking a full day each year to focus on organizational culture and engage in staff-wide learning on key aspects of the Foundation.

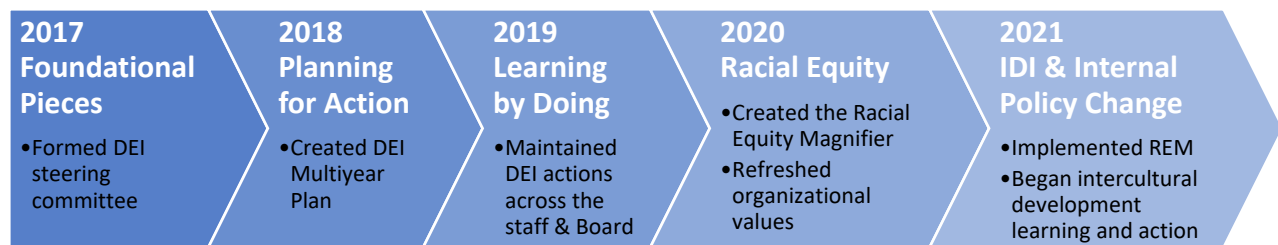
These activities pushed us in the direction of being more mission aligned and DEI focused before it became an *organization-wide* effort. It would have been much more difficult to have staff and Board buy-in for an internal DEI journey without having started DEI activities in pockets across the Foundation first.

The Impetus—How We Began Our DEI Journey

The spark for NWAf's DEI journey began with a Board-level conversation, but it was staff of color who led the charge in ensuring DEI was an organization-wide commitment. In the August 2016 Board meeting, we had a session on new messaging materials about the Foundation's grantmaking approach. The materials included wealth-disparity statistics. One statistic stood out: "65% is how much Native, Black, Latino, and Southeast Asian families earn in comparison to the average for U.S. families." This statistic raised questions and initiated a debate among the

Board about how to communicate root issues NWAF’s funding aimed to address. It was clear to staff that Board members were not all on the same page about racial disparities and their connection to NWAF’s mission and approach. After the meeting, staff of color came together multiple times and brought forward the idea of creating a racial equity statement to clarify the organization’s understanding and commitment. Staff of color expertise was critical in drafting the statement and engaging in conversation with our president and CEO, who supported the idea. It was the first time there was a significant number of staff interested in doing sustained work together to ensure that the values of diversity, equity, and inclusion permeate our organization. We understood then that working on this and learning together would help us be more effective and advance our mission more powerfully; but it was not going to be simple and would take all of us going on this journey together. At the November 2016 Board meeting, staff presented the Foundation’s racial equity statement. The Board reviewed it and supported the clarity it provided. They also approved the following year’s strategic goals, which included DEI for the first time: “Initiate an organization-wide project to advance diversity, equity, and inclusion.” This was key because it provided top-level support to make sure our DEI journey included Board and staff members across the organization.

PART 2: OVERVIEW OF OUR DEI JOURNEY—MAJOR MILESTONES FROM 2017 TO 2021



Year 1 (2017): We focused our major activities on foundational pieces to bring staff and Board together around DEI. We also built infrastructure to lead DEI by creating a staff DEI Manager role, along with an internal DEI steering committee that met monthly. In addition, based on DEI field research, we learned it was important for an organization’s president and CEO to be involved in leading DEI from the very beginning. So, our president and CEO agreed to serve on the DEI steering committee along with a cross-functional group of staff. We also produced a DEI purpose statement to guide us going forward. NWAF began using its voice more forcefully, beginning with our president and CEO’s blog condemning the then-US president’s assertion of moral equivalence between white supremacists and anti-racist protesters in Charlottesville, Virginia. Our internal culture was not yet conducive to talking about race or other DEI topics across staff. If these conversations took place, they were one-on-one or in smaller groups. We also did not have a culture where staff volunteered to share personal experiences related to their identities. Staff and Board fell across a spectrum in both their understanding of and willingness to engage in DEI.

Year 2 (2018): We created staff and Board buy-in for the DEI journey through many actions. We began by creating DEI definitions that gave us language and helped to bring internal stakeholders along. The Investment Committee led the way in Board engagement by taking on the task of understanding the diversity of the Foundation's fund managers. We engaged a prominent consultant (Frontline Solutions, a Black-led and -owned firm) to help lead us through the process of creating a DEI Multiyear Plan. Staff's engagement in generating tangible actions within the next three years fostered buy-in for the DEI journey and clarified that every single person could advance DEI regardless of position. We solidified that the DEI journey was organization-wide. Other major milestones included hosting our first DEI learning summit for staff and launching our public DEI webpage. Our internal culture started to open up in conversations about DEI, but explicit conversations about racism were challenging. These conversations were not just happening in small groups though; we started to have more open dialogue in all staff and Board spaces. There was energy to engage and learn together.

Year 3 (2019): We started to implement our DEI Multiyear Plan, including tangible actions by both the Board and staff. We learned and built more buy-in for the DEI journey by working together on the recommendations. This was a noteworthy year for the Board's engagement: each Board committee pledged to take action around DEI. The Board updated its composition matrix and Board handbook, developed an investment diversity dashboard, and added DEI-specific questions into its annual Board self-assessment. It was also the first time we documented the Board recruitment process and highlighted ways DEI was embedded into the process. At the staff level, we built DEI into our annual budgeting process and had our first staff-wide racial equity workshop, diving deep into understanding historical and structural racism. The DEI Manager also began speaking more publicly about our DEI journey. Our internal culture shifted to being more comfortable with sharing personal experiences and histories with each other. Both staff and Board members started to share more vulnerable reflections with their colleagues, and we started getting more comfortable talking about racism.

Year 4 (2020): We made significant DEI changes and reinforced a strong focus on racial equity because of the COVID-19 pandemic and racial reckoning sparked by the murder of George Floyd in Minneapolis. The Board had its first racial equity workshop and updated Board committee charters with a DEI lens. Publicly, we put out more statements and blog posts in response to racial injustice. We more intentionally carved out space for staff to process and learn from what was happening around us. We were galvanized by current events to do the heavy lifting of drafting the Racial Equity Magnifier (REM), a racial equity decision-making tool. We successfully tested an early version with staff in the fall and made several improvements as a result. We also made notable DEI changes to our hiring process, including the removal of a long-standing practice of using personality assessments in hiring decisions. We made another significant milestone by approving NAAF's refreshed values, which now deeply connect to DEI. Toward the end of the year, we made the decision to engage both staff and Board on intercultural development learning to ensure our organizational culture was helping us advance racial equity. Our internal culture was open to talking about race explicitly; it became a common topic in staff and Board spaces. There was also growing awareness that healing should be embedded into NAAF's DEI and racial equity efforts.

Year 5 (First half of 2021): We continued to make substantial changes to our practices and policies as a result of our racial equity and organizational culture focus. We finalized the REM in February and started using it at the departmental level. As a direct result of using the REM, we changed our holiday policy to align with DEI. Both staff and Board continue to dive deeper into intercultural development learning. The Board kicked off its engagement with the [Intercultural Development Inventory \(IDI\)](#) in February and had multiple conversations about Board culture. Intercultural development learning at the staff-level includes all staff learning sessions on conflict styles and power. We also launched cross-functional action learning teams to deconstruct and make equity recommendations to our HR leave policies, DEI Multiyear Plan goals, and the grantmaking strategic refinement.

PART 3: CURRENT ASSESSMENT—WHERE ARE WE NOW?

We can be proud of all we've accomplished in the last four and a half years. Yet there is much more we can improve and build upon going forward.

Key aspects of the Foundation's current state we can be proud of:

- **We have a more open culture.** Our internal culture has shifted considerably in the past four and a half years. We have spent time learning together and about each other, visioning together about DEI actions, and then working together to advance DEI. Overall, as an organization we are more compassionate, open-minded, and willing to empathize and see different worldviews. We have built the muscle and increased staff and Board knowledge to talk more openly and in more vulnerable ways.
- **We have more commitment across staff and Board to work toward racial justice.** We have a more unified commitment to working toward racial justice. And we are starting to change the status quo. There is a desire across both staff and Board to make significant racial equity changes to our policies, practices, and culture.
- **We have the tools:** The creation of the REM and deep learning about intercultural development through the IDI are available to us and we've already seen how both can push our thinking and actions.

"We've went from avoiding talking about race and equity, aside from our work with Native American communities, to deeply integrating discussions, focus and learning on race, equity, and more."

– NWAF staff

[Source: Staff DEI Progress Reflections Jamboard]

"I believe we strongly have the will to move forward—now is the time to build our skills and use the many tools we've been exposed to. Exciting time."

– NWAF staff

[Source: Staff DEI Progress Reflections Jamboard]

- **We have a growing DEI reputation externally.** The Foundation has taken stronger public stances against racial injustice, which has been noticed by our grantees and peers. We have increased the number of speaking engagements, blog posts, and sharing of DEI resources across the philanthropic

sector. As a result, NWAFF is seen as a leader in advancing DEI for foundations.

Key aspects of the Foundation’s current state we can improve upon:

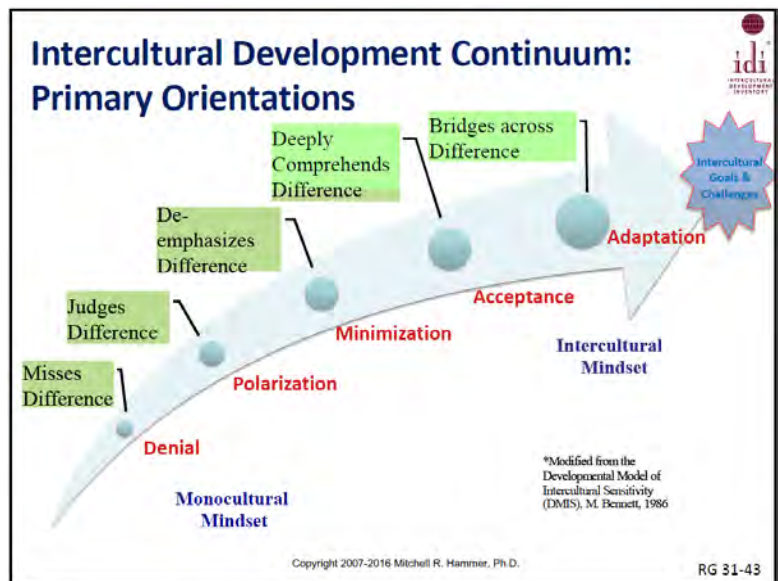
- **We need to create a stronger container for racial equity.** The Executive Team (ET) has a specific role in influencing the culture of the Foundation and holds top-level decision-making authority. The ET is accountable for advancing the racial equity work of the Foundation so that this work can rise to impact change. To become a strong “container,” the ET must do continual learning for action around racial equity and demonstrate: 1) shared understanding of what we mean by racial equity, 2) clarity on what success in advancing racial equity looks like within the organization, 3) skill and will to partner with the DEI steering committee and bring all staff along, and 4) commitment to collaborative discussions that impact racial equity.

- **We are in *Minimization*.** The recent [IDI assessment](#) provided the Foundation with a starting point—one that reflects where we *think* we are and where we *really* are. Our organization-wide results indicate we are in *Minimization* but perceive ourselves to be in *Acceptance*.

Individual Impact: *Minimization* characteristics include: Minimizing differences—when

interacting with people who are culturally different, most members of the staff or Board are likely to respond by over emphasizing assumed areas of cultural commonality and may be uncomfortable with confronting stark underlying cultural differences due to either a lack of cultural self-awareness and/or as a “go along to get along” strategy. As a result, we might be likely to miss significant cultural differences that, if noticed and understood, could lead to more culturally responsive and adaptive approaches. Individuals tend to authentically care about diversity, equity, and inclusion and have good intent. However, the developmental challenge is that individuals tend to project their own cultural lens and assumptions on others, often without knowing they are doing so, assuming harmony and unity rather creating shared meaning through interaction.

Organizational Impact: *Minimization* is manifested through: overemphasis on use of positional power; hiring for difference yet onboarding for similarity due to emphasis on comfort and fit with dominant culture; pressure to assimilate to the dominant culture; implicit bias that contributes to micro-aggressions; conflict avoidance; organizational processes designed from the perspective of, and to support, current organizational



culture; and the notion that we “want change without changing anything about ourselves.”

- **We have a lot more learning to do and action to take.** Our DEI tools help us see now what we might have missed before about racial equity. With growing awareness, we increasingly realize how great the task is to do something about it. The initial IDI conversations in the action learning teams have started our practice of deconstructing an issue or policy. It is helping us scratch the surface of what we still have to learn across all staff. There continues to be a healthy tension between being able to *see and name* a challenge with *taking tangible action* to address the challenge. We need to continue to take the time to have longer conversations about racial concepts and individual perceptions that move us to take action.



PART 4: LEARNINGS TO AFFIRM FOR THE FUTURE

We have learned much in the past four and a half years, but we also recognize that DEI will be an area for continuous learning. The following are the top three learnings to affirm for the future as we consider the next phase of NWAf’s DEI journey:

- 1) **Organization-wide support and being intentional about DEI is critical.** We would not be where we are today without the staff-wide and Board-wide support for DEI. The many ways we were intentional in involving everyone and at multiple levels (individual, teams, departments, staff, Board committees, full Board) from the beginning was important. It also took intentionality to create the infrastructure, capacity, discussions, learnings, and tools that have helped us accomplish so much.
- 2) **Organizational culture is critical to make significant DEI changes.** The progress the Foundation has made around culture significantly impacts our DEI efforts and where we want to go. We need to delve into deeper conversations and encourage more sharing of individual histories and experiences across the Board and staff members. Their greater awareness and comfort level with healing will help us acknowledge more parts of our humanness, beyond our job duties.

“We have made great progress, integrating [DEI] across the organization, learning along the way. Still a long way to go, but I appreciate the thoughtful deliberate planning, respect, and patience. Multiple year plan is key.”

– NWAf staff

[Source: Staff DEI Progress Reflections Jamboard]

The IDI reflects where we are individually and organizationally and can help us guide our future growth/activities to further create an organizational culture conducive to advancing

racial equity. The primary developmental learning task is to increase cultural self-awareness. For dominant culture, this includes managing feelings of guilt, emotional discomfort, dissonance, and anxiety in dealing head-on with issues concerning racism and other forms of oppression. For non-dominant culture, this includes regrounding in your own identity and cultural self-awareness.

- 3) **Organizational change requires us to deconstruct, take action, and keep practicing.** We need spaces to question, reflect, and deconstruct assumptions, beliefs, worldviews, and history. It is not enough for staff and the Board to just be aware of what needs to change; it's critical to take the next step and use the knowledge to change practices, policies, procedures, and how we communicate internally with each other and externally with our grantees and peers. Practicing DEI conversation and using DEI tools have been effective for NAAF. We learn, build confidence, and discover new ways to deepen DEI each time we practice what we have learned.

CLOSING

Thank you to all the staff and Board members who have been a part of our DEI journey in the last four and half years. This report shows the remarkable progress we have been able to accomplish together. One of the most meaningful changes I have witnessed as the DEI Manager has been seeing individuals grow and strengthening our relationships to one another. I would like to honor all the ways you have shared, learned, leaned into discomfort, and tried new ways of being. Our learning and actions have led us to this pivotal moment for the Foundation.

Recent events have generated widespread recognition of the urgency to act and increased our motivation to continue to build off the momentum of our DEI journey. Internally, it will require intentionality and continued openness to learn and change. The good news is that we have the willingness, insight, and experience across our staff and Board. Externally, we have amazing grantees and community partners leading change that we can support and learn from. Lastly, we are poised to share our internal learnings with peer funders, in turn bringing others along as we lead the change we want to see both for ourselves at NAAF and across the greater philanthropic field.

Key DEI-related documents referenced in this report that can be provided upon request:

- Racial Equity Statement
- DEI Purpose Statement
- DEI Definitions
- DEI Multiyear Plan
- DEI Multiyear Plan Tracking Progress Report
- Racial Equity Magnifier
- Racial Equity Magnifier Rollout Plan
- IDI Consultant Recommendations Memo
- IDI Results and Resources
- Preferred Vendor Policy
- Vendor Policy Progress Report
- DEI Spending Report



List of DEI Activities (2017-2021)

This is not meant to be an exhaustive list but a way to capture DEI activities done with **staff**, **Board**, and **externally** in chronological order.

2017

- Updated Preferred Vendor Policy (created in 2013) to better align with priority communities
- First time DEI is a stated strategic goal – “Initiate an organization-wide project to advance diversity, equity and inclusion”
- Created new Diversity Equity Inclusion Manager staff position (Feb)
- President/CEO adds NWAFF’s name to [GCIR’s](#) joint foundation statement on immigration executive orders
- Internal DEI Steering Committee is formed (March). DEI Manager planned and facilitated 9 DEI steering committee meetings.
- DEI Manager contributed to [GEO’s](#) publication “Exploring Microcultures and Why They Matter”
- Completed initial Baseline of Current DEI Practices
- Changed wording of evacuation policy from “intruder and undesirable individuals” to just “intruder”
- DEI Manager completes DEI research – conducted over 35 one-on-one conversations, workshops, webinars, and conferences related to DEI to inform our work and understand the larger DEI field (Aug)
- First blog post that takes a more DEI-specific stance “Our CEO Speaks up on Charlottesville” (Sept)
- All Staff DEI Kick-off session (Sept)
- Internal DEI folder on Public created (Sept)
- President/CEO joins CEO peer learning cohort on DEI affiliated with [Philanthropy Northwest](#)
- Full Board DEI Kick-off session w/ speaker Trista Harris (then president of MN Council on Foundations) to provide field-wide perspective on DEI
- First time Board starts to receive DEI memo in mtg materials
- DEI Manager created staff space to process Philando Castile verdict
- DEI Manager represented NWAFF at community events (AALF, PFund, CAAL)
- DEI Manager created initial staff and Board engagement plan, DEI work plan & DEI goals.
- DEI Manager conducts 1:1 DEI conversations with all staff (Nov)
- Initiated new demographic data collection of communities served
- **Created DEI Purpose Statement (Nov)**
- Board approves DEI strategic goals for 2018
- First time embedding DEI into new staff hires orientation (Alli & Matt were brought on)
- DEI Manager hosted listening sessions for all staff to learn more DEI issues (e.g. Overcoming Racism conference, Prosperity Now’s event)
- Launched RFP for DEI consultant & created scoring methodology for selection process (Dec)

2018

- All Staff Learning Summit focuses on DEI for the first time and includes [Penumbra Theatre](#) Company’s RACE workshop (Jan)
- Changed Small Gift Policy to align with DEI
- Engagement with DEI consultants, [Frontline Solutions](#) begins (March)
- President/CEO blog post for BoardSource on [Foundation Board Diversity](#)
- First time participating in DAPP (Diversity Among Philanthropic Professionals) survey

- Staff DEI self-assessment launched (May)
- Added Salesforce feature to better capture diverse vendors
- Staff DEI one-on-ones with Frontline Solutions (June)
- Investment Committee's initial conversation about diverse fund managers (June)
- Frontline Solutions administers Board DEI Survey (June)
- Created new Administrative Support Assistant position in partnership with [Kaposia](#)
- Updated Guidestar profile with staff & Board demographic
- Added NWAFF's name to GCIR's joint foundation statement on family separations and detention (June)
- DEI Landing Page on NWAFF website launched (June)
- DEI blog post by President/CEO "From Our CEO, Kevin Walker: Why DEI?" (June)
- First July Learning Summit ever – focuses on DEI with Frontline Solutions
- Initiated new demographic data collection of grantee leadership (July)
- Board learning from DEI journey of peer funder, Meyer Memorial Trust (Aug)
- **Created DEI Multiyear Plan (28 recommendations)**
- DEI blog post by Director of Organizational Effectiveness and Talent (All) "Insights on Our Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Journey 3: Complexity Is a Synonym for Richness and Growth in Our DEI Journey" (Sept)
- Board session led by Frontline Solutions on their role in advancing DEI for the Foundation. Reviewed goals in DEI Multiyear Plan & examples from other boards (Nov)
- All Gender Restroom permanent signage is installed (Dec)
- DEI blog post by Program Officer (John) "Insights on Our Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Journey 3: Complexity Is a Synonym for Richness and Growth in Our DEI Journey" (Dec)

2019

- DEI Manager & Program Officer partner on DEI blog article for the EITC (Earned Income Tax Credit) Funders Network (Jan)
- DEI Manager and Investment Director partnered to create a survey for investment managers
- Investment Committee: Developed an investment diversity dashboard. The results showed a portfolio significantly more diverse than the investment industry, with 20% of the portfolio having diverse ownership.
- Audit Committee: Initial brainstorm of a variety of ways the Audit Committee could embed DEI into its role (Feb)
- Launched internship in partnership with the University of St Thomas Dougherty Family College which focuses on students of color who come from low-income households. Our first intern starts at NWAFF.
- Created staff DEI learning opportunities list
- First time DEI is embedded into the new Board orientation process, conversation, & materials
- First large vendor decision (for a new Custodian Bank) where DEI is embedded into the process (RFP, interview questions, decision-making). DEI Manger part of RFP & interview & decision-making process.
- All Staff January Learning Summit focused on Worldview w/ [Elemental Partners](#)
- DEI Manager co-hosts and speaks at [MCF](#) "Equity in Action" Convening (June)
- DEI blog post by President/CEO "Owning My Whiteness" (July)
- DEI blog post by first intern "Insights on Our Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Journey 4: DEI Isn't an Abstract Concept, It's Lived Experience" (July)

- All Staff DEI Learning Summit focused on Racial Equity w/ [Elemental Partners](#) & [MP Associates](#)
- N&G Committee: Updated Board Matrix with DEI lens
- N&G Committee: Updated Board Handbook with DEI lens
- N&G Committee: Added DEI-specific questions to annual Board Self-Assessment
- N&G Committee: 1st time Board recruitment process is documented -includes ways DEI is embedded into the process (e.g. DEI interview questions)
- Audit Committee: Staff presented a Draft DEI Workplan for discussion which identified 3 potential areas of focus: a) Governance, b) Know Your Vendor/Partner, and c) Learning. And several potential action items were presented under each focus area for group contemplation and feedback.
- IT Manager facilitated book discussion for TAG members on the book, *Automating Inequality*
- All staff encouraged to add pronouns to bios on NWAf website & to email signature
- Finalized smudging guide in collaboration with [Native Governance Center](#)
- DEI Manager speaks on GEO webinar “Internal Culture, External Change: Lessons from Two Foundations” (Sept)
- GEO creates blog post lifting up DEI Manager’s comments from the webinar (Sept)
- DEI Manager speaks on panel for an Equity Summit co-hosted by St Paul Chamber of Commerce & Wells Fargo (Oct)
- DEI Manager blog post “Insights on Our DEI Journey: How Self-Healing Can Be a Powerful First Step” (Oct)
- DEI Manager speaks to MRAC’s (Metropolitan Regional Arts Council) board about NWAf’s DEI journey (Oct)
- Operations Director and accounting staff drive key improvements to the preferred vendor policy, forms and processes.
- New DEI Steering Committee is formed
- Created an internal task force to create DEI evaluation methodology to track progress & learnings from implementing the DEI Multiyear Plan
- Changed Inclement Weather Policy to include a DEI perspective
- [PEAK Grantmaking features NWAf and our DEI Journey](#) (Nov)
- Board activity where Board members shared an artifact and shared powerful stories, as well as learned about Native American history from visiting the Mia art exhibit (Aug)
- Audit Committee: Staff presented a redlined version of the Audit Committee Charter which incorporated the concepts of diversity, equity, and inclusion throughout the Committee’s work as outlined in the Charter for recommended approval by the Board (Nov)
- Board hears presentation from intern on her experience and impact (Nov)
- N&G Committee: Created Board Composition Matrix for each committee to intentionally look at diversity to inform following year’s committee assignments
- Board learning session on intergenerational trauma from an indigenous perspective (Nov)
- Board approves a Board DEI Learning Plan
- Board approves “that the Executive Committee of the NWAf Board shall have responsibility for monitoring the progress of the Foundation’s DEI initiative” (Nov)
- Launched DEI page in BoardEffect
- Vendor Policy: Office Director & DEI Manager conducted 8 mtgs across the functional areas to discuss preferred vendors and ideas for improvement at the functional team-level.

- DEI Manager planned and facilitated 7 DEI steering committee meetings. DEISC mtgs moved to every other month starting this year.
- Investment Director (Amy) co-hosted and spoke on CFA Society Minnesota event focused on inclusion in the investment industry (May)
- DEI Manager speaks at sold-out CHANGE Philanthropy's Unity Summit on "Directing DEI: Structuring organizational change in foundations" alongside speakers from Raikes Foundation, Meyer Foundation, and [NCRP](#) (Nov)
- DEI blog post by Program Officer (John)
- Instituted practice of tracking DEI speaking engagements & requests
- First time adding DEI-specific customized questions to the fourth time implementing the Grantee Perception Report (GPR) which the Center for Effective Philanthropy (CEP) facilitated.
- Results from DEI-specific CEP survey of 2019 grantees (on a scale of 1 (Not at all) to 7 (to a great extent): 1) Rated 6.66 to the question, "To what extent does the Foundation convey its commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion?"; 2) Rated 6.86 to the question, "How important is it to you that the Foundation is committed to diversity, equity, and inclusion?"
- [Annual report for 2019](#) focuses on DEI

2020

- All staff session focused on celebrating DEI "wins" & sharing learnings from DEI work in 2019
- January learning summit focused on refreshing NWF's organizational values and included discussion of DEI values.
- President/CEO signs onto public statement by PACE: Philanthropy for Active Civic Engagement regarding attack on U.S. Capitol (Jan)
- Board Racial Equity Workshop w/ [Catch Your Dream Consulting](#) (Feb)
- Board member (Carter) is interviewed by news site *Finance & Commerce* and voices how the Foundation is considering its investments & grantmaking as a means for change (Feb)
- Audit Committee (Special Meeting): Representatives from our two key external partners, CliftonLarsonAllen (Audit/Tax) and Faegre Drinker (Legal Counsel), presented information relative to the state of diversity within their own industry, the actions taken and progress made in increasing diversity within their own firms, and the actions currently planned to continue to make positive progress in this area. This was a critical part of the Committee's work in more fully integrating DEI within its own work by knowing our partners (Feb)
- Vendor Policy: First time we collected and included expenses reported in Expensify, to go along with those in Great Plains, in the vendor policy analysis. 2020 becomes our benchmark for future years.
- Vendor Policy: Improved vendor data in response to previous staff feedback - Revised the vendor form and created a workflow for more clarity, Added more vendor data and attached completed forms in Salesforce, & added a '3rd party aligned' field in Expensify to capture those preferred vendors paid by credit card and personal business-related expenses
- Participated in DAPP (Diversity Among Philanthropic Professionals) survey again (March)
- President/CEO signs onto AAPIP Statement on COVID-19 and anti-Asian racism (March)
- DEI Manager speaks on MCF webinar on how to respond to COVID-19 with DEI in mind (March)
- Book circle for staff that identify as white to work through the book, [Me and White Supremacy](#) (May-June)
- All staff DEI session that invited members of the book circle share learnings with the whole staff

- Multiple staff shared their personal stories at all staff meetings
- Created a subteam of the DEI steering committee to focus on creating the Racial Equity Magnifier and had 19 mtgs focused solely on this project.
- DEI Manager hosts POC staff optional quarterly gathering (April)
- [DEI public statement “Justice for George Floyd and Black Communities”](#)
- Second intern from University of St Thomas Dougherty Family College starts with us.
- Streamlined grants and reporting process in response to crises of 2020
- Reallocated operating expenses to the grants budget for more grantmaking to our priority communities
- **Audit Committee:** In reflecting upon the abysmal state of diversity in the accounting/audit fields, staff and CliftonLarsonAllen discussed several potential action steps that could be undertaken if supported by the Committee. While NWAF cannot control the resources of another firm, the Committee agreed to have staff move forward in working with CLA on all of these requests and CLA shared their willingness to do so. (August)
- Investment Committee drafts DEI Advocacy plan
- All Board charters are updated with DEI commitment
- New audit principle – is a person of color
- **N&G Committee:** First time documenting Trustee recruitment process, includes ways DEI is embedded into process.
- [Office Director presents to FFOG \(Foundation Financial Officers Group\) on Preferred Vendor Policy \(July\)](#)
- **Executive Committee:** Agreed to support the full Board’s engagement in the Foundation’s IDI process (July)
- DEI Manager hosts POC staff optional quarterly gathering (July)
- Significant changes to recruitment processes – discontinued long-time practice of personality assessments, changes to job description, partnering with diverse search firms, info sessions, posting locations,
- Increased employee matching grant “allowance” in response to crises
- First year we made Juneteenth a staff holiday
- DEI Manager hosted optional all staff learning session on the history and significance of Juneteenth
- [President/CEO adds NWAF to the Philanthropic Collective to Combat Anti-Blackness & Realize Racial Justice \(July\)](#)
- [DEI blog post by President/CEO “Racial Inequity Is at the Root of This Year’s Crises. Our Response Is Immediate, and Long Term” \(Aug\)](#)
- Identified a number of new BIPOC-owned vendors and started to support
- Created internal team to support intercultural development journey
- Staff kicked-off our intercultural development work with taking the IDI. The October DEI Learning Summit focused on the IDI and was facilitated by [Synergistic Transformations](#) & [Zemsky and Associates Consulting](#)
- DEI Manager hosts POC staff optional quarterly gathering (Oct)
- Board member (Carter) blog post, “A Discussion with Board Member Dr. Duane Carter on Racial Equity” (Oct)
- **Executive Committee:** Reviewed draft racial equity magnifier (Oct)

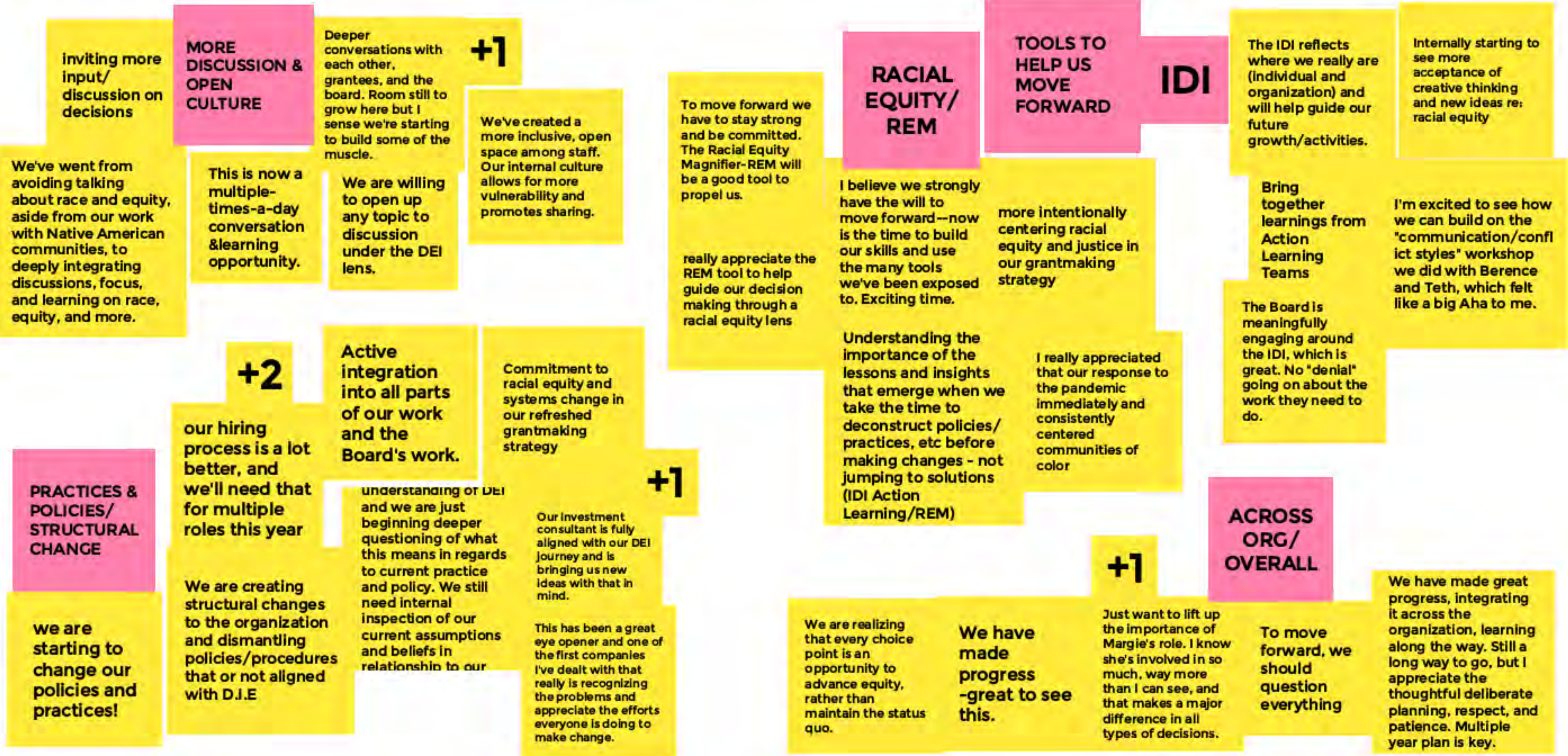
- Refreshed new values that deeply connect to DEI (Social Justice, Courage, Heart, Grantees Come First, Trust, Listen & Learn for Change) (approved at Nov Board mtg)
- Approves three new Trustees – all are Board members of color (Nov Trustees mtg)
- Audit Committee: the Committee reflected upon its DEI journey and multiple accomplishments and highlighted potential activities for 2021. Of note, CLA's (outgoing) Principal, Deirdre Hodgson, shared that, as of 2021, we will have a new, diverse Principal, we will have diverse audit staff (though not new) on the audit team, and our upcoming 2020 audit agreement with CLA has been amended to include a requirement that, should subcontractors be needed, diverse subcontractors will be sought. (Nov)
- Vendor Policy: First time we surpassed our goal of 20% of total vendor dollars spent with preferred vendors! (Note: this reflects spending with vendors paid only through Great Plains)
- Test initial draft of the Racial Equity Magnifier with all staff using the holiday policy (Oct)
- DEI Manager planned and facilitated 5 DEI steering committee meetings. DEISC mtgs moved to virtual starting in April.
- [Annual report for 2020](#) focuses on racial equity

2021

- DEI public statement "Our Response to the Attack on the US Capitol"
- All staff Learning Summit focuses on IDI and refreshed values (Jan)
- DEI Manager hosts POC staff optional Q1 gathering (Jan)
- DEI Manager & Program Officer (Christianne) co-present at MCF's annual conference session on advancing racial justice for private foundations (Feb)
- DEI blog post by Director of Organizational Effectiveness and Talent "Alli Naithani Gets Personal on Kamala Harris as Vice President" (Feb)
- DEI blog post by Program Officer (John) connecting our refreshed values to DEI "Values Are More Important Now Than Ever" (Feb)
- President/CEO agreed to sponsor CHANGE Philanthropy's 2021 Unity Summit - one of not the largest, most diverse funders conferences focused on DEI issues in philanthropy (Feb)
- Board kicked-off intercultural development work with taking the IDI (Feb)
- N&G Committee: Created visuals of the updated Board Composition matrix to better utilize the data in determining Board recruitment priorities
- **Finalized Racial Equity Magnifier as a decision-making tool (Feb)**
- All staff IDI learning session on conflict styles (March)
- DEI Blog post "Healing Through a Year of Pandemic and Racial Injustice, with Dr. Rahul Sharma" (March)
- DEI Manager and Program Officer (Jen) take the lead in creating DEI public statement, "Justice for the Families of Atlanta and the Asian American Community" (March)
- DEI public statement "Daunte Wright Should Be Alive" (April)
- DEI Manager hosts POC staff optional Q2 gathering (April)
- DEI public statement regarding the Chauvin verdict "Relief, Resolve, and Urgency" (April)
- President/CEO signs onto letter by Illuminatives to hold CNN accountable for erasure of Native peoples (May)
- Each department tested Racial Equity Magnifier (April-June)
- Made decision to move to open holiday policy in 2022

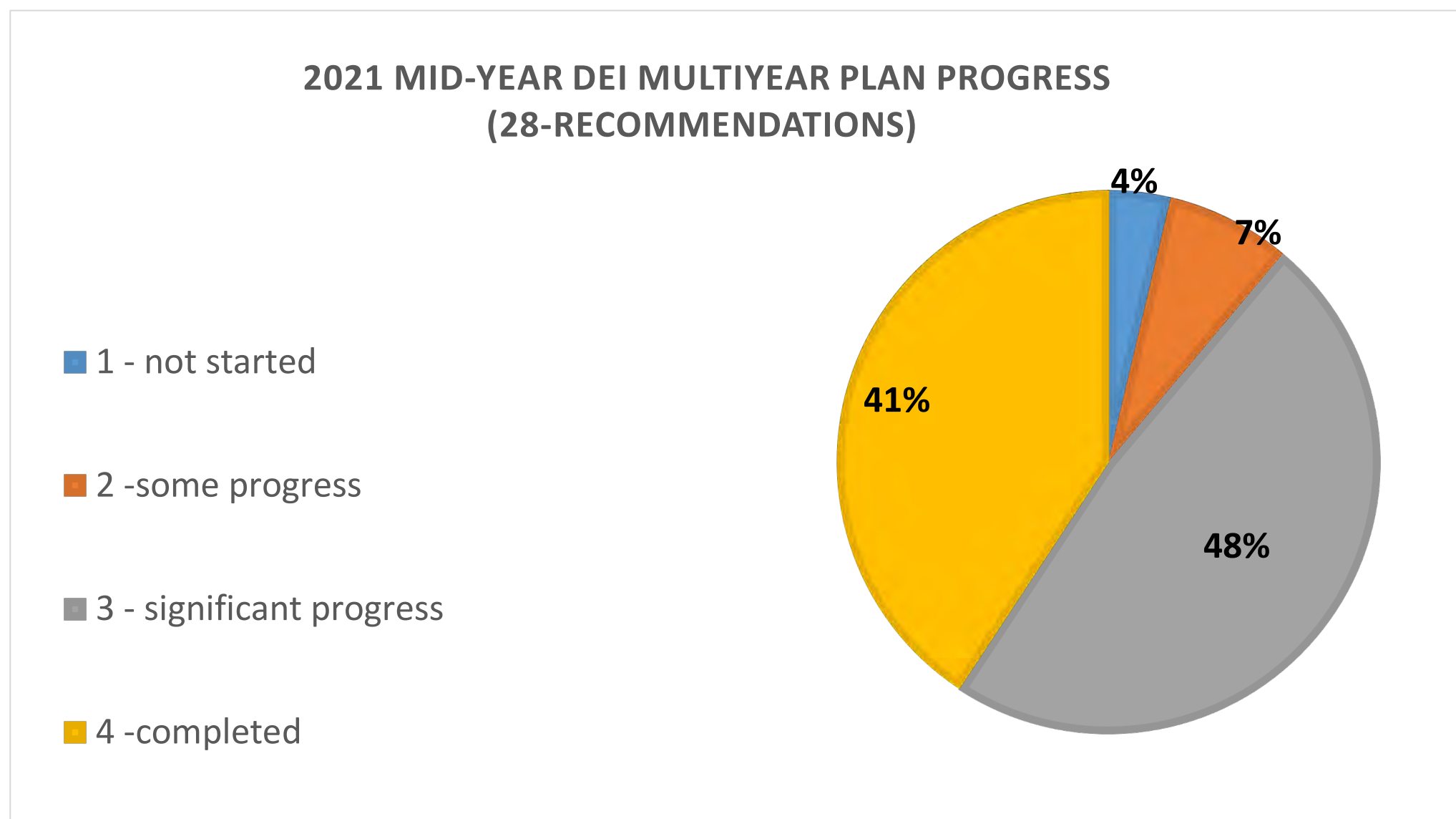
- Began intercultural development Action Learning Teams focused on 1) HR Leave Policies, 2) DEI Multiyear Plan Goals, & 3) Grantmaking Strategic Refinement
- All staff IDI learning session on power and resilience
- Executive Committee: Board leadership discussion with IDI consultants
- Board continued intercultural development learning & discussed way to support Board culture that helps advance DEI (May)
- DEI public statement “A Moment to Honor George Floyd” (May)
- DEI Manager hosted optional all staff learning session on Asian American History in Minnesotan (June)
- Second year we made Juneteenth a staff holiday
- DEI Manager and IT Manager presentation to GEO/TAG on “Beyond check-Equity: Partnering Across Silos to Operationalize Equity” (June)
- Revamped DEI webpage – greater focus on racial equity and updated resources (June)
- DEI Manager hosts POC staff optional Q3 gathering (July)

DEI Progress High-Level Reflections (2017-2021): Where are we now? Where have we been in order to move forward?



DEI MULTIYEAR PLAN TRACKING PROGRESS LEARNING FORM

About: This form is intended to help guide us on our DEI journey. The DEI Multiyear Plan was developed in Feb 2019 and this form is an opportunity to pause and reflect on what we've been able to accomplish and learn. This will enable us to strategize on the DEI Multiyear Plan recommendations in the future.



PART I: PROGRESS TRACKING (There should only be one rating provided per recommendation. This rating should be agreed upon by all the leads)

Core Function Area	Recommendation	Lead Staff	Progress Continuum				Comments to Support Rating for work in 2021 (Midway Point) Why did you give it this rating? (include evidence/observations of progress/ evidence countering progress)	Will this recommendation be done by the end of 2021? (Y/N) and please explain. Note it is completely okay if you are not expecting it to be done.
			1 We have not begun this/ This would be new for us	2 We started, have made some progress, have significantly more to do	3 Made significant progress, have some more to do	4 Completed		
Human Resources & Organizational Culture	1. Build all staff's knowledge of racial equity.	Alli & Margie			X		This will always be ongoing. I don't think it's ever marked as completed. It would harm us more, be less helpful if we said this was done. This year we had departments test the REM and this has been a way for staff to continue to build knowledge around racial equity.	Nope, this one is ongoing
	2. Support efforts that continue to build a culture of trust.	Alli & Margie			X		Alli-we're really working on it. Our work with Beth & Terrence has really pushed us. The REM has given us lift in being able to call out some truths. To have "trust" as a value is to name it. Alli: 3; Margie: 2.	No, this one is ongoing, still work around the values work that can still happen
	3. Review and refresh current HR policies to ensure that they explicitly support the growth of an organizational culture that is centered on DEI.	Alli & Margie			X		Getting more lift and attention on the leave policies since they are part of an Action Learning Team. We completed assessing the holiday policy with the REM and made a decision and we're on our way.	Not sure, will depend on team discussions
	4. Create a recruitment toolkit to address that all elements of the recruiting process are thoughtfully created with diversity, equity and inclusion.	Alli & Margie			X		We acknowledge that this was sidetracked and we have not made more progress this year given not having a St Thomas intern due to the pandemic and this was going to be a project of the intern. We still have made recruitment shifts that would be good to capture at some point. We're also in the middle of an RFP with the CFO position and can capture lessons learned.	No. We're supposed to have an intern start in the fall but unsure what projects they'll have. See the priority being the handbook.
	5. Review staff job descriptions to ensure that NWAF's DEI commitment and expectations within roles are explicitly stated.	Alli & Margie		X			We did first phase of job descriptions for the compensation study but the second phase was to go through the job descriptions with a DEI lens. We need to get together and look at the important parts to us, titles, sections we want to use. The result of first phase around the compensation study has taken more time than anticipated. This takes priority.	Not sure, will depend on capacity of HR Director given multiple staff departures & onboarding of new temporary staff
	6. Refresh NWAF's organization-wide values.	Alli				X	This was completed in 2020 and approved by Kevin and the Board in November. Our next steps for this process is implementation on how to live out the values.	N/A
Communications	7. Identify and highlight elements of grantee work depicted in profiles that demonstrates how that work is advancing equity in grantees' communities.	Paul				X	I've indicated that this is a 4, but it's really ongoing work because we've kept it centered in all of our communications. In essence, we'll never be "done" showing how work is advancing equity because it's always a part of our work. This year, we ran the series of profiles from Hattaway on Breaking Barriers that depicted the work of grantees who'd contributed to our narrative and messaging and lifted up their work on equity. Our many blogs and profiles that described our funding and grantees' responses to the pandemic and the racial uprisings centered racial equity and the disparate impacts of multiple crises this year. This extended to our annual report, Kevin's quarterly President's Corner Blogs, our first-ever Board member-focused blog (Duane Carter's blog in October), and two videos that showed how our leadership (Kevin and Karla) were incorporating racial equity into their work at the Foundation.	N/A
	8. Assess and address the Foundation's communications to incorporate DEI.	Paul				X	This goal remains the same. Here's what I wrote earlier, which accurately describes where we are now: So, this coming year [2021] we'll revise the narrative and messaging, looking to hopefully finalize it in Q1 of 2022. And, then, as envisioned, we'll also look at having another firm take a further, independent assessment of how we're addressing DEI later in 2022.	No, but as indicated in my notes in the column to the left, we should finish the new narrative and messaging in Q1 2022, and we could plan to do a further assessment later in 2022.
	9. As the Foundation discovers opportunities to promote and spread DEI practices in its eight-state, 76 Native nation region and across the field of philanthropy, Communications will provide a primary means to engage with key stakeholders and align with allies.	Paul		X			I'd indicated in last year's note how work on this goal might be a little redundant: "We'd originally wanted to see a strategic goal emerge that is squarely focused on DEI as an aim in and of itself....[we're seeing that in strategic refinement and through the crises in 2020--is that DEI is so enmeshed with the grantmaking and other work of the Foundation that setting an independent goal for DEI work might seem redundant." I'm still in talks with Margie about what we might/might not do with this goal. However, we HAVE implemented the REM to the DEI webpage and just recently updated the page with changes based on it. This might be all the further we pursue this goal, and/or we might decide to change/add a new goal in its stead.	No, see note in column to the left--we've completed the REM and updated the DEI webpage based on the REM. We might or might not add/change this goal, depending on the outcome of the strategic framework refinement and talks with Margie.

DEI MULTIYEAR PLAN TRACKING PROGRESS LEARNING FORM

F&A	10. Provide staff with direction, resources and support to achieve the goals of the Preferred Vendor Policy.	Karen & Margie			X	2020 was an unusual spending year (15% fewer vendors paid in GP compared to 2019) likely due to the pandemic, the office closing, and no travel. 1st year we collected/reported credit card/personal business expenses (Expensify) data, and captured 3rd party aligned vendor transactions, along with GP data in the vendor report. Good incremental year-over-year progress on our goals. Improved accuracy and completeness of vendor data in Salesforce. Ongoing process to identify preferred vendors and select them when 'choice points' arise.	No, this is an ongoing effort. In 2019, there was speculation about reassessing our goals because they might not be realistic and attainable. Although the goals are aspirational, our progress over the past three years towards achieving them has been very positive. Didn't meet with individual departments to review their vendor data in 2020, but will do so in 2021. These meetings allow us to discuss the specific challenges and support staff need, and identify opportunities for selecting more preferred vendors.	
	11. Transform all of the office space to feel more inclusive and accessible for all staff and visitors.	Karen			X	Produced a roadmap of initiatives to pursue and then the pandemic arrived, which paused almost all of this effort because the office closed. Installed touchless restroom sink faucets and toilet/urinals for improved accessibility and health.	No...with the lease ending in 2023 and the uncertainty about our future office location, I'm weighing the impact vs. the cost of making further improvements.	
	12. Embed DEI into the annual budget planning process.	Matt				X	This was completed for the 2021 fiscal year, though should be ongoing and embedded into each budget year.	N/A
Grantmaking	13. Build the program team's knowledge and skills around DEI grantmaking practices.	Karla & Christianne			X	The program team has begun working through two guides: Grantmaking with a Racial Justice Lens and Power Moves. We are about halfway through our team learning sessions (we have held 3 team learning sessions, and have 3-4 more to do). We are working closely with the consultant facilitating our strategic refinement process to ensure that there is a close link between goals 13 and 15 in the DEI Multiyear Plan. We have begun planning to engage grantees and the Board in how we should shift our grantmaking practices to more fully support racial equity and justice.		
	14. Use grantee data to assess our current grantmaking.	Karla & Deanna			X	We present demographic data of grantee leadership to our Program Committee in March regarding our priority communities.		
	15. Focus on DEI within the Grantmaking strategy refinement process.	Karla & John			X	Due to COVID, our refinement process was pushed back a year (expected completion moved from Nov 2020 to Nov 2021). I would say we are at same place as previous rating. The first six months of 2021 will include a lot of work around more fully integrating equity and justice into our grantmaking strategy.		
Investments	16. Understand the current state of diversity, equity and inclusion within the investment portfolio.	Millie				X	We do understand the 'current' state of diversity of the portfolio and that was completed by developing an investment diversity dashboard in September 2019 which was presented to the Inv Comm. Further work is needed to create this on an annual basis. We have asked NEPC (our investment consultant), which is working on its own manager diversity scoreboard, if it could attempt to recreate our dashboard given that it is now collecting manager diversity statistics (and thus outsourcing this work), and NEPC has indicated that it should be able to provide us with a first draft by the end of 2021.	N/A
	17. Articulate NWA's advocacy objectives and identify opportunities to advance diversity, equity and inclusion in the investment industry.	Millie				X	The Draft Advocacy Plan was endorsed by the Investment Committee and additional action items were suggested by the group. Next Steps are to create a Multiyear Advocacy Plan from which the Committee could work, inclusive of the additional action items mentioned above, and to engage additional/expert resources if needed.	N/A
	18. Include diversity, equity and inclusion considerations throughout the operations of the Investment Committee.	Millie			X		I am comfortable keeping this as a 3. While we could legitimately say 4, I feel that integrating DEI into the operations of the Committee is ongoing work and that we should constantly pay attention to it, i.e., it is never done. However, if others are interpreting this differently, I would be comfortable if DEI Manager or Kevin felt a 4 was the better choice.	
Leadership & Governance	19. Develop a learning agenda for Board meetings around centering and advancing DEI.	Kevin, Margie & Karla				X	The learning agenda is in place and traction with the Board has been good. Focus of racial equity was a good improvement. In 2020, the full Board engaged in a racial equity workshop.	N/A
	20. Thread DEI discussion, planning and implementation into the work of each Board Committee.	Kevin, Millie, Karla				X	We accomplished this goal and each committee is honoring its DEI-related commitments. All four committees revised their charters to specify the committee's role in the DEI journey. The Executive Committee DEI highlights include updating the Board's DEI Learning Plan & clarifying their role in tracking DEI progress overall for the Foundation. We also engaged them on the Racial Equity Magnifier and got their approval to engage the whole Board in the IDI. The N&G created the Trustee Recruitment Process which includes DEI components. The Audit Committee had multiple DEI-related conversations and approved a plan to embed DEI into its role. The Investment Committee is in the process of creating its advocacy plan. The Program Committee partnered with staff to ensure that racial equity/racial justice is centered in the Crisis Response Initiative launched in 2020 (including budget increases for 2020 and 2021), and the Program Committee will be a key thought partner with staff for the 2021 strategic refinement in which racial equity will presumably be a major theme.	N/A
	21. Identify and share 3 priorities and commitments from Executive Team to the staff regarding advancing DEI in the Foundation in 2019.	Executive Team (Kevin)			X		This is a case where the specific plank of the plan was not as useful as anticipated. We identified these 3 things and delivered on them as best we could in 2019, hitting about two thirds of the imagined work. But things continued to evolve. The ET now focuses virtually weekly on its role as the container for advancing racial equity at NWA.	No. Other DEI-related actions will continue to emerge, but it's time to turn the page on this relic from 2018 thinking.
	22. Ensure staff individual learning plans or individual annual goals include DEI goals and activities.	Alli				X	We have asked all staff to include at least one DEI goal in their learning plan or annual goals. This has gone well! We will continue to do this as it has been effective in our learning and work. Please note that we have marked this completed as it is but it is indeed continuous.	N/A
	23. Ensure each department within the Foundation is integrating DEI into annual goals and work plans.	Kevin				X	This has occurred as a natural consequence of pursuing the Multiyear Plan. DEI priorities are woven into the thinking and planning in F&A, Program, Communications and HR.	Leaders will continue to be attentive to this but I don't see practical value in continuing it as a specific "recommendation."
	24. Embed DEI into the strategic goals development.	Alli & Margie				X	Yes, DEI continues to be embedded.	N/A
Tracking Progress & Learning	25. Embed DEI into the Strategy Map.	Kevin	X					
	26. Develop methods and tools to track DEI progress.	Margie				X	A small cross-functional task force was formed to create methods to capture progress and learnings from DEI Multiyear Plan Leads (rating spreadsheet, survey, meeting). We also have visuals to show progress of the DEI Multiyear Plan overall and themes collected from the survey. The task force and DEI steering committee also reviewed an outline for a DEI progress report. Conversations with the Executive Committee also clarified their role as monitoring DEI progress overall.	N/A
	27. Develop mechanisms to communicate & report out on DEI progress and learning.	Margie			X		Created DEI Progress Report and ways for folks to contribute to sharing learnings. Created accountability in having this go to the DEISC, all staff and then the Board.	Yes
	28. Amend the DEI Multiyear Plan as needed based on progress and learning.	Margie			X		Action Learning Team is taking on the question of vision. The DEI Progress report is the first phase of this and the DEI Multiyear Plan will come out of that as well as using our consultants Beth and Terrence as guidance.	Yes