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## **Justice, Equity, Diversity, & Inclusion Organization Progress Report**

In response to the urgent need to create an inclusive and equitable program experience, and create more accessible opportunities in the environmental field, Conservation Corps Minnesota & Iowa (CCMI) established a Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (JEDI) Committee in 2018. The committee built from the work of a previous task force and the advocacy and input of staff and AmeriCorps members before that. In 2021, CCMI published its [Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion statement](#) to guide our organizational work, hold ourselves accountable, and further our commitment to equitable access. Over the last several years, CCMI has dedicated significant time and resources to advancing our JEDI goals organization-wide. Below we outline the progress made as an organization towards these goals.

### **Goal: Use equity as a lens for all the work we do and the decisions we make.**

- **Built common language, experience, and knowledge at the staff and board level with support from and in partnership with the Avarna Group**, an outside JEDI consulting firm with expertise in the outdoor and natural resources industries.
- **Since 2019, staff and board members have collectively participated in over 1,000 hours of JEDI training, with more than 400 hours in 2021 alone. All AmeriCorps members now complete JEDI training at orientation to establish a common organizational culture and set of expectations.**
- **Contracted with an outside consultant in 2019 and 2020 to conduct a Climate Culture Survey with staff, AmeriCorps members (2019-2021), youth (2019-2021), and the board to determine areas where the organizational culture inhibits an equitable and inclusive workplace. The results have helped us set priorities and long-term goals.**
- **Staff members completed 7 JEDI training modules and discussions in 2021 on the topics of allyship, white supremacy culture characteristics, anti-racist supervision, microaggressions, and Deaf/Hard-of-hearing culture.**
- **Revised position descriptions and job postings to include our commitment to JEDI and added JEDI goals to the employee review process.**
- **Beginning in 2022, salary ranges are disclosed in staff position descriptions.**
- **JEDI priorities are included in the organization's current strategic framework.**

### **Goal: Build a shared vision surrounding Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion goals with our partnering organizations and communities.**

- **Began normalizing the sharing of pronouns at events and trainings, in email signatures, business cards, name badges, and on the website.**
- **Began integrating JEDI values into our organizational communications plan and how we engage our Corpsmembers, partners, and stakeholders in our shared vision, including sharing and amplifying voices of traditionally underrepresented communities on our social media platforms and using more inclusive language.**

- **Prioritized JEDI values throughout our website redesign process in 2020 and 2021**, resulting in a new JEDI page, listing pronouns for staff/board, more inclusive language and imagery, highlighting our JEDI commitment on our employment page, and insuring ADA compliance.

### **Goal: Provide an equitable training environment and high-quality programming to all our participants.**

- **Analyzed and revamped orientation trainings** to better reflect our JEDI goals, use inclusive language, and provide standardized training around implicit bias and history of public lands.
- **Launched a Member Assistance Fund to support AmeriCorps members during their term of service**, which provides one-time financial assistance (up to \$250) for members who experience an unexpected expense during their service term. This resource was funded through support received during our 2021 spring fundraising campaign.
- **Initiated a Housing Allowance for current AmeriCorps members** as a way to offset housing costs as a financial barrier during service.
- **Program evaluations were updated to include more questions about the Corpsmembers' experience and Corps culture in relation to JEDI.** Staff use the results of this anonymous survey to carry out continuous process improvement and compare results year-over-year.
- **Programs provided non-binary housing options starting in 2020.**

### **Looking Forward**

- **Staff and AmeriCorps Field Specialists completed a four-month-long Racial Equity Certification Program** through Workforce 180 and the Soul Focused Group as of April 2022.
- **We continue to partner with the Avarna Group to analyze and improve our organization's capacity to serve underrepresented communities and Corpsmembers.**
- **Our programs are working to build new and existing community partnerships with BIPOC-focused and underrepresented communities around Minnesota and Iowa through a new Community Partnership Initiative.** AmeriCorps members and staff will have the opportunity to partner with these communities on natural resource and service-learning projects.
- **Our Human Resources department is finalizing an anonymous general feedback form for staff and Corpsmembers.**

Conservation Corps Minnesota & Iowa recognizes that building an equitable Corps takes hard work, time, and accountability. CCMI will continue working with our staff, board, members, alum, and community partners as we work towards our JEDI goals.

We look forward to sharing our progress again with you next year.