



**City of Bend
Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion
Project Update**

May 20, 2020

Key Terms

Language is evolving and contextual, particularly as it relates to personal and social identities. This update uses language that is easy to understand, culturally relevant, and reflective of current best practices.

Access/Accessibility: The ability or right of a person to get what they need (such as services, entrance, work, education, etc.).

Bias: A conscious or subconscious attitude toward people or association of a stereotype based on their (actual or perceived) identity or background.

Discrimination: The act of treating a person differently based on their (actual or perceived) identity or background. Typically refers to negative treatment.

Diversity: Differences in identity and/or experience, typically focusing on those identities or experiences that may be subject to bias or discrimination.

Equity: The recognition that everyone faces different barriers and needs different support to achieve equal access and opportunity.

Historically Marginalized: Describes people, communities, and identities that have been systematically disempowered and/or excluded from access and opportunity.

Historically Underrepresented: Describes people, communities, and identities that have been represented or portrayed (in politics, media, etc.) to a lesser extent than they are present in the population.

Human Rights: Rights inherent to all human beings, regardless of identity or status, including: the right to life and liberty, freedom from slavery and torture, freedom of opinion and expression, the right to work and education, and many more.

Inclusion: Creating a culture where all people feel respected, accepted, and valued.

Restorative Justice: Theories of justice, rooted in indigenous approaches to peacemaking, that emphasize accountability and repairing harm caused by injustice, often through a collaborative process informed by the needs of the impacted party.

Project Update

On March, 21, 2019 Bend City Council unanimously approved goals for the 2019-2021 biennium that included, for the first time, actions focused on “embedding a commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion within the City of Bend.” The City of Bend hired Allyship in Action in September 2019 to support these efforts. Below is a summary of Allyship in Action’s progress toward these objectives.

Council Goal	AIA Task	Outcome
Embed a commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion within the City of Bend.	Actively engage with a variety of both internal and external work groups to identify participation opportunities as well as bring resources together toward a unified action plan.	Met with 6 of 7 City Councilors (one declined the invitation) to clarify their DEI goals and timeline; provided DEI presentations to eight City teams; interviewed 16 external community stakeholders. Final report will include recommendations to inform action planning.
Implement a DEI training program for City Council, City Staff, and volunteers	Provide four 3-hour DEI trainings, including trainings for City Councilors	Provided 3 DEI trainings for 34 City leadership staff, six city councilors, and nine other civic leaders. *Fourth training postponed due to COVID
Hire a consultant to conduct an organizational assessment	Conduct a survey to assess staff’s DEI knowledge, perceptions, attitudes, and concerns	AiA surveyed 489 City staff (70 percent) via online and print questionnaires; results to be addressed in report to Council.
Establish a short-term task force to assist in identifying the needs and priorities of underrepresented communities in Bend.	Establish a short-term task force to assist in identifying the needs and priorities of underrepresented communities in Bend.	Facilitated 16-member Task Force members in evaluating models for DEI-related committees/commissions and identifying which practices would best serve the needs and priorities of historically marginalized and underrepresented communities.

Council Goal	AIA Task	Outcome
Establish a permanent commission or committee to develop a DEI action plan, and seek opportunities to leverage community efforts through funding and support.	Identify possible models and best practices for a permanent DEI commission or committee to develop a DEI action plan and serve as a conduit to underrepresented communities in Bend.	The DEI Task Force’s recommendations regarding models and best practices will be included in AiA’s final report.

While the final report from Allyship in Action will include recommendations related to the City’s diversity, equity, and inclusion objectives, we want to take this opportunity to preview some of the feedback from the DEI Task Force. This will allow the Stewardship Subcommittee to ask questions and give feedback and ensure that the DEI Task Force’s final recommendations are in alignment with both the needs of the community and the needs of Council.

DEI Task Force

Membership and Process

The DEI Task Force was directed by City staff to draft recommendations related to the establishment of a permanent DEI committee or commission rooted in the needs and priorities of historically marginalized and underrepresented communities in Bend. Members were invited to participate based on their connection to historically marginalized and underrepresented communities, their planning experience, and/or their civic engagement.

Allyship in Action is grateful for the contributions of the DEI Task Force, including: Adrianna Guevarra, Denise LaBuda, Dustin Painter, Erika McAlpine, Frances Waldrop, Gordon Price, Jen Rusk, Jessica Amascual, Joanne Mina, Kecia Kubota, Michelle Cary, Rabbi Johanna Hershenson, Rodrigo Gaspar, Romir Chatterjee, Rutila Galvan-Rodriguez, and Whitney Swander.

The DEI Task Force convened its first meeting in February 2020. Due to the COVID pandemic, all subsequent engagement has been remote. Allyship in Action has

continued to facilitate feedback from the Task Force using a combination of group video chats, one-on-one calls, email correspondence, and online surveys.

The group's process included the following:

1. Identify ways the needs and priorities of historically marginalized and underrepresented communities that could be addressed by a DEI committee or commission.
2. Evaluate existing models for DEI-related committees and commissions to identify common roles, responsibilities, authorities, membership criteria, application processes, and group compositions.
3. Determine which key qualities would best meet the identified needs and priorities.
4. Consider whether a committee or a commission is best suited to this work.
5. Draft recommendations for City Council drawing from this research, evaluation, and consultation.

Needs and Priorities

Task Force members described the need for a multifaceted committee/commission with a responsibility to historically marginalized and underrepresented communities in Bend, to the City Council, and to the community as a whole.

The task Force articulated specific **needs** including:

- A place to bring concerns or complaints of discrimination
- A way to address alleged violations of the Bend Equal Rights Ordinance that does not involve BOLI or going to court
- A mechanism for ensuring that the voices of historically marginalized and underrepresented communities are included in all aspects of City decision making
- More intentional outreach to and engagement with historically marginalized and underrepresented communities
- Tools and resources to support City Council and staff in engaging in DEI work
- To be taken seriously and appropriately supported/resourced

The Task Force identified **priorities** that centered around themes of accountability and intentionality, including:

- A forum for community concerns or complaints related to diversity, equity, and inclusion
- Intentional and proactive inclusion of historically marginalized and underrepresented communities in goal-setting and planning processes
- A driver for change that has the power/authority to hold City Council accountable
- Rooting the committee/commission's response role in restorative justice principles

“One of the main objectives should be to provide those who face bias with a place where they can bring issues to the notice of the City,” one member said.

Other Considerations

Other issues raised by Task Force members included:

- Some members may need stipends to offset costs associated with serving on the committee/commission.
- The committee/commission's role and responsibilities should be a realistic reflection of its authority, capacity, and resources.
- The committee/commission will need the support of a paid staff member or consultant to both begin and sustain its work.
- The existing standard application includes potential barriers to participation for some members of historically marginalized and underrepresented communities.
- City Council and staff will need other sources of support to bridge the gap until the committee/commission is up and running.
- The disparate impacts of COVID-19 on historically marginalized and underrepresented communities highlights the urgency of creating systems to address inequities.

After gathering feedback via multiple methods, Allyship in Action drafted recommendations for review and discussion by Task Force members. That feedback was incorporated into an updated draft which has been submitted to the Task Force for approval by consensus. The full recommendations will be included with Allyship in Action's final report to Council this summer.

About Allyship in Action

Kerani Mitchell (she/her), Erin Rook (he/they), and LeeAnn O'Neill (she/they) are the Principals of Allyship in Action LLC, a collaborative of Central Oregon consultants committed to engaging individuals, organizations, and communities to advance equity and social justice through customized assessment, education, and long-range planning and support.

As three people from marginalized communities who grew up in small agricultural communities, we have a shared passion for equity work to be place-based and rooted in lived experience. Erin's background in journalism and DEI work at the university level, LeeAnn's experience as a corporate attorney and in access to justice, and Kerani's nonprofit work and experience facilitating community conversations across Oregon, complement each other to provide a diversity of viewpoints and services. When possible, our team intentionally contracts with people of diverse identities, lived experiences, and expertise to bring authentic perspectives to issues of equity and social justice. Our collaborators bring an intimate understanding of local needs and resources as well as the unique dynamics of rural Central Oregon.

Allyship in Action emerged out of the growing demand from Central Oregon businesses, nonprofits, schools, and communities that are ready to engage in meaningful equity work, but are often unaware of the rich resources available locally. Our mission is to embolden and equip individuals and organizations to advance equity and social justice through active allyship that is rooted in our community and centers those most impacted in service of our collective liberation.