



PWA Equity Commitment 2023

What We Believe

Portland Workforce Alliance sees youth access to meaningful career exploration and career development as a matter of social and economic justice.

How We Define DEI

Diversity: Diversity encompasses the spectrum of shared and unique identities, characteristics, experiences and backgrounds across industries, schools, the community, and within PWA.

Equity: Equity embodies the values, policies, and practices that ensure that all people are represented in the development of, and access to, career-learning opportunities.

Inclusion: Inclusion means working together to create an open and welcoming environment that respects and affirms the value and uniqueness of all individuals.

Our Actions

Actions we are taking in 2023 to further our commitment to equity include:

- Engaging board members, staff and volunteers who reflect the demographics of the communities we serve.
- Seeking out youth voice and educator expertise in the development of our programs.
- Managing programs with an equity lens to reduce barriers to participation and to support access by students from underrepresented and marginalized communities.
- Tracking and reviewing youth outcomes to evaluate, adapt and improve our work.
- Sharing best practices with industry partners about creating welcoming environments for students.
- Dedicating board/staff time and resources to equity as a core pillar of our mission.

Accountability

PWA began as an idea shared by people with different perspectives on a common challenge: *Connecting young people in Portland to great jobs*. PWA has grown to offer thousands of career learning experiences annually for Portland-area high school students to discover their career aspirations. But our work doesn't stop there. PWA is committed to continuously develop and revisit our Equity Commitment through best practices to ensure that the diversity of our

membership and the broader employer community better serve all students, especially those from underrepresented and marginalized communities.

PWA pledges to help build a more inclusive and equitable workforce, and to provide more informed, meaningful career development resources by:

- **Pursuing racial and cultural consciousness throughout our organization** by engaging in [annual] professional and internal development.
- **Acknowledging, dismantling, and redesigning inequities** within our policies, systems, programs, and services, and report organization progress through our annual DEI Assessment.
- **Committing time and resources to expand** PWA's work towards diversity, equity, and inclusion to ensure that our board, staff, supporters and volunteers strengthen their DEI journey.
- **Improving informed practices** by creating and supporting programs that foster leadership and meaningful career experiences that reflects the full breadth of nationwide workforce development best practices and research.

DEI at a Glance

At Portland Workforce Alliance, we welcome all students and conduct focused outreach with higher-poverty and marginalized communities. We work closely with our school partners, especially those with diverse student populations to regularly identify, examine and address current and historical barriers of participation for BIPOC students.

In 2021-22 programming, over 70% of students in the Future of Nursing mentor program, 80% in our second cohort of the Youth Impact Council and over 80% in the Summer Career Academy identified as BIPOC. Our partners and leaders also come to PWA to collaborate on their company and industry's diversity, equity and inclusion efforts through student outreach. They have been key champions of the Mentorships to Careers programming since it is designed to focus on students from historically underrepresented backgrounds.

Our employer partners and board also represent a diverse group and many of our volunteers reflect gender and racial diversity. Over the last few years, PWA has embarked on a concerted effort to diversify our board leadership, striving for 50% of all board nominees to be BIPOC. Since 2019-20 we have been able to grow BIPOC representation on the board between 4-5% each year; growing from 28% to 41%.

Additionally, PWA has been actively working to be a more inclusive and diverse organization through partnering with culturally specific organizations, like Elevate Oregon, to provide experiences embedded within connections students already have with caring adults.