

DEI Task Force Survey Results

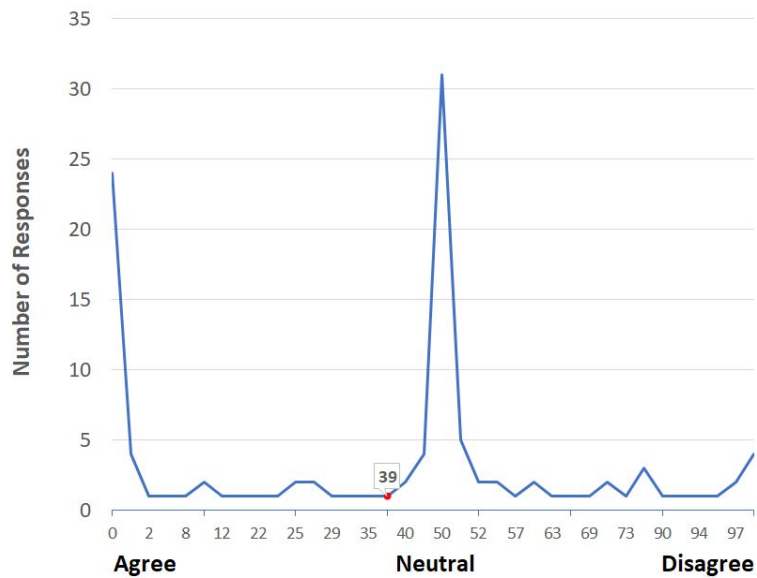
Survey was open October 6 - October 23 and collected 114 responses from 27 states.



Q: NACD has provided leadership in diversity, equity and inclusion.

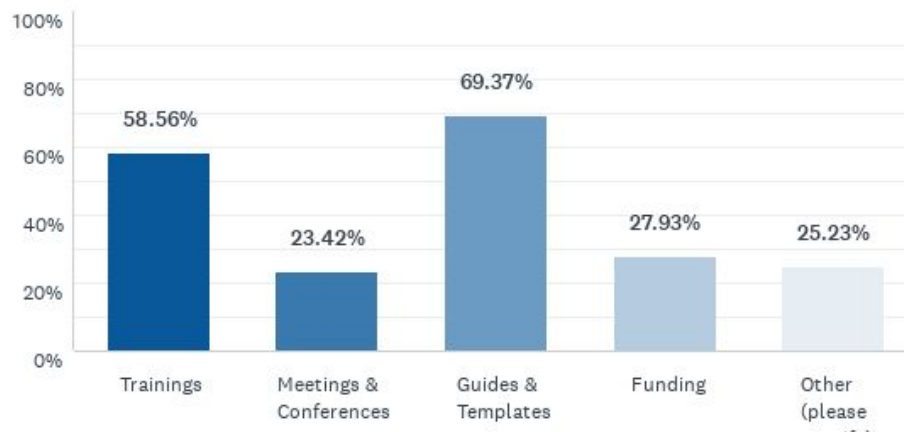
Answered: 113 Skipped: 1

Average Number: 39



Q: What resources would you like to see from NACD on DEI?

Answered: 111 Skipped: 3



OTHER (PLEASE SPECIFY)

- leading by example
- All of the options listed, but real-world case studies on how people in our world have engaged on this issue.
- Equity and Environmental Justice lens on all programs. Need to ensure women are part of the inclusion. Food insecurity is one area districts may be uniquely qualified to help. Although often in urban areas, also a problem in many rural communities. Local food systems help address this.
- coordinated data from GIS, DNR, etc. re land use changes in minimum of 5 yr. increments, coordinated orientations for county newcomers re land history and resources for good stewardship, advocacy to county board of supervisors re development
- Printed material will be read. We don't have funds to travel
- How to post position openings to attract more diverse candidates
- None we get enough from NRCS
- Lead by example have NACD leadership and staff engage with underserved communities on their turf
- All of the above
- Any tangible resources for connecting with tribes
- Hiring outreach to historically black universities
- None
- Virtual meetings and trainings on this important topic. And virtual even after COVID for affordability and easy of attendance
- results of this study would be helpful
- Analysis of systems that play a role in the lack of diversity among districts.
- Things for the Conservation Districts and their employees.
- Inclusion of minorities & women in leadership roles.
- actions and resources to be used to increase diversity and be a more inclusive organization
- Articles featuring research on how long term decisions are better done with diverse perspectives
- NACD should provide an appropriately vetted library of resources: books, articles, videos for supervisors to consider using to raise their personal awareness and knowledge of DEI issues.
- None

- POC leadership
- Showcase success stories from other Districts on how they have increased DEI in District operations and programs. Examples of diverse boards and projects that engage and support diverse audiences.
- Emphasis on why DEI matters, convenings to help everyone see the strong connection to DEI and serving EVERYONE in our communities and why we must make our programs and services relevant and approachable by everyone.
- How other state's associations/districts are dealing with DEI
- A firm statement that any kind of discrimination will not be tolerated we work on natural resource issues not political
- Conversation
- this is a nonstarter topic that is a waste of time and resource for NACD. It is not a good plan for NACD to expend its limited resources on political correctness and try to be woke to prove

Q: Please describe challenges and/or successes your district has experienced related to DEI.

Answered: 95 Skipped: 19

- None
- Lack of diversity on SWCD boards makes it difficult to move forward. Statutory criteria for board eligibility is a barrier to having diverse boards. Entire board is not committed. Levels of staff training differ so it's hard to be aligned.
- None
- We are in an area where there is a large population of Japanese (WW II encampments), Chinese (turn of the century labor), Basque (sheep herders), Latino (migrant labor), Irish (cattle herders), plus Europeans - immigrants all. Yes, there have been some issues, but over time they have been resolved. For us, it does not seem to be an issue, as in this part of society the families have intermingled.
- No known problems
- We have a history of women in leadership and supervisor roles. The lack of overall diversity in our county presents challenges in bringing various groups into the conversation and onto our board.
- We are able to reach all populations in our county, due to the fact that our county does a good job with DEI and we partner a lot with Cooperative Extension and they do a good job with DEI.
- Reaching to those in particular
- Our membership is not diverse. I suspect this may be a similar case for other states (not all, of course). So this isn't really "seen" as an important issue. And by that, I mean people are literally not seeing folks who look different than themselves, so it makes it hard for them to understand why we need to do something in this area. Couple that with the fact that most states/districts/LCDs (in WI) are woefully under-resourced as it is, and you can see how the groundwork is laid for prioritizing bread-and-butter conservation work, and not doing something "beyond" what districts/LCDs typically do, and have done for years. We have engaged with a local firm to better understand how we can engage on DEI issues. There is a dollar figure attached to this engagement that is pretty high, so we are trying to figure out when the best time we would embark on such a project would be (and how we would pay for it). The uncertainty around budgets due to the pandemic makes this doubly hard.
- N/A

- Lack of racial diversity on district boards. Reflection of lack of diversity in natural resource management in general.
- I am not aware of any issues
- N/A
- Blessed to have some strong female leaders who have connected with female landowners, assisted with trainings, connected with schools, and been visible in the conservation community.
- We Have 2 women on our board that have given their perspective on many issues that we wouldn't have gotten otherwise
- We have had zero issues in central Illinois. We are in a rural area where 80% of industry is agriculture related.
- not applicable
- Successes: Partnership with local group (RVC) to hire and bring on a Green Pathways Fellow. This program places BIPOC young adults into historically white lead environmental organizations in the Seattle area. This program also provides training and oversight for organizations new to forming DEI teams. Challenges: Funding to continue moving the DEI work forward. Trainings for staff and Board members around DEI.
- Very homogenous community
- We have only basic harassment policies right now. How do we analyze our policies and procedures to reduce bias or other unintended negative impacts? How do we increase diversity in a rural, predominately white region? What kinds of trainings have been most successful in changing behavior of white people to be more inclusive and welcoming, and to reduce the effects of bias?
- Have no comments and no problems
- Not aware of any issues pro or negative
- Our board, led by the chairman, was immediately responsive to the issue, drafting and posting a position statement on DEI. In addition, a ranking element for cost-share was added that helped identify if an assistance request was from within a limited resource area.
- Only personalities
- not sure
- I'm seeing more challenges from our customer base and contractors related to discrimination. Actions and words have changed over the last couple years where respect for others is not certain!
- The County is 95% white to quote a local Professor of Sociology at recent cultural diversity workshop "a County that is 95% White, with a rich cultural heritage that is adverse to change" Less than 28% of adults have bachelors degree or higher. Convincing most of our staff and board to step out of their comfort zone is a huge challenge.
- Providing Grants
- On diversity - GRCD both have male and female attendees where each opinion is heard. On inclusion - though we are a small group with few attendees, each has something to offer particularly their ideas as they feel valued in the group. On equity - we respect each individualistic needs and adjust to what should be done in order to finish a project or attain the district's goal
- It is challenging to figure out where to begin. We want to be mindful in this work and while we would like to go fast, we understand that we should go slow. It has been challenging finding funding to potentially hire consultants to do trainings/workshops for Board and staff. We are successful in that the Board and staff are willing to start this process.
- our district works well with the landowners and cooperators in the area....on a whole we have not run into any DEI issues

- We have made a concerted effort over the last decade to diversify the staff. It has also included diversity and inclusion training.
- Hasn't been a problem
- Haven't done a lot
- We have found it very hard to find diverse people to serve or participate. We have had some success with female participates but not much ethnic wise.
- Solving drainage and soil issues in disadvantaged areas and/or underrepresented populations
- Being in Eastern Kentucky we are sometimes overlooked for projects, funding and opportunities that could benefit our economy.
- Lack of interest from non-Caucasian, non-Ag communities.
- We are not a highly diversified county and we do not have many people of color involved in agriculture beyond migrant workers. We would like to see that change. We would like to see more minority farm owners and we would like to better support migrant workers.
- N/A
- N/A
- Comments made from landowners that our district makes them feel like they want to help them anyway we can not just another customer
- None
- Money is our biggest problem
- We have a limited pool of people for both staff and supervisors to select from here in Maine.
- None
- We've had representative gender balance on the board and with staff but no racial diversity which is out of balance with our community at large. This imbalance is not intentional but we have not analyzed why or discussed a strategy to address in the past.
- getting older board members to attend training.
- N/A
- Working for the district is really nice, however, we do not get as much training or experience as NRCS does. Yes, I understand that we are different agencies, but maybe that's why our turn around rate is so high. If we actually had proper training videos and conferences or teleconferences maybe they would feel like they are learning their position instead of getting frustrated.
- n/a
- Our district is in a very small county which is not very ethnically diverse.
- We have not approached this issue directly.
- Getting women and younger people on the boards
- The biggest issue is just educating existing directors and staff about the unique history that has affected farmers and ranchers of color. Specifically, around the incredible discrimination that happened under FSA. I think there is a lack of knowledge about how land was essentially taken from farmers of color because of FSA negligence and discrimination. The fact that no one was ever fired from FSA for discrimination does not make reaching out to producers of color any easier. Good, bad, or otherwise, districts are seen as an offshoot of USDA and as such, there is a long way to go to rebuild trust. The current political climate of divisiveness makes some of the conversations seem political when in reality, the hope is just to have districts do what they were created to do - serve as a bridge between farmers and ranchers and their government.
- Not sure
- We have both minority and diversity on our board.
- Our team lacks diversity, we have not focused on DEI in any programming
- Challenge of the fear of change and what that might do to the routine some are set in

- We're a small district and haven't had a direct conversation on the topic with board members during my tenure.
- Very little interaction. We are a very small community with a very singular population. Hispanics seem to shy away from our assistance
- We have not had issues.
- Maintained diverse gender representation on board. Have not been successful in recruiting minority board members
- Founding legislation only includes "landowners" in election process, no language access plans, limited outreach to historically underserved
- Funding the time to attend trainings and the time to review our organization. Statutory obligations also establish inequitable access to our leadership roles (i.e. landownership).
- We are in a bit of a rebuild, but I have taken to re-writing a progressive anti-discrimination policy. We are hiring currently and I struggled to find good resources that I could use to specifically reach out to underrepresented groups in the scientific and conservation community.
- Hesitancy to put out any strong messages, but a desire to do more learning and integration with diverse communities in our area
- We are working on it. We have started making sure that our social media is either race-neutral (showing the back of a farmer's hatted head in a field for instance). We have hired someone who speaks Spanish and are formatting our videos in both languages. We are subtitling our videos for the hearing impaired. We have taken bias courses. Long way to go, but we are working on it.
- We don't have the funding or staff capacity to engage an outside party to assist us in the process of a DEI strategy. So we're doing it on our own. We are hopeful, but having additional leadership would be helpful.
- In Minnesota the district board members file for office and are elected during the general election (as opposed to be appointed or selected). Providing education and outreach on the role of a supervisor can be challenging. Clear communication on the topic is essential. If not communicated correctly, unfortunately some board members may perceive it as process to remove them from their current role.
- I am comfortable saying that not all board members are on the same page. My perspective is that where there is a difference, it lies most squarely with unfailing belief about the history of the U.S. I know otherwise since my journey to get educated has revealed a gaping hole in what I learned about this country's history in my journey through the K-12 and higher education systems. I'm 67 and I flat out now believe that anyone my age, like me, was robbed of a much more complete understanding of history when we were students. Until someone who does not really 'get' white supremacy as the foundation of the nation, actually makes that transition, then coalescing around how to move forward will be tough.
- none
- We barely have cisgendered diversity (meaning that women who do not identify as trans are represented in leadership positions).
- We have diverse participation in our programs but there is low racial/ethnic diversity in our leadership team (commissioners, volunteers, and staff)
- Gaining local support and funding for the work.
- We have not had any significant issues.
- Field staff is 2 1/2 females, 2 males. Office staff 1 female. P/R staff 1/2 female. All are Caucasian. Elected Board of Directors - 6 males, 4 females (9 Caucasian, one Black) Appointed Directors - 2 Caucasian males
- Lack of racial, gender, age, etc. diversity of members serving on the board of directors. Lack of

racial diversity with constituents currently served by district programming. No mention of DEI in current mission, vision, goals, strategic planning, district policies and operations, etc.

- Peaks of Otter SWCD has not faced any challenges when it comes to DEI. Our staff is comprised of all women and we have a strong, positive relationship with our BOD (comprised of all men) and the agricultural community.
- Finding better ways to promote our programs to full range of people. Also, while we think we are fully reaching our community, how can we know if we are not? Our district currently does not have any DEI resources to share.
- Success: We are inclusive of all community members through invitation to our programs. I.e: mail invitations, being available for school programs; prior to COVID, outreach at public events. Challenges: We have a large coverage area and feel people may not know what we can offer still.
- We live in a majority white community which has historically no black farmers. We have an all white staff. BUT we now have a black director, and our Virginia Association of Conservation District Employees is conducting DEI training and discussion sessions.
- We have had an intentional and focused DEI initiative since 2015. Our major challenges have been about bringing out Board along with our learning - not because they are not supportive, but because of time availability. The other major challenge is about bringing staff along as new people join our team. Our successes have been approving an Equity Statement, reforming our hiring processes and onboarding processes, training our hiring managers. We have found success in ongoing training and discussions as a team about our fluency in DEI, why it matters to us personally and to our mission. We have had success in reimagining our program delivery to make it more equitable especially to people of color, immigrants and refugees, non- English speaking people and people of lower incomes.
- Very sensitive employee
- I think our main challenge is that many question if DEI is relevant to our community or our mission.
- Lack of desire to serve by younger and diverse landowner/farmers in our district. Can't even get to attend information meeting and field days
- First, I'm the NYCD Manager. Second I was hired because I was the Best qualified. Third NACD MUST remember that its constituents serve prioritized natural resource concerns AND those who have management responsibility of those priority Natural Resource Concerns. If we first serve "diversity" then Natural Resource Concerns will remain and not be resolved, treated or managed. Fourth, in nearly all scenarios funding for CD's is for a specific Natural Resource Concern and is granted under contracts or agreements and can not be used to meet a diversity issue. Fifth, a willingness to sever as a local Board Member is and has historically been driven by local knowledge of Natural Resource Concerns and needs. This successful process should not be sacrificed to meet a diversity need. In closing, for NYCD, very few priority Natural Resource Concerns are managed by minorities, protected classes, etc... ANY creation of a formal diversity statement, position, etc.. by NACD should not fundamentally change "what" or "who" we are but should strive to change how we as local leaders perceive and treat our communities that benefit indirectly from "clean water", Clean air", healthy ecosystems, etc...
- We have minimum challenges balancing agriculture against water quality and quantity and fish habitat to support for treaty reserved fishing rights
- Na
- to date so far we are unaware of any DEI issues the county does not have much diversity so it is difficult to gauge. We are still working on getting urban, school teachers and environmentalists to participate with farmers and foresters.

- Our community is not very diverse.
- Outreach, perception of the district as only a regulatory agency rather than a helpful partner. Also issues regarding race, color, gender have not really been openly discussed. Board and staff are diverse in terms of gender and demographic. I believe our board is open to the conversation.
- We serve anyone who comes through the office doors equally. Always have and always will. No challenges, and all successes.
- Challenging to locate interested parties to be customers and/or board member candidates.
- We work with a neighboring Native American Reservation. After many attempts to work with them, they seem to talk a good talk but never follow through.

Please use the following space for DEI resources your district is willing to share (e.g. projects, presentations, guides, etc.).

<https://www.nal.usda.gov/afsic/social-justice-and-quality-life-0>

<https://www.soilandshadow.com/healthysoilshealthycommunities>

<http://www.co.monroe.wi.us/departments/land-conservation/>

<http://www.bflt.org/>

<https://cefs.ncsu.edu/food-system-initiatives/food-system-committee-on-racial-equity/>

<https://www.soulfirefarm.org/>

<https://www.okconservation.org/care>

<https://www.Yumaconservationgarden.org>

<https://pierced.org/472/Equity-Inclusion>

<https://pierced.org/386/Recursos-en-Espanol>

[PCD HR Tool Kit](#)

[Soul Fire Farm: Anti-Racism, Equity, Rubric](#)

[2020 Elections Guide for SWCDs](#)

[Action and Allyship Guide](#)

[GRCD DEI Summary](#)

[Glossary of Terms](#)