



ASSOCIATION OF WOMEN'S HEALTH,  
OBSTETRIC AND NEONATAL NURSES



## DIVERSITY, EQUITY, & INCLUSION

### AWHONN's DEI Roadmap

The mission of AWHONN is to empower and support nurses caring for women, newborns, and their families through research, education, and advocacy. AWHONN seeks to operationalize diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) as our world grows more diverse and globally interconnected yet has profound racial and ethnic disparities in health outcomes and health care quality. We are committed to addressing the issues of racism and bias by auditing our organizational systems and collaboratively implementing solutions that result in being a more equitable and anti-racist organization.

At AWHONN, we believe diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) bring a vibrant mixture of experiences and backgrounds into our community, critical to informing our association's values, policies, programs, and strategies. As a result, we will better recognize new and different opportunities and institute meaningful, systemic change toward more equitable and culturally responsive environments.

We understand that diversity, equity, and inclusion are principles that must work together to result in fair treatment, access, opportunity, and advancement for all. Therefore, AWHONN is creating environments in which any individual or group will be welcomed, respected, supported, and valued to fully and authentically participate. We will work so that our internal team and membership reflect both the workforce and the people they serve so that we can best meet the needs of our field and constituents.

#### We commit to:

- **Be active champions for diversity, equity, and inclusion** through a strong organizational commitment, proactive leadership, and well-defined actions with an **overarching goal of equitable and respectful care for all**.
- Be an **inclusive organization** for nurses who provide care to women and pregnant and postpartum people and their babies while embracing a culture of humility.
- Fully **respect and honor the autonomy** of each pregnant and postpartum person.
- **Incorporate DEI into AWHONN's organizational DNA** and ensure it's not just what we do, but who we are.
- **Ask tough questions** and design bold systems-level solutions in the quest for answers.
- **Be an antiracist organization** and **work to reverse the racial, ethnic, and other health disparities** that contribute to the growing maternal health crisis.
- **Grow and innovate** in the area of DEI.
- **Revisit our DEI and anti-racism commitments annually** to ensure sustainability, growth and reflection.
- **Hold ourselves accountable to the operationalizing of our DEI efforts** and report out on our progress.

DEI work is not limited to a particular group of people within this organization. The recommendations and commitments of AWHONN staff members, senior leaders, board members, and members at large contributed to the vision presented below. This multifaceted approach increases the likelihood of aligning learning, strategy development, and accountability in a manner that positively impacts all key stakeholders.

The following 5-pillar framework aims to highlight voices from all stakeholder groups, and offer clear, practical ways AWHONN can incorporate DEI into all aspects of our work. This serves as AWHONN's strategic DEI roadmap outlining key priorities, goals, and associated success metrics and implementation plans.

The alignment of accountability, transparency and power-sharing encourages and sustains a more inclusive work environment and culture. In particular, transparency around decision making is also an accountability feature that promotes power-sharing. AWHONN commits to an open and transparent process where all input is welcome. This process will be one of continuous engagement, improvement, and, when necessary, course corrections.

As a part of this plan, internal and external leaders and stakeholders, including the volunteer leadership of AWHONN, AWHONN staff, and the general membership, will all be called upon to define and audit the accountability metrics and targets of the strategic plan.



**Goal 1: AWHONN's values & messaging explicitly demonstrate a commitment to DEI**



**Goal 2: Establish internal and member facing leadership for DEI including structured committees to support the ongoing accountability and implementation of DEI strategy**

**Goal 3: Amplify and highlight the vantage points of underrepresented populations within AWHONN**



**Goal 4: Ensure AWHONN resources, programs, events and meetings are inclusive and accessible**

**Goal 5: Understand the DEI needs of AWHONN members and design relevant DEI-centered engagement strategies**



**Goal 6: Design and implementation of a DEI-centered learning journey for all AWHONN stakeholders (board, membership, staff)**

**Goal 7: Design strategy to support inclusion & belonging within AWHONN stakeholders**



**Goal 8: Ensure equity within AWHONN's policies, systems & processes**



## GOAL 1: AWHONN'S VALUES & MESSAGING EXPLICITLY DEMONSTRATE A COMMITMENT TO DEI

### Baseline Indicators

- Create a baseline metric to support this target for both members and staff
  - Develop an annual Member Perception & Impact Survey.
  - Develop an annual BOD End of Year (EOY) DEI Survey.
  - Ensure the inclusion of questions in AWHONN Convention survey reflects a focus on DEI.
- Evaluate, track, and measure current levels of engagement, reach, and representation.
- 62% of staff respondents agree or strongly agree that AWHONN demonstrates a commitment to DEI through its actions and policies. Ensure the execution of an annual AWHONN Staff DEI survey.

*Note: Data from AWHONN staff survey 2021.*

### Impact Targets

- Increase staff baseline of 62% to 80% agree or strongly agree by end of 2022. Staff agree that AWHONN demonstrates a commitment to DEI through its actions and policies.

KEY IMPLEMENTATION ACTIVITIES	DELIVERABLES
Draft Updated DEI Vision & Tenants	Draft Document
Inform & gather feedback from stakeholders	Feedback Process
Finalize, share & integrate statement	Final Document
Complete external DEI brand and messaging review	Audit Report
Ensure diverse representation in AWHONN marketing/messaging	Updated visual materials on all platforms including social media, journals, online groups, and volunteer groups

### Instances for Integration:

- All internal/external communication channels including journals
- Directly prioritize and feature DEI content publicly and internally within the organization
- Include DEI language within job postings and descriptions
- Reference DEI prominently throughout strategic plan and priorities documents, education programs, and event planning
- Feature DEI in New Employee Orientation

### Additional Detail Related to Implementation Ideas:

- Dedicated page to DEI on AWHONN.org (highlight goals, plans and dashboard, beyond just having a statement)
- Use the page as an education tool for internal/external audiences
- Establish traffic and content targets and update on a regular basis
- Engage with constituents, provide updates, reflect on, and respond to current events
- Showcase AWHONN's diverse staff including the DEI team, emerging leaders' cohort, DEI committee, and volunteer groups
- Add a DEI-focused banner to the AWHONN website home page like the existing COVID-19 banner
- Consider adding DEI role in Section or SAC leadership



## GOAL 2: ESTABLISH INTERNAL AND MEMBER-FACING LEADERSHIP FOR DEI INCLUDING STRUCTURED COMMITTEES TO SUPPORT THE ONGOING ACCOUNTABILITY AND IMPLEMENTATION OF DEI STRATEGY.

### Baseline Indicators

- 68% of survey respondents agree or strongly agree “I believe that my ideas are strongly considered in the decision-making processes within my organization.”
- 67% of survey respondents agree or strongly agree that they have the ability to voice DEI-related concerns without negative consequences.

Note: Data from AWHONN staff survey 2021.

### Impact Targets

- DEI Committee completes 80% of action plan goals annually and tracks progress quarterly on a dashboard.
- Increase Baseline: Decision making to 80% agree or strongly agree by August 2022.
- Increase baseline: Voice DEI concerns to 75% agree or strongly agree by August 2022.
- Create committee engagement metric measured annually.

KEY IMPLEMENTATION ACTIVITIES	DELIVERABLES
Design Committee Charge (Purpose/Role)	Draft charter documents
Recruit & Train Committees	Committee rosters
Finalize Committee Charters	Final charter documents
Design & Implement Committee Action Plan to support strategy	Written plan, goal attainment dashboard
Hire VP of DEI to lead internal and external DEI efforts	VP DEI hired

### Instances for Integration:

- DEIC has seats designated for AWHONN board members and DEIT staff representatives
- DEIT periodically attends ELT meetings

Note: The diversity, equity, and inclusion committee (DEIC) is an AWHONN member committee. The diversity, equity, and inclusion team (DEIT) is an AWHONN internal team of staff.



## GOAL 3: AMPLIFY AND HIGHLIGHT THE VANTAGE POINTS OF UNDERREPRESENTED POPULATIONS WITHIN AWHONN

### Baseline Indicators

- **Evaluate, track, and measure** current member, volunteer, and board demographics.
  - o Demographic data for applicants for national committees
  - o Demographic data on AWHONN member and customer database via Nimble
  - o Demographic data at AWHONN Convention, regional conferences, meetings, and leadership conference
  - o Demographic data on national awards, scholarships along research projects on the populations that they serve
  - o Demographic data on proposals submitted for Convention from prospective speakers
  - o Demographic data on customers that purchase products, educational materials, and engage with publications

### Impact Targets

- Increase the number of new strategic partnerships added annually.
- Increase and broaden recruitment efforts for new members into AWHONN to reflect DEI.

- Increase and broaden marketing, advertising, and promotional efforts to engage with underrepresented groups in awareness campaigns, education, and much more.
- Increase, broaden and amplify engagement efforts on advocacy by focusing on legislative issues that impact underserved populations and communities.
- Increase the number of stakeholders, collaborators in reproductive, newborn, and maternal health in combating maternal morbidity and racial equity in underserved populations.
- Increase and broaden speaker bank for educational webinars, workshops, instructor led training, and education sessions.



## GOAL 4: ENSURE AWHONN RESOURCES, PROGRAMS, EVENTS AND MEETINGS ARE INCLUSIVE AND ACCESSIBLE.

### Baseline Indicators

- Our programs are inclusive and accessible, as validated through internal and external survey measures.
- Implement ADA Guidelines to ensure the accessibility of resources, programs, and events (both in-person and virtual).

### Impact Targets

- Increase baseline indicators of members who strongly agree our programs are inclusive and accessible by end of 2022.
- Add additional targets based on external baselines related to current levels of engagement, reach, and representation.
- Increase the number of educational materials available in multiple languages, including Google translate option for AWHONN.org.
- Measure increases in the number of people who access the website and engage in other ways, # of new accessibility measures implemented.
- Evaluate and integrate close captioning in education webinars, sessions, townhalls, videos and conversations on social media.
- Provide virtual option when possible for education sessions, townhalls, roundtable discussions, etc., via Zoom for those who are unable to attend in person events or meetings.
- Track the number of downloads/impressions of resources.
- Establish the baseline and increase the number of professional associations that reference AWHONN as a resource in 2022.

KEY IMPLEMENTATION ACTIVITIES	DELIVERABLES
Conduct audit of current resources.	Create a comprehensive list of current resources that reference DEI
Identify populations/identities that are in need of accommodations/customization.	Comprehensive execution plan with quarterly milestones
Ensure an equity lens is used in all project planning for new materials and products which would include intentional translation and accessibility steps.	Equity rubric to support decision making filters for project planning
Identify funding source(s) for resource enhancements.	Budget
Create a plan for language translations of key materials.	Written plan

### Instances for Integration:

- Seek opportunities to build networks (staff and members) that are inclusive of the new and different populations we aspire to serve.
- Include measurable goals related to inclusion within employee goal setting, measure progress via annual performance management processes.

- Include members of specific populations or groups in the content writing and review processes for all new programs and project development.
- Provide a portion of the marketing budget specifically targeted to connect, recruit, and network with DEI stakeholders regarding nurse-focused opportunities in newsletters and advertisements.

### Additional Detail Related to Implementation Ideas:

- Develop education materials in multiple languages; (like the POST-BIRTH Warning Signs Parent Handout).
- Create and deploy a consistent literacy review process for all educational and other materials.
- Convene key opinion leaders and organizations to share AWHONN organizational updates on DEI initiatives and to gain the same from those groups in attendance. Promote outcomes via social media.
- Create collaborative agreements that provide low- or no-cost AWHONN memberships for nurses who are also members within organizations that advocate and support professionals within the underserved or underrepresented segments in the nursing workforce.
- Create a collaborative council of nursing organizations serving women and newborns for strategic advancement of DEI initiatives for these patient populations within the overall nursing profession.



## GOAL 5: UNDERSTAND THE DEI NEEDS OF AWHONN MEMBERS AND DESIGN RELEVANT DEI-CENTERED ENGAGEMENT STRATEGIES

### Baseline Measurements:

- 85% respondents indicated AWHONN National demonstrates a strong commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion through its actions, policies, and programs.
- 58% of respondents indicated AWHONN Sections demonstrates a strong commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion through its actions, policies, and programs.

Note: Data from AWHONN member survey 2021.

### Impact Targets:

- Increase 2021 baseline of respondents that indicate AWHONN national demonstrates a strong commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion through its actions, policies, and programs to 90% by the end of 2022.
- Increase 2021 baseline of respondents that indicate AWHONN sections demonstrate a strong commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion through its actions, policies, and programs to 75% by the end of 2022.
- Increase the number of policies, programs, and procedures reimagined.

KEY IMPLEMENTATION ACTIVITIES	DELIVERABLES
Conduct initial equity assessment of membership policies, procedures and programs	Prioritized list of policies, programs, and procedures for review
Assess DEI-related member needs	Include DEI questions in annual member survey
Based on assessment results, design and implement engagement strategies to support DEI gaps	Written plan for DEI member engagement
Based on assessment results, reimagine policies, procedures, and programs with a foundation of equity where needed	New written policy and process documents developed

### Instances for integration:

- Member communication, including member polling on social media, and e-newsletters
- Annual member survey
- Member application process
- Pre and post event evaluation

### Additional detail related to implementation ideas:

- Host a town hall or webinar for DEI quarterly to ensure commitment, transparency and encourage more participation and suggestions from all constituencies described in this strategy document.
- Invite and listen to those who are negatively impacted by the healthcare system and who have experienced systemic bias and racism. Invite those with lived experiences to collaborate on solutions to prevent future harms.



## GOAL 6: DESIGN & IMPLEMENTATION OF A DEI-CENTERED LEARNING JOURNEY FOR ALL AWHONN STAKEHOLDERS (BOARD, MEMBERSHIP, STAFF)

### Baseline Indicators

- Evaluate and measure current demographic data for educational programs, training, events, and policies across the organization.
- Evaluate policies and process with each team and department on development and engagement of DEI learning journey.
- Evaluate the creation of milestones for projects, programs, and other related communication to ensure DEI focused learning with all stakeholders.

### Impact Targets

- Identify the objectives and desired outcomes of the training.
- Measure pre/post learning gains from training sessions against stated objectives and desired outcomes.
- DEI learning sessions offered at least quarterly for AWHONN members.
- DEI learning session offered at least annually for AWHONN Board members, Section Advisory Council leaders, and section and chapter leadership.
- DEI learning sessions offered at least annually for AWHONN Staff.

KEY IMPLEMENTATION ACTIVITIES	DELIVERABLES
Design ongoing DEI learning journey for AWHONN Staff (formal training, brave space, individual learning)	2022 learning journey written plan
Launch annual DEI training program for the AWHONN Board	Written training plan for 2022
Implement DEI workshops and leadership development at all National convention and section conferences	Implicit Bias training developed and implemented
Initiate Affinity Groups (staff and membership)	Affinity Group charter document and implementation guides

### Identified Training Topics:

- AWHONN Style Guide and Communication Policies & Practices (images and language) with advice or engaging in inclusive conversations, including guidance regarding ethnicity and pronoun usage, as well as gender-inclusive language, general gender inclusion, and race
- Implicit bias/unconscious bias (particularly within healthcare)
- Cultural humility
- Inclusion awareness
- Crucial conversations, such as “brave space” conversations with the goal of increasing efficacy and comfort in engaging with persons and/or groups who are different than ourselves
- Microaggressions (micro-behaviors) with the goal of recognizing and appropriately addressing both within internal and external messaging, activities, and interactions

### Instances for Integration:

- Individual development plans
- Integrate DEI learning in existing staff meetings, 1:1 meetings
- New employee orientation/onboarding
- Budget allocations for training/leadership development

- Performance expectations for people managers following education and training regarding how bias shows up in performance reviews, hiring, promotions, job design, and inequitable distribution of work, etc.)
- Career path development rich in DEI learning and professional growth

### Additional detail related to implementation ideas:

- Develop member and volunteer-facing racial and gender affinity groups or committees to support ongoing trends, education, and opportunities for nurses in those groups.
- Identify an online coaching and/or learning platform (e.g., Better Up) along with monthly/quarterly engagement of DEI experts to speak to staff/members/board as appropriate.
- Encourage staff to participate in asynchronous education before meetings to optimize the time together for inclusive and interactive activities based on the learning.
- Make DEI learning modules available free of charge on AWHONN.org as modeled by other professional nursing organizations.
- Partner with other professional nursing organizations that are doing this well.



## GOAL 7: DESIGN STRATEGY TO SUPPORT INCLUSION & BELONGING AMONG AWHONN STAKEHOLDERS

### Baseline Indicators

- 76% of staff respondents feel **like they fully belong** at AWHONN.
- 76% of staff respondents report they feel comfortable bringing their authentic self to work.

Note: Data from AWHONN staff survey 2021.

### Impact Targets

- Increase both baselines to 85% agree or strongly agree by end of 2022.

KEY IMPLEMENTATION ACTIVITIES	DELIVERABLES
Assess baseline levels of inclusion & belonging (staff and membership)	DEI Survey Assessment Report
Create strategy to support inclusion and belonging within the AWHONN staff team	Written plan
Develop and implement gender inclusion strategy	Written plan and implementation guide

### Instances for Integration:

- Engage existing committees to include activities that support inclusion and belonging.
- Incorporate DEI strategy into new employee orientation and onboarding.
- Gender-inclusive language in marketing and messaging efforts, specifically for health awareness. campaigns and recruitment efforts.
- Host annual staff retreats.

### Additional detail related to implementation ideas:

- Implementation of monthly lunch and learns and other informal staff engagement to support belonging.
- Feature an AWHONN member or staff member every month on the website for DEI.





# GOAL 8: ENSURE EQUITY WITHIN AWHONN'S POLICIES, SYSTEMS & PROCESSES

## Baseline Indicators

- Evaluate, track, and measure the current representation metrics for the board, membership, volunteer structure, and staff.

## Impact Targets

- Consider Setting Talent Pool Thresholds.
- Representation metrics – trends – board, membership, national committees, Section leaders, and staff.
- All HR trends year over year in retention rates – race/ethnicity.
- Track the number of HR lifecycle processes reimagined to support equity.

KEY IMPLEMENTATION ACTIVITIES	DELIVERABLES
Equity assessment of internal HR systems & Processes	HR Equity Matrix Assessment Report
Equity assessment of membership recruitment policies and practices (membership diversification)	Refresh membership policy documents
Equity review of governance and volunteer recruitment processes (Board diversification)	Refresh governance documents
Require annual equity updates on organizational, departmental, programmatic policy, program and procedures	Update written policies
Create a plan for intentional pipeline development within AWHONN programs	Written pipeline development plan

## Additional detail related to implementation ideas:

- Create processes/policies for standardized hours or scheduling time for personal 1:1 check-ins between HR, supervisors, and staff members on benefits, career development, performance etc.
- Standardize and bring all refreshed HR forms together in one place (along with written documentation on how to use them).

## Nonprofit HR's Approach to Diversity, Equity & Inclusion

Nonprofit HR is the leading human resources firm in the country that works exclusively with the nonprofit sector. Their team is made up of highly experienced and passionate professionals who specialize in partnering with nonprofits to achieve their potential through their people. It is a high priority for us to foster and maintain an environment where diversity and inclusion are valued and realized. We believe strongly in treating everyone fairly and value the full diversity of our colleagues, clients, partners, and vendors. Inclusion is how we live our commitment to fairness and diversity. It shapes how we honor the perspectives, abilities, and identities of our colleagues; how we listen to, engage and respond to our clients; and how we connect to and appreciate each other and those we serve.

**Foundational approach grounded in Systems Theory:** In social science, systems theory is the study of society as a complex arrangement of elements including individuals and their beliefs as they relate to a whole, such as an organization or a country. The various systems within organizations, including recruitment, hiring, performance management and many others, represent formalized operations that can help or hinder goals to foster and maintain a diverse, equitable, accessible, and inclusive workplace. Recognizing these large and complex interdependencies of policies, processes and behaviors, we work with organizations to uncover where inequities exist within their systems and provide strategic guidance to revise or create new, equitable systems to replace them.

**Full organizational involvement for sustained change:** Diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) work is not limited to a particular group of people within an organization. Our approach is to involve staff at all levels from frontline service delivery staff to senior leadership and board members when appropriate. Certain groups (such as leadership and boards) may benefit from separate and more targeted engagements depending on an organization's structure of operations or organizational climate, but the goal is always to align learning, strategy development and accountability in a manner that positively impacts all key stakeholders.

**No two organizations are alike:** Recognizing that organizations have unique missions and are comprised of unique groups of staff and volunteers, we work with all clients to develop strategies and solutions that are designed to advance organizational objectives.

**Nonprofit HR** served as a consulting partner to AWHONN for approximately two years and produced this strategy document to support the primary focus areas prioritized by AWHONN stakeholders. This document includes detailed strategic goals complete with targeted outcomes measures and integration points to generate greater equity within AWHONN.

**Nonprofit HR** is the leading professional services firm focused exclusively on the talent and culture needs of the social impact sector.