

Diversity Principles (Draft, 2014)

To accomplish our mission, we believe that we must be responsive to the needs of the communities and organizations we work with. We will create and implement programs using our awareness of cultural differences and treat all partners and stakeholders with respect. We will also create an organizational culture that values people of all backgrounds, including differences in race, ethnicity, age, ability, sexual orientation, and religious preferences and model the organizational values of respect, integrity, and honesty. Our commitment to inclusiveness will be evident in our organizational policies and procedures, as part of our strategic plan, and within our organizational goals.

The principles and practices outlined here are not meant to be prescriptive; rather they represent a collective, affirmative effort to lift our field to a higher standard of operating practice.

Our Principles

We seek to encourage all leaders in this field to embrace the following principles intended to promote diversity as a matter of fairness and effectiveness in our profession.

- **Mutual Respect:** Within the parameters of our core values, we are committed to diversity, equity, and inclusion; and we fundamentally value and respect experiences that might be different from our own.
- **Knowledge and Creativity:** By increasing diversity, equity, and inclusion, we believe we will access more expansive and varied ideas, information, and perspectives, making us a more creative, informed organization.
- **Strategic Approach:** To achieve our aims, we believe it is necessary to be strategic and intentional in formalizing and pursuing meaningful diversity goals as central aspects of our governance and programming.
- **Transparency:** We believe we have a responsibility to society and our sector to achieve our goals with honesty and transparency, regularly reporting progress and lessons learned along the way.
- **Promising Practices:** We seek to advance field effectiveness by encouraging voluntary diversity practices that have shown potential to enhance the environmental education field, including periodic self-assessments of board and staff appointments, contracting that better enable institutional leaders to identify and act on strategic opportunities to increase their inclusivity and public problem solving leadership. Practices include building peer support, promoting public leadership that highlights the benefits of diversity and identifies new strategies that lead to greater effectiveness, tracking progress, as possible with the resources we have, and enhancing transparency and public accountability.

We all should know that diversity makes for a rich tapestry, and we must understand that all the threads of the tapestry are equal in value, no matter what their color.

--Maya Angelou