

# **Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DE&I) Strategic Plan**

## **Transportation Research Board**

### **June 15, 2022**

#### **Mission**

TRB's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DE&I) Initiative's mission is to create and foster an inclusive environment that leads to increased diversity of participants in TRB and equitable outcomes for the transportation system. The TRB DE&I Strategic Plan provides a roadmap for achieving this mission.

#### **Background**

The TRB Executive Committee adopted a Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plan in January 2018. The plan was updated to include equity in fall 2020. The TRB Special Committee on DE&I has been charged with monitoring implementation of the Plan and proposing revisions as appropriate. The Committee meets quarterly, monitors progress on the plan's strategies and action items, and reports to the TRB Division Committee and the TRB Executive Committee. The committee's membership is representative of TRB's major oversight committees and stakeholders and every effort is made to ensure racial, ethnic, gender, and ability diversity of the committee.

Significant progress has been made in the strategies contained in the 2018 Plan. Since TRB began implementing its plan, the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine (NASEM) also developed a DE&I strategic plan and has created its Office of Diversity and Inclusion (ODI). It also stood up two employee-led groups in 2022—the NASEM DEI Council and the DEI Program Advisory Group. TRB staff have collaborated in the development and monitoring of the NASEM DE&I Strategic Plan to ensure alignment of the work of ODI and the employee groups, as well as with TRB's DE&I strategic plan.

This revised DE&I Strategic Plan has been developed to better reflect recent TRB work, accomplishments, societal changes, new priorities, alignment with NASEM's DE&I priorities, and alignment with the Executive Committee's priorities. In order to realize the strategies in this 2022 update, coordination across TRB, including from volunteers, contractors, and staff will be required.

#### **Working Definitions**

This plan uses the following definitions for diversity, inclusion, and equity:

Diversity is defined as the broad spectrum of experiences, cultures, and physical attributes within a community, including but not limited to race or ancestry, national origin, religion, age, ability, gender, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, or perspective.

Inclusion means that all individuals and groups are welcomed, valued, respected, and supported equally as they contribute to the mission and success of a community.

Equity is the absence of barriers, biases, and obstacles that impede equal access, fair treatment, and opportunity by all members of a community.

### **Strategies and Associated Action Items**

The following are seven strategies and associated actions, that are proposed and in progress:

#### Strategy 1

*Ensure equitable opportunities for all involved in TRB and implement strategies and resources that are used to recruit, welcome and actively involve more diverse committee and panel members.*

- Encourage TRB sponsors and affiliates (e.g., state DOTs, USDOT, companies, organizations, and academia) to identify and nominate diverse candidates and young professionals during the various CRP nomination periods.
- Encourage TRB sponsors and affiliates to nominate diverse candidates and young professionals within their organizations to become friends of TRB standing technical committees.
- Identify, document, and disseminate best practices and resources for TRB staff and committee leaders about recruiting and maintaining diverse and inclusive committees and panels. Disseminate exemplary practices of winners of the Technical Activities Council's Blue Ribbon Award for Diversity.
- Communicate, disseminate, and encourage chairs, members, and TRB staff to use the best practices and materials to make progress in diversifying committees and panels.
- Increase diversity of TAD standing technical committees, both of membership and chairs (which must be approved by the TAD director).
- Develop strategies to further publicize how to become a Friend and get involved with committee activities and other TRB volunteer opportunities.
- Educate TRB staff on resources they can use to identify diverse volunteers.

#### Strategy 2

*Engage with transportation-related organizations and other appropriate organizations that serve groups that are underrepresented in TRB (e.g., minority groups, women, people with disabilities) to increase their members' awareness of and participation in TRB.*

- Collaborate with organizations that TRB already has existing MOUs (e.g., COMTO and Latinos In Transit), including through participation in their convening events, mentoring programs, the Minority Student Fellows Program, and nominations for CRP panel members. Identify champions at the organizations that will ensure long-term sustainability of the relationships.

- Seek opportunities with additional groups that serve underrepresented communities to develop MOUs.
- Develop strategies to contact other organizations that serve underrepresented communities to discuss inclusion of their members on committees and CRP panels, opportunities for joint webinars, cooperation in each other's mentoring programs, and promotion of each other's reports online and in social media.

### Strategy 3

*Create opportunities for everyone to make connections and feel included, welcomed, and able to participate equitably at the Annual Meeting, specialty conferences, and committee meetings.*

- Encourage committees and research panels to welcome, value, and respect and support equally all individuals and groups.
- Continue the curated program on equity and develop sessions focused on DE&I content at the TRB Annual Meeting.
- Develop Annual Meeting sessions, including through the Young Members Coordinating Council and its subcommittees that welcome and support topics of interest of students and young professionals.
- Coordinate with FHWA Dwight David Eisenhower Transportation Fellowship Program (DDETFP) staff to engage the 200+ DDETFP fellows in standing committees' meetings and activities, and other Annual Meeting events, especially those planned by the Young Members Coordinating Council.
- Support mentoring initiatives that promote the development of TRB volunteers at the Annual Meeting and through its committees and panels.
- Include diverse perspectives in TRB conference planning committees.
- Use the Annual Meeting survey and Twitter feed as means to monitor attendees' perceptions of diversity at the Annual Meeting.
- Provide training and guidance to leaders and members of committees (e.g., tools from NASEM such as their Inclusive Meeting Checklist and Inclusive Language Guide).
- Provide guidance to technical standing committees and CRP panels on making newcomers feel welcome at meetings.
- Coordinate with the NASEM DE&I Council as they develop tools and resources regarding inclusivity.

### Strategy 4

*Achieve greater diversity among TRB contractors and their lead staff, whether they are research consultants or suppliers.*

- Continue to ask organizations submitting CRP proposals about how their team would bring a diverse and inclusive approach to their research, and policies or programs that they have in place to promote diversity and inclusion.
- Develop a webinar, web page, and/or fact sheet available to all about responding to RFPs which would include tips for making proposals competitive and navigating TRB's processes.

- Market opportunities to HBCUs and organizations that serve minority contractors that have databases so as to increase their involvement in CRP projects.
- Explore holding an event and other convening opportunities where minority and prime contractors can meet and network regarding TRB contracting opportunities.

#### Strategy 5

*Identify and minimize barriers to achieving greater TRB staff diversity and assure opportunities for career advancement for diverse staff.*

- Coordinate with NASEM's Director of Workforce Diversity and Inclusion to ensure that job openings are advertised widely and high-quality, diverse candidates are encouraged to apply for TRB positions.
- Assist and advise on implementation of NASEM-wide diversity efforts through TRB participation on the new NASEM Diversity Council and the NASEM DE&I Program Advisory Group.
- Enhance staff mentoring programs designed to develop new staff and give them a sense of inclusion as part of the TRB team.
- Develop opportunities for celebrating TRB workforce diversity.
- Display various photos of staff and volunteers in TRB offices to highlight diversity of TRB participants.
- Respond to results on the TRB staff survey by ensuring that the onboarding process is welcoming and the rewards and recognition are equitable.
- Coordinate with the NASEM DE&I Council on action items related to hiring and advancement.
- Expand outreach efforts to market positions to minority groups and organizations that represent those groups.

#### Strategy 6

*Ensure that TRB's programmatic activities (e.g., convening and other technical activities, consensus activities, and research projects) address diversity, equity, and inclusion and ensure results are disseminated.*

- Develop reports and projects in the CRPs, CAAS, and TAD that address DE&I-related topics.
- Sponsor/host workshops/conferences that have a DE&I theme and result in conference proceedings or e-circulars.
- Coordinate with USDOT (e.g., through its Office of Civil Rights), AASHTO, and APTA (e.g., through their civil rights-related committees) on DE&I efforts to work together and support one another.
- Conduct outreach to underrepresented groups who use and are impacted by the transportation system in order to better understand key issues that affect them.

- Continue to incorporate DE&I work by maintaining the open-access TRR collections (e.g., Equity in Transportation, Minority Student Fellows papers) and consider additional collections for other underrepresented groups.
- Host webinars that have DE&I-related topics.
- Maintain current and develop additional DE&I-related snap searches through TRB's Transportation Research Integrated Database (TRID)
- Address DE&I issues as part of any TRB strategic plan updates to demonstrate executive level commitment.
- Highlight DE&I in TRB's updated "Critical Issues in Transportation" document, to be released 2023.
- Identify equity-related issues within the scope of standing technical committees.
- Carry out a strategic review of the portfolio of equity-related projects to identify gaps and overlaps.
- Identify means so that those who are interested in DE&I issues can be aware of full range of activities in this area.

### Strategy 7

*Improve existing data, information, and communication mechanisms to support all strategies.*

- Implement NASEM's new racial/ethnic categories for collecting demographic data from TRB volunteers.
- Distribute data to standing committees prior to rotation, and share information and resources with committee members on potential candidates, including from NASEM fellowship programs, CRP panels working on projects related to the committee, and organizations with which TRB has MOUs.
- Increase the percentage of MyTRB profiles that have fully completed demographic information.
- Collect data on the panel members who were nominated but not selected for a CRP and follow up with outreach to encourage participation in standing committees and future CRP project panels.
- Compare technical standing committee demographic data with friends' demographic data during committee rotations.
- Review TRB promotional material and *TR News* to ensure that all content is represents a broad array of transportation professionals.
- Continue to release and update articles on its blogs, podcasts, weekly newsletter, and webinars that feature DE&I-related themes.
- Strengthen benchmark data used to compare TRB participation with national demographic data.