

Oregon Country Fair DEI Consultant Recommendations

In 2020 The Oregon Country Fair engaged four Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) professional consultants from different professional and personal diverse backgrounds after being interviewed by members of the board and Diversity Committee. These members were Siobahn Cancel (she her), Dr. Johnny Lake (he, him), Oblio Stroyman (they, them) and Mark Harris (Xai - The other part of me). The DEI consultants can continued to be reached at ocf.equity.diversity.inclusion@gmail.com

After being interviewed, the consultants were presented with a contract/work scope that in their professional opinion was unrealistic for the timelines and compensation offered, though even more significantly, did not meet the stage of development of the Oregon Country Fair in regards to DEI. The consultants wrote an amended work plan to take first steps with OCF leadership (in this case the board and Diversity Committee) as in the consultants' extensive professional experience the leadership of an organization has to set the precedent for valuing DEI, including; creating clear policies and procedures regarding DEI; speak a common language for DEI; assess and make public values regarding DEI; create grievance vectors for DEI violations; create and make public consequences for discriminatory/oppressive actions; diversify leadership and/or get diverse consultation; develop education programs in conjunction with everything listed about for the fair at large; before DEI work can be effective.

The consultants: facilitated listening sessions with the OCF board, diversity committee and interim executive director; conducted surveys with leadership and with fair family at large; delivered a six-hour training with the aforementioned leadership; formulated and delivered initial recommendations appropriate to the stage of DEI development of OCF to guide in an ongoing DEI process. The consultants will be following up with a small group of people in leadership in June 2021, and will do a complementary follow up after the virtual fair in July.

It is important to note to whomever reads this, and to whomever continues this DEI work at fair, that the consultants all feel like there could be a complete second "robust" report regarding the experience of working with fair as marginalized people doing DEI work. The consultants all feel that this experience was as telling as any survey answers, training or content, with very specific challenges that need to be addressed for the fair to do effective DEI work/work respectfully with marginalized people. The consultants may be willing to share some of this experience with future DEI consultants in a hand-off if they have the capacity, and would be willing to write this in-depth experiential report with supporting examples if compensated to do so.

1. Create a dedicated 1-2 FTE staff position split between 2 people who have a demonstrated background in DEI and who are members of marginalized communities. If funding is not readily available, write capacity building grants in the interim. These positions would:
 - a. educate and assist the board, staff, and decentralized leadership to take and maintain a strong stance that discrimination/oppression/abuse won't be tolerated.
 - b. in partnership with the team recommended in point 4 of this report **will set up systems for resolving grievances** staffed primarily by the folks who are part of marginalized communities (i.e. women, BIPOC folks, LGBTQIA+ folks) without favoring a dominant marginalized group (i.e. staffing it all with white women is not enough)
 - c. Create trainings
 - i. training folks to be inclusive and engaged in micro resistance.

- ii. training folks on DEI 101 and practical skills for interrupting on the ground oppression
 - iii. revisiting training for new hires and regular DEI practice for leadership to hone their skills
 - d. Help craft addendums to the current guidelines and code of conduct. Have folks who review these on a yearly basis to keep them up to date/make sure they are still relevant
 - e. Oversee the DEI specific grievance processes/responses.
 - f. Set up clear processes for grievances against leadership that do not involve leadership's friends as the decision makers.
 - g. Be involved in decision making with the Executive Director and Board.
 - h. Be a liaison to the Diversity Committee
 - i. Be a liaison to the BIPOC and LGBTQIA+ Sanctuaries, and 4A
 - j. Maintain an ongoing dialogue across the organization regarding DEI, especially supporting leaders in working with crews
- 2. OCF needs to commit to ongoing long term effective learning opportunities related to DEI and addressing structural and institutional "isms", this is not the responsibility of these DEI staff alone to deliver. This means bringing in outside trainers.
- 3. Hiring committees need to be composed of marginalized people from outside of the board/ED along with the board/ED staff members. This **cannot be one** marginalized person, as one person cannot speak for all, and more importantly, it puts undue duress on that one person.
 - a. The requirements for employment should be designed in such a way to remove institutional barriers for marginalized people (i.e. experience is more significant than advanced degrees). Consult with a DEI consultant who has experience in drafting these kinds of processes.
- 4. Assemble a team (potentially some of the diversity committee members) who will support the dedicated DEI staff. These folks are to be trained by professionals with a demonstrated expertise in consent, survivor trauma and intersectionality.
- 5. Have a team that will have a dedicated space/booth at fair to address grievances/violations that is staffed by folks on this team who are passionate to do so, and that has diverse representation. It is essential that a BIPOC person can talk to a BIPOC person, and LGBTQIA+ person can talk to another LGBTQIA+ person, and that someone who is sexually assaulted to be able to speak to an advocate. Make passess available for these folks.
 - a. Allocate resources to booths doing the diversity work on the grounds.
- 6. Diversity Committee:
 - a. Implement requirements for who serves on the Diversity committee.
 - b. Create a process for who serves, not just who decides that they want to, has for a long time, or who responds fastest
 - c. Slow down processes so those who are on the diversity committee, especially the most marginalized, have an opportunity to respond and/or step in. Many marginalized people have high work, family, and self care demands.
 - d. Marginalized voices need to be **centered** in the Diversity committee.

- e. Give the Diversity Committee passes for the emotional labor they do all year. This should not be a “side-job” at fair but rather a dedicated crew that is supported in focusing on their heavy task.
 - f. Diversity committee recommendations to the ED/board should be public and transparent to fair family whether or not they are taken, and should weigh heavily into decision making
7. In conjunction with the DEI staff position, the craft committee/craft inventory crew should:
- a. Re-evaluate the booth representative system/power through a DEI lens
 - b. The craft committee should find jurors with diverse representation, sourcing from organizations/non profits comprised of marginalized people
 - c. Re-evaluate the kid-crafter policies to assess barriers to opening craft slots up to more diversity
8. In conjunction with the dedicated DEI staff position, entertainment hiring practices should be re-evaluated through a DEI lens
- a. To include reaching out to folks in marginalized communities
 - b. To include a committee comprised on marginalized folks to help jury
 - c. To hold each stage accountable for this
 - d. To share with the sanctuaries/rainbow village folks who feel comfortable being advertised as LGBTQIA+, BIPOC, disabled so these spaces can have a schedule of these performances for the folks who want to specifically attend
9. Redesign the OCF Guidelines with a DEI lens. Some suggestions are included in the attached addendum.
10. Have a clear process of addressing DEI and assault violations, with not only consequences for the perpetrator, but support for the targets of abuse.
11. Implement a demographics Census, of all fair participants, to track where DEI elements are (where diverse people are working), and where improvements can be made. Have the team do something with this information and make it **public and transparent**.
12. Distribute Fair assessment DEI surveys with QR codes to surveys for folks to give feedback. Process and address that feedback in a **transparent public process**.
13. Offer camping passes to marginalized people **in addition to** day passes. Have a dedicated camping area for folks from marginalized groups as a sanctuary. If you do not offer this dedicated space, and marginalized people do not camp, you cannot chalk it up to **“they just don’t want to”** and reallocate those passes. Collect feedback on the camping experience and continue to implement recommended supports.
14. Implement a DanceSafe-like drug testing program, after the sweep.

15. Create multilingual signage
16. OCF needs to make sure all leadership is on board with DEI and the OCF guidelines around DEI. If there is a misstep, they should be offered further education. If they refuse to be on board or continue to harm, the fair needs to remove them. This is not discrimination for differing beliefs, this is the fair setting a code of conduct and values that people can self-select out of.
17. At the info booths have visual representation (pride flags, BLM images, disability) so folks know they can ask questions pertaining to DEI stuff
18. Write capacity building grants for DEI staffing and initiatives
19. Create a “ point of contact” intervention staff for advocacy on call. This means that when someone at fair is in an altercation - especially with fair staff- an advocacy team can come and assess/support/deescalate the situation and determine further action.
20. Dedicate a column in the Fair Family News to share what is happening in the fair’s DEI work in the interest of wide reaching communication and transparency. This could include progress on the recommendations, celebrated people/achievements, events at fair that are in the spirit of DEI etc.