



Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Action Plan

July 2021

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LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT AND CEO & CHAIR OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS – WHY DEI?

Dear U.S. Ski & Snowboard Members, Athletes, Staff, Partners, Colleagues, and Fans,

The Olympics showcases a global human spirit. At U.S. Ski & Snowboard, that human spirit is reflected in how deeply we value ourselves, others, fair play, and the ongoing pursuit of excellence and wellness.

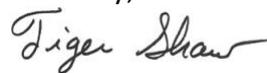
It is no secret that U.S. Ski & Snowboard, our sports, our industry, and our mountain towns are historically White. The ability to change the face of our sports requires systemic evolution, and we cannot do it alone. Despite many great programs in place, the industry needs more widespread initiatives for underrepresented communities to participate meaningfully. As an industry, much work remains in creating wider access to the mountains. As an organization, we also need to ensure a level playing field for those who strive to reach the top of their sport. We simply cannot be the Best in the World when only a small portion of our country is represented in our programs and our sports.

Elite performance cannot reach its highest levels when pursued in an elitist or inequitable way. In setting this Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Action Plan, our purpose is to implement best practices within our organization and our teams, and encourage other industry stakeholders to do the same. Collectively we can create a more welcoming culture, establish fair systems at all levels, and open the door wider to make skiing and snowboarding more accessible to athletes, professional staff, and communities with a more diverse array of backgrounds and identities.

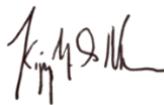
To drive these objectives, this Action Plan provides clarity on where we have been, where we are now, and a map of where we are going on our strategic DEI path for the next three years. The Action Plan does not mark the beginning of the work, nor will its completion mark the end of the work or the elimination of the imbalances that we seek to address. There will always be more to be done, and this plan will help to focus our efforts on key priorities and hold us accountable for changes within our organization over the next three years. We are committed to advancing DEI throughout our organization and our sport in a way that is both meaningful and lasting.

We won't be successful alone. To improve our sports and our communities, we invite you to work with us—side by side—as we embrace this important challenge. Please join us.

Sincerely,



Tiger Shaw
President and CEO



Kipp Nelson
Chair, Board of Directors

DEFINING DEI

Creating a shared language is an important first step in articulating our DEI objectives. U.S. Ski & Snowboard adopts the following definitions in alignment with definitions used by the U.S. Olympic & Paralympic Committee (USOPC), with the understanding that DEI language will continue to evolve and be updated:

Diversity - Developing a team of stakeholders/people from differing perspectives and backgrounds to drive innovation and increase cultural awareness.

Equity - Creating spaces and removing barriers so all people are treated fairly and have the same access to opportunities.

Inclusion - Enabling a welcoming and respectful environment that fosters belonging for all stakeholders/people and groups.

PROCESS & PARTICIPANTS

PROCESS

To develop this DEI Action Plan, U.S. Ski & Snowboard started with a fresh assessment of its prior DEI efforts and its current DEI status. Specifically, and as summarized in more detail in later sections of this Action Plan, we looked back at our 2017-2020 efforts and commissioned a comprehensive DEI Audit completed in November 2020 by Ashland Johnson of The Inclusion Playbook consulting firm.

U.S. Ski & Snowboard then analyzed a resulting menu of potential forward-looking action items with the assistance of DEI strategic advisor Annie Kao of Ascent Inclusion Consulting, gathering additional feedback and guidance from the DEI Strategic Planning Task Force and DEI Committee. Recommendations were then presented to our Board of Directors for discussion and acceptance. These steps collectively resulted in this DEI Action Plan, which identifies, describes, and prioritizes U.S. Ski & Snowboard's top actions for the next three fiscal years.

PARTICIPANTS

DEI Committee

Staff

Ellen Adams (<i>Chair</i>)	Lara Carlton	Ashley Laakso	Elise Saarela
Magnus Andersson	Patty Frechette	Charlotte Moats	Tiger Shaw
Lindsay Arnold	Megan Harrod	Jamie Nagle	Jeff Weinman
Sheryl Barnes	Gus Keading	Suzanne Rieske	

Board of Directors and Board of Trustees Representatives

Donna Carpenter	Henri Rivers
Sydney McNiff Johnson	Steve Strandberg
Kipp Nelson	

External Partners

Billy Demong	Mike Mallon	Justin Samuels	Lauren Samuels
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External Experts

Ashland Johnson, The Inclusion Playbook
Annie Kao, Ascent Inclusion Consulting

SUMMARY OF THE PAST & PRESENT

To chart a course of action going forward, U.S. Ski & Snowboard assessed its prior efforts as well as new information derived from a DEI Audit completed in November 2020, summarized here to inform and contextualize our next steps.

PAST: 2017-2020 Scope of DEI Efforts

In **2017**, U.S. Ski & Snowboard created its first Diversity and Inclusion Committee which was tasked with assessing the state of diversity and inclusion in the organization and to make recommendations. In 2018, we committed to creating and executing a plan to develop a more diverse and inclusive community within U.S. Ski & Snowboard in line with our Mission and Vision and drafted our first Diversity and Inclusion Statement.

Initial discussions of the Committee focused on gender imbalance, specifically between the number of men in coaching positions compared to the number of women, which had high disparities: 76/24% at the grassroots level, and 91/9% at the elite level; while athlete gender ratios at all levels tend to be around 55/45% (National team athletes: 55/45%; Club level athletes: 54/46%). A separate Gender Equity Task Force comprised of internal and external members was formed to further study this issue and present findings and recommendations.

With the formation of the Gender Equity Task Force, the following actions were taken in 2019 and 2020:

2019

- U.S. Ski & Snowboard adopted a new Diversity and Inclusion Statement with clear principles reflecting our commitment.
- A membership-wide survey on the barriers to women in coaching was completed and results were shared with the executive team and all staff in April 2019.
- Women's Alpine Development Camp took place at Mammoth. All eight guest coaches (sport and strength and conditioning) were women. Areas of focus included technical, tactical, culture, and conditioning. Based on feedback from the camp leadership, outcomes surpassed previous women's projects.
- Two female National Team Coaches and two female members of staff attended the International Female Seminar in Oslo, Norway, where they shared information and best practices around increasing the number of women in coaching and leadership roles in ski and snowboard sports.

- Four female cross country coaches participated in a one week coaching fellowship with U.S. Ski & Snowboard, where they worked alongside U.S. Ski Team coaches to assist and learn in a camp setting in Park City, UT and Lake Placid, NY.

2020

- Two new women National Team coach hires joined current U.S. Team coaches.
- Five Sport Liaisons were selected to be the conduit between the athletic staff and the Gender Equity Task Force, working on establishing goals and action steps.
- Two snowboard coach certification clinics were taught by and hosted specifically for women in collaboration with USASA.
- Adopted Rules Change to create equal opportunity for course setters.
- The International Coach of the Year Award was awarded to the second woman since the award's inception in 1998.

In the late Spring of 2020, the Diversity and Inclusion Committee (renamed the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Committee) was spurred into additional action in broader areas including racial disparity as events in the U.S. brought racial injustice to the forefront.

By June of 2020, along with other NGBs and sports organizations, U.S. Ski & Snowboard took immediate action and stood in solidarity against racial discrimination and exclusion. As our President and CEO said in his June letter:

“It is no secret that U.S. Ski & Snowboard and our sports are historically white and despite many great programs in place, we could use more widespread initiatives for marginalized communities to participate. We could attempt to justify this with excuses, but when you drill down, the core issue is that there has been a lack of broad responsibility to do so. We can start by improving our organization, and better engage with and support those around us. We will lead by action and use our influence to help others.”

On July 15, 2020, in the first of several planned events, a Board Member led a panel discussion on Discussing Racial Diversity in Snowsports; and on August 7, U.S. Ski & Snowboard featured a story showcasing one Black woman's experience in ski racing.

The DEI Committee also redefined its strategic pillars and prioritized its goals and objectives. The result was the creation of seven subcommittees each working toward the following overall DEI actions and goals:

1. AUDIT – DEI Audit to identify gaps and needs in policies, procedures, and practices, and make recommendations for improvement. To be conducted by The Inclusion Playbook with support from the DEI Audit Subcommittee.

2. TRAINING AND EDUCATION – Phase I: Create a plan for Board, Staff, and Athletes; Phase II: Create a plan for clubs, coaches, and officials.
3. WEBSITE AND PUBLIC FACING CONTENT – Further develop DEI content and increase representation of diversity, equity, and inclusion at all levels – grassroots to elite.
4. PARTNERSHIPS – Collaborate with like-minded organizations to increase accessibility to, and diversity in, our sport.
5. GENDER EQUITY IN SKI AND SNOWBOARD COACHING – with the Gender Equity Task Force reintegrated into DEI Committee work, to recruit, develop, and retain more women in ski and snowboard coaching.
6. RACIAL INCLUSION - Work toward making skiing and snowboarding and the introduction to competition, welcoming and accessible to underrepresented groups through partnerships and grassroots initiatives.
7. RECOGNITION – Establish an Annual Award to recognize a person, group, or organization that has positively heightened the awareness of diversity and inclusion efforts through various modes and media resulting in the increase and successful participation of currently underrepresented groups in the sport of skiing and snowboarding.

These steps marked U.S. Ski & Snowboard’s intentional and explicit expansion into a broader scope of DEI work, with a renewed commitment to investing time and resources in an appropriate and responsible manner as we strive to be Best in the World.

PRESENT: 2020 DEI Audit (by The Inclusion Playbook) & Accomplishments

To further assess the current U.S. Ski & Snowboard DEI landscape in more detail and to help generate the next phase of potential action items, in September 2020 we commissioned The Inclusion Playbook to conduct a comprehensive DEI Audit, completed in November 2020.

In summary, the Audit assessed our people, policies, and practices across three key diversity dimensions: racial justice, gender equity, and LGBTQ+ inclusion. From the Audit and additional input from the DEI Strategic Planning Committee, below is a summary of our organization's demographics, followed by U.S. Ski & Snowboard's top strengths, challenges, and opportunities in advancing DEI.

Demographics

The Audit's snapshot of the diversity data for our Board, staff, coaches, and members focuses on the available demographic categories of women and people of color (POC), because little to no data about LGBTQ+ diversity was available.

	Women	Men	POC	Non-POC	*LGBTQ+
Staff	39%	61%	1%	99%	N/A
Coaches	8%	92%	0%	100%	N/A
Members	40%	60%	.01%	99.9%	N/A
Board of Directors	33%	67%	0%	100%	N/A
Board of Trustees	17%	83%	2%	98%	N/A
Sport Committee	22%	78%	N/A	N/A	N/A

The Audit reinforced the need to track a more complete set of data, including demographic data for LGBTQ+ identities.

Strengths

The Audit and DEI Strategic Planning Committee identified a number of existing DEI strengths at U.S. Ski & Snowboard, including these top strengths:

- Solid employment protections for underrepresented communities
- A dedicated DEI Committee
- Recent strides in gender diversity, as described above
- A comprehensive DEI commitment statement
- A new community partner outreach strategy

Challenges

The Audit and DEI Strategic Planning Committee also identified the following top DEI challenges as of November 2020:

- The lack of a dedicated budget for DEI-focused work
- The lack of essential DEI training
- Extremely low racial diversity
- No data on people with LGBTQ+ identities
- The lack of a diverse pipeline for Board, staff, coaches, and members
- High financial costs associated with participating in the ski and snowboarding space

Opportunities

The Audit and DEI Strategic Planning Committee then identified categories of top opportunities as of November 2020, including:

- Edit or create clearer organizational policies with direct DEI impacts, for example policies addressing key issues such as paid family leave, protest protections, and codes of conduct. Collaborate with USOPC and other NGBs on sharing examples.
- Provide DEI training. Collaborate with USOPC and other NGBs on training and education resources.
- Improve data collection, including data on sexual orientation, transgender identities, and other gender identities
- Secure dedicated DEI budget and/or staff; identify funding sources for DEI work
- Develop DEI talent pipeline/recruitment strategies and retention programs at all levels (board, leadership, staff, committee, and members)
- Enhance external-facing DEI content and resources
- Invest in diverse community partners
- Advance DEI expectations with various third-party stakeholders

Actions (June 2020 - June 2021)

With the above strengths, challenges, and opportunities in mind, our DEI accomplishments of note over the past year have included:

- Implementation of Board diversification initiative
- DEI Committee expansion to include Board members and external thought leaders
- Budgeting for ongoing DEI work
- Completion of Internal DEI Audit (as described above)
- Retention of DEI Expert in consulting role
- Revision of DEI Statement
- Delivery of foundational DEI trainings for Board, staff, and athletes
- Preparation of a three-year DEI Training Plan

- Provision of educational opportunities through Panels, Seminars, and Club Excellence Conference led by individuals from underrepresented groups
- Revision of clearer hiring and onboarding practices
- Updating of Code of Conduct
- Initiation of data collection on LGBTQ+ identities
- Preparation of content for a baseline Inclusion Survey for Staff
- Establishment of High Performance Department DEI Fellowship
- Commitment to Partnerships - NBS (Summit Title Sponsor), SOS, Share Winter, YES
- Offered paid volunteer time off benefit opportunities for employees to engage with community-based organizations
- Establishment of a new DEI Champion Award
- Approval and release of this DEI Strategic Action Plan

STRATEGIC ACTION PLAN

In developing this plan, U.S. Ski & Snowboard's objective is to achieve a higher-performing organization with an inclusive culture, equitable systems, and a team benefitting from a more diverse range of backgrounds, experiences, and views.

Based on the results of the DEI Audit and additional feedback, U.S. Ski & Snowboard establishes the below three-year action plan matching its updated DEI pillars and corresponding owning Subcommittees. The hired DEI professional will work with each Subcommittee to further develop specific metrics/key performance indicators (KPIs) where applicable, to be reported back to the DEI Committee on an ongoing basis.

1. **LEADERSHIP & GOVERNANCE (previously the DEI Audit Subcommittee)**
 - a. **FY22 Goals:** Establish an ongoing dedicated DEI annual budget and resources through internal and/or external sources; draft/edit top 3-5 policies identified in the DEI Audit; collect LGBTQ+ data and analyze results; conduct a pulse baseline Inclusion Survey and potential focus groups and analyze results; begin implementing and training on new policies.
 - b. **FY23 Goals:** Incorporate the pulse Inclusion Survey questions into the recurring Employee Engagement Survey cycle; continue to develop and implement new/edited policies identified in the DEI Audit; consider additional or modified actions based on new data.
 - c. **FY24 Goals:** Assess effectiveness of new policies and adjust as needed; consider DEI policies influencing third parties (e.g. vendors, sponsors, venues, fans, etc.).

2. **TRAINING AND EDUCATION**
 - a. **FY22 Goals:** Establish a comprehensive, 3-year DEI Training Plan; deliver foundational DEI training for Board, Staff, and Athletes; present persuasive DEI programming at the Club Excellence Conference; provide cultural competency training in advance of the Beijing 2022 Olympics; confirm an annual schedule of commemorations celebrating diverse groups and events.
 - b. **FY23 Goals:** Develop and conduct training for clubs, coaches, and officials.
 - c. **FY24 Goals:** Continue to implement DEI Training Plan.

3. **EXPANDED ACCESS & REPRESENTATION (previously the separate Gender Equity and Racial Inclusion Subcommittees)** focusing on recruiting, retaining, and developing a more diverse range of underrepresented groups throughout U.S. Ski & Snowboard.
 - a. **FY22 Goals:** Draft organizational DEI Best Practices for recruiting, interviewing, hiring, and onboarding a more diverse pipeline of employees targeting underrepresented groups; assess and draft best practices for retention and advancement, including the exploration of mentorship opportunities; continue to implement actions advancing Gender Equity in Coaching as well as Racial Inclusion. Develop specific KPIs accordingly.

- b. **FY23 Goals:** Consider options such as expanding paid internship or fellowship programs to target underrepresented groups; extend/develop best practices to Athletes, Board of Directors, and Board of Trustees.
- c. **FY24 Goals:** Assess effectiveness of new Best Practices and adjust as needed.

4. RECOGNITION

- a. **FY22 Goals:** Establish an Annual DEI Award to recognize, elevate, and celebrate significant DEI advancements and achievements.
- b. **FY23 Goals:** Establish an additional Annual Women in Sport Award.
- c. **FY24 Goals:** Assess additional recognition opportunities.

5. WEBSITE AND PUBLIC FACING CONTENT

- a. **FY22 Goals:** Update DEI Statement and language in corresponding documents; update website content to affirm our commitment to DEI and begin to diversify imagery authentically, without tokenization or appropriation; look for ways to incorporate DEI concepts/storytelling into the public-facing content for the Beijing 2022 Olympics.
- b. **FY23 Goals:** Further develop DEI content and increase authentic representation of diversity, equity, and inclusion at all levels (grassroots to elite); improve website access to DEI info/resources.
- c. **FY24 Goals:** Develop a longer-term messaging and marketing strategy and best practices incorporating DEI principles and imagery, without tokenization or appropriation; consider multi-lingual access.

6. PARTNERSHIPS

- a. **FY22 Goals:** To advance DEI in sport entry, consistently invest in and collaborate with organizations that target underrepresented communities--this investment could be monetary and/or educational; build and leverage partnerships with various third parties to advance DEI (*e.g.* community partners, clubs/membership, resort partners).
- b. **FY23 Goals:** Expand collaboration with community partners and organizations that target a broader range of underrepresented communities.
- c. **FY24 Goals:** Assess effectiveness of existing partnerships and adjust as needed.

With this DEI Action Plan, U.S. Ski & Snowboard charts its path to advance DEI with clarity and to hold itself accountable to the many steps it will take to implement meaningful and sustainable change. While embarking on this process, we will remain agile, allowing for open minds and flexibility if circumstances warrant adjustments along the way.

This balance will allow U.S. Ski & Snowboard to remain steadfast, transparent, and purposeful in its commitment to make our organization and sport more diverse, equitable, and inclusive, in a manner that benefits long-term growth and success.

For more information about U.S. Ski & Snowboard's DEI platform and resources, please visit <https://usskiandsnowboard.org/about/diversity-equity-inclusion>.