



DIVERSITY, EQUITY & INCLUSION (DEI) RECOMMENDATIONS & STRATEGY REPORT

INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF
EMERGENCY MANAGERS - USA REGION

JANUARY 2024



2024

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DEI ROADMAP: THEMES & GOALS

1

DEI INITIATIVES & ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

This theme refers to the concerns and issues by groups from marginalized communities related to diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) within IAEM-USA as an organization. It mainly focuses on the perception of minority groups who have experienced that their perspectives and contributions are not sufficiently acknowledged or valued within the organization.

GOAL 1

Develop and implement a comprehensive DEI strategic plan

GOAL 2

Improve DEI awareness in emergency management, DEI skills among staff, leadership, and members, and more pathways to leadership positions

2

ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE & CLIMATE

This theme encompasses the varied perceptions about IAEM-USA's organizational culture. It explores the differing experiences of members, with some experiencing being valued and supported, and others, particularly from diverse backgrounds, reporting experiences of unfair or negative treatment.

GOAL 3

Foster a more inclusive IAEM-USA

GOAL 5

Establish effective communication strategies to foster collaboration and inclusivity

GOAL 4

Enhance collaboration and improve IAEM-USA's organizational culture and climate

3

LEADERSHIP & BOARD GOVERNANCE

This theme discusses the mixed experiences with and perceptions of the leadership and governance of IAEM-USA. It highlights the confidence expressed by some members in leadership's abilities, contrasted with dissatisfaction or uncertainty reported by others, particularly younger members and members of historically underrepresented groups.

GOAL 6

Improve alignment among membership and leadership (Chairs/Vice Chairs, Staff, Board)

GOAL 8

Provide intentional DEI and conflict resolution training

GOAL 7

Increase transparency and frequency of communication around DEI efforts

4

POLICIES & PROCEDURES

This theme underlines the generational differences in understanding and satisfaction with IAEM-USA's policies and practices. It highlights a trend where older, more established members are generally more satisfied and knowledgeable, while younger and newer members experiencing dissatisfaction.

GOAL 9

Establish and streamline clear policies, procedures, and feedback loops to ensure safety and inclusivity

GOAL 11

Align recruitment and retention roles, responsibilities, and resources

GOAL 10

Implement transparent and standardized processes and structures for committees, caucuses, and board leadership

STRATEGIC RECOMMENDATIONS

#1 DEI INITIATIVES & ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

This theme refers to the concerns and issues by groups from marginalized communities related to diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) within IAEM-USA as an organization. It mainly focuses on the perception of minority groups who have experienced that their perspectives and contributions are not sufficiently acknowledged or valued within the organization.

GOALS

GOAL 1

Develop and implement a comprehensive DEI strategic plan

GOAL 2

Improve DEI awareness in emergency management, DEI skills among staff, leadership, and members, and more pathways to leadership positions

ACTIONS

- 1** Establish a formalized DEI institutional strategic plan (which includes a well-defined vision, purpose, goals, actions, milestones, stakeholder responsibilities, etc.), involves staff & committee feedback during its creation, and promotes a shared purpose for emergency managers
- 2** Define and disseminate common DEI definitions for membership-wide use
- 3** Review and stay up to date with FEMA's resources and recommended partners for aligning on DEI needs in emergency management
- 4** Create a DEI mission statement to support IAEM-USA's goals for a more diverse, equitable, and inclusive environment
- 5** Add DEI initiatives and goals within the annual report and make it public to all IAEM members
- 6** Develop education and communications around the pathways to leadership roles within IAEM-USA to increase opportunities for underrepresented members

STRATEGIC RECOMMENDATIONS

#2 ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE & CLIMATE

This theme encompasses the varied perceptions about IAEM-USA's organizational culture. It explores the differing experiences of members, with some experiencing being valued and supported, and others, particularly from diverse backgrounds, reporting experiences of unfair or negative treatment.

GOALS

GOAL 3

Foster a more inclusive IAEM-USA

GOAL 4

Enhance collaboration and improve IAEM-USA's organizational culture and climate

GOAL 5

Establish effective communication strategies to foster collaboration and inclusivity

ACTIONS

- 7** Work with committees to utilize the DEI Assessment & Findings results, which highlight the experiences of underrepresented groups, to develop action plans to address their needs
- 8** Provide yearly and required DEI training for all Board members, Committee & Caucus leaders. Provide DEI training opportunities for members. Topics to include are unconscious bias, microaggressions, utilizing I-DIEM (Institute for Diversity and Inclusion in Emergency Management) as a tool for operating with a DEI lens in emergency management, etc.
- 9** Choose IAEM-USA conference locations that do not have harmful laws against marginalized communities and are not cost-prohibitive to a majority of members
- 10** Formally recognize cultural events and holidays that capture IAEM-USA's diverse membership population
- 11** Announce expectations for respectful interactions before in-person gatherings and communicate clear repercussions (i.e. certificate revocation) for those who violate the sexual harassment policy
- 12** Provide regular (quarterly/monthly) IAEM community building group calls to foster networking and inclusivity
- 13** Provide mentorship program for new IAEM members to connect with current members
- 14** Sponsor special events (e.g. external speaker) to foster DEI topic dialogues and learning
- 15** Engage external partners (i.e. academia, health care) to increase learning exchange and increase exposure to EM as a professional field
- 16** Engage, support, and cross-promote events and programming by IAEM committees and caucuses to cultivate an invested community
- 17** Foster communication with members around how to advocate for their associations and provide feedback loops for member concerns
- 18** Provide regular town halls to share updates on IAEM goals, actions, and upcoming events for all members to attend and ask questions
- 19** Promote and increase opportunities for international members and members of IAEM-USA to share case studies and best practices when it comes to serving diverse populations.

STRATEGIC RECOMMENDATIONS

#3 LEADERSHIP & BOARD GOVERNANCE

This theme discusses the mixed experiences with and perceptions of the leadership and governance of IAEM-USA. It highlights the confidence expressed by some members in leadership's abilities, contrasted with dissatisfaction or uncertainty reported by others, particularly younger members and members of historically underrepresented groups.

GOALS

GOAL 6

Improve alignment among membership and leadership (chairs/vice chairs, staff, board)

GOAL 7

Increase transparency and frequency of communication around DEI efforts

GOAL 8

Provide intentional DEI and conflict resolution training

ACTIONS

20

Provide regular opportunities for Committee, Commission and Caucus leaders to give feedback, voice concerns, and share suggestions for improved membership culture and climate in a psychologically safe environment

21

Provide coaching and/or workshop sessions for Staff, Board members, Committee, Commission and Caucus leaders designed for cultivating community and efforts towards building trust and restoring relationships

22

Develop communication structures for feedback, notification of key information, and transparency of DEI initiatives for IAEM members

23

Ensure consistent and clear communications around changes to roles, responsibilities, policies, procedures, and goals with members and conference attendees

24

Determine a consistent location, such as a dashboard or website, to share updates on progress around the DEI strategic plan

25

Provide targeted DEI training for Board members and Committee and Caucus leaders (i.e. cultural competency, conflict resolution, community building, etc.)

26

Provide targeted DEI training for IAEM Staff and leadership (i.e. cultural competency, conflict resolution, community building, etc.)

27

Ensure trainings occur regularly when new folks are elected into their respective positions

STRATEGIC RECOMMENDATIONS

#4 POLICIES & PROCEDURES

This theme underlines the generational differences in understanding and satisfaction with IAEM-USA's policies and practices. It highlights a trend where older, more established members are generally more satisfied and knowledgeable, while younger and newer members experiencing dissatisfaction.

GOALS

GOAL 9

Establish and streamline clear policies, procedures, and feedback loops to ensure safety and inclusivity

GOAL 10

Implement transparent and standardized processes and structures for committees, caucuses, and board leadership

GOAL 11

Align recruitment and retention roles, responsibilities, and resources

ACTIONS

28

Develop HR team & policies for IAEM for members to report cases such as harassment, discrimination, etc.

29

Provide ongoing opportunities for members to communicate with Board leadership and IAEM Staff through anonymous and non-anonymous means.

30

Develop culturally sensitive and inclusive conflict resolution processes to address issues that arise among staff, leaders, members, and conference attendees

31

Remove gendered language in all policies and procedures in place at IAEM

32

Review Administrative Policies & Procedures (APPs) to ensure clarity and ease of understanding and make it easily accessible to all membership

33

Update policies to allow for Committee members to elect their Chair and Vice Chair each year

34

Expand work experience considerations for those applying to CEM

35

Review and revise recruitment processes including Board search, Committee and Caucus leader search, and new membership recruitment

36

Review and revise retention practices to support DEI objectives, such as mentorship, professional development, and leadership advancement

37

Roll out revised recruitment and retention processes to membership to ensure alignment on DEI goals and objectives

DEI STRATEGIC PLAN

The DEI strategic plan is the final portion of this report and is meant to serve as a guide for the implementation of the goals and actions outlined in the strategic recommendations sections of this report. It outlines specific goals, strategies, responsible parties, timelines, and evaluation mechanisms, ensuring that the organization's efforts are focused, actionable, and measurable. The DEI strategic plan is crucial as it provides direction for IAEM-USA to address opportunities identified in the DEI assessment.

The purpose of this DEI strategic plan is manyfold: on a national scale, this plan supports the 2022-2026 FEMA Strategic Plan (“Goal 1: Instill equity as a foundation of emergency management”). Emergency managers are integral when it comes to considering the diversity of needs across subgroups, approaching diverse populations with inclusivity, and creating equitable plans and processes. IAEM-USA seeks to prepare and provide resources to emergency managers in their professional roles: access to educational materials around DEI for EMs and forums for sharing best practices are key additions IAEM-USA can facilitate. Furthermore, this strategic plan can set the stage for an improved organizational culture that invests in the future of new emergency managers from a variety of educational backgrounds, work experience, and geographic locations.

It is essential that key leaders of IAEM-USA create a timeline with specific milestones and deadlines in order to take action on this strategic plan. Additionally, a framework for monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of the initiatives recommended in the strategic plan is tantamount. This may involve regular progress assessments, surveys, feedback mechanisms, or other evaluation tools to measure the impact of the DEI efforts, and to identify areas for improvement. We recommend that the President of IAEM-USA with Board Leadership and in collaboration with IAEM-USA Staff create the timeline for this strategic plan, identify the appropriate framework for measuring results, identify DEI champions within IAEM-USA to support implementation of the plan (such as the DEI Committee), and coordinate with the Board on reviewing progress and feedback at appropriate milestones. An important distinction is that DEI champions should only support the relevant parts of the DEI strategic plan, and are not responsible for the execution of the entire plan. The ownership lies within the IAEM-USA President, Board, and IAEM-USA staff (for continuity across elections). By following this strategic plan, the association can make tangible and meaningful progress in creating a more inclusive and equitable environment for all individuals who contribute to the environment of IAEM-USA.

The strategic plan is structured in phases to serve as a framework for IAEM-USA to organize and prioritize the goals and actions from the recommendations portion of this report based on immediate needs, resources available, and overall staff and leadership capacity.

DEI STRATEGIC PLAN

PHASE 1

Establish Structure &
Plan



In this phase, the structure and plan for any DEI initiative are established by prioritizing and organizing the goals and actions in the recommendations portion of this report. This includes outlining the goals, objectives, and scope of the DEI initiative overall, as well as identifying the resources and team members needed to carry out the plan. Team roles and responsibilities are determined, as well as a meeting cadence to discuss, implement, monitor, and evaluate the DEI initiative plan over time.

PHASE 2

Communicate &
Mobilize Plan with
Stakeholders



During phase 2, the plan is communicated with stakeholders, including members, staff, leadership, board, public, and other relevant parties. This phase also involves mobilizing stakeholders to take action and support the plan and ensuring that everyone has the necessary resources and support to carry out their tasks effectively.

PHASE 3

Implement &
Monitor Plan



This phase involves carrying out the tasks and activities outlined in the plan, as well as monitoring progress and making adjustments as needed.

PHASE 4

Gather Feedback &
Evaluate Plan

In the final phase, feedback is gathered from stakeholders, and the plan is evaluated. This helps to determine the success of the DEI initiative and identify areas for improvement.

***Ongoing throughout all phases: Communication with all stakeholders**

CONCLUSION

In summary, this strategic report serves as a comprehensive guide to addressing diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) within IAEM-USA. By implementing the goals and actions outlined in this report, IAEM-USA can create a more inclusive and equitable environment for all individuals involved in the organization.

This report emphasizes the importance of developing and implementing a DEI strategic plan, improving DEI awareness and skills among staff and leadership, fostering a more inclusive organizational culture, enhancing collaboration, and improving communication strategies. It also highlights the need to improve alignment among membership and leadership, increase transparency, provide DEI and conflict resolution training, establish clear policies and procedures, and align recruitment and retention efforts.

It is crucial for all stakeholders to take responsibility and actively contribute to the execution of this plan. By doing so, IAEM-USA can make tangible and meaningful progress in creating an environment that values and supports the diverse perspectives and contributions of its members. When this plan is collectively received and implemented, positive long-lasting change can be enacted within IAEM-USA.