

# National Ecological Observatory Network (NEON) Program Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Plan

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NEON is a major facility sponsored by the National Science Foundation and proudly operated by Battelle

# A Message from Battelle President and CEO, Lou Von Thayer

At Battelle, we're driven by our mission—to translate scientific discovery and technology advances into societal benefit. We succeed by attracting, engaging, retaining and developing the best and brightest minds in their fields to work together to solve some of the world's most difficult challenges.

As a research institution, diversity is one of our strongest assets—we celebrate the characteristics that make every individual different. Our employees, we call them “Solvers,” inject our culture with their perspectives formed through widely diverse life experiences, educational backgrounds, geographic origins, socioeconomic statuses, communication styles and everything else that makes them unique.

New ways of thinking are critical to Battelle's success, and we arrive at the best ideas through the inclusion of input from all those involved, which is why we strive for diversity, inclusion and collaboration across all levels of our organization. We measure inclusion by the extent to which an employee feels valued and we generate ideas and solutions by collaborating with peers who work and think differently.

Our commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion starts with education. As part of our mission to do the greatest good, we are committed to extending the reach of STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) learning opportunities to all learners. Together with public and private partners, we're bringing quality STEM education to hundreds of thousands of students across the United States.

In 2018, Battelle signed the Columbus Commitment: Achieving Pay Equity, a voluntary pay equity commitment created by the Columbus Women's Commission, because we embrace equal pay for women and minorities. Our compensation methodology ensures that all employees at all locations are paid equitably.

As we witness a rise in protest against decades of structural and institutional racism and the senseless killing of Black and Brown Americans, Battelle signed a letter in May 2020 in support of a Columbus City Council resolution declaring racism as a public health crisis. Battelle is committed to working toward solutions with civility and collaboration and we stand with Mayor Ginther and leaders across Columbus in our commitment to fight all forms of racism.

I've also committed to the CEO Action for Diversity and Inclusion initiative, the largest CEO driven commitment to advance diversity and inclusion in the workplace, which aims to improve workplace diversity through efforts such as unconscious bias training and open dialogue.

As we strive to stay at the forefront of scientific innovation, we're committed to continuous improvement across all aspects of our business, including our focus on diversity.

Lou Von Thayer  
President and Chief Executive Officer

## Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Strategy

Building a diverse, equitable, and inclusive culture doesn't happen without an intentional focus and commitment to workplace policies and practices that help foster and grow a diverse workforce.

Recruiting from diverse talent pools ensures that we are hiring the best and brightest to help us solve some of the world's most challenging problems. Battelle collaborates with women's groups and minority associations on college campuses, as well as regional and community-level minority development councils and events, to promote employment opportunities and to identify highly qualified candidates.

Battelle offers a variety of professional development opportunities to support employees at every level. To support leaders in strengthening a diverse, equitable, and inclusive culture, Battelle offers leadership-focused learning experiences. Battelle's leadership development program titled "Manager Learning Experience" ("MLE") explores unconscious bias and inclusion, helping leaders develop the skills they need to better guide their teams. The MLE unconscious bias and inclusion has a three-part e-learning component as well as a quick checklist to help managers understand what unconscious bias is and how it shows up in the workplace and gives managers the tools to challenge and disrupt these unconscious biases.

In addition to the aforementioned annual trainings, managers are required to participate in this comprehensive MLE that covers topics ranging from performance management to compliance. Any employee that becomes a direct people manager is required to participate in the MLE within the first 18 months of becoming a manager, and all existing managers are required to take certain components of the MLE.

Annually, all employees are required to complete ethics and harassment awareness training courses to ensure they are aware of Battelle's Code of Conduct and the expectations for legal and ethical behavior. Battelle also requires employees to annually review its Policy Manual. The Policy Manual, as well as the accompanying e-learning, specify that Battelle is an equal employment opportunity employer and that discrimination will not be tolerated. In 2020, Battelle implemented a mandatory annual Workplace Harassment training for all employees and new hires. The Workplace Harassment training has an additional component specifically designed for managers that gives managers additional tools to recognize and address workplace harassment.

Battelle makes every effort to create an environment where staff feel comfortable raising ethical concerns through management. In February 2020, Battelle provided all NEON staff a laminated ethics card containing Battelle Ethics Hotline contact information, and alternative reporting

information for staff that feel they need another option.

In addition, employee-led diversity workshops are held throughout the year, covering topics ranging from veterans' issues to appropriate terminology to the role of protests as catalyst for change to how to be an ally to other groups.

From actively participating in Pride celebrations in our communities to recognizing and celebrating our employees' diverse cultural heritages, Battelle is committed to ensuring that every employee feels safe, valued, and included.

## **CORPORATE ACTIONS**

### **Annual Reporting and Analysis**

Annually, Battelle submits its EEO-1 and VETS 4212 report as required by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission and the Department of Labor.

Further, Battelle annually assesses its progress toward its affirmative action goals pursuant to Executive Order 11246. The Office of Federal Contractor Compliance Programs periodically audits Battelle to ensure compliance with this Executive Order and monitors Battelle's progress as it relates to goals for women, minorities, individuals with disabilities, and veterans. As part of this annual review, Battelle does monitor the progress to goals for employees.

### **Self-Identification Campaign**

Battelle is committed to building a diverse, equitable, and inclusive culture that embraces and celebrates qualities and experiences that make our employees unique. To recognize, celebrate, and support all our employees, including improved benefit considerations and other support services and programs, we must understand how employees identify themselves. Battelle revised its self-identification process and now allows applicants, new hires, and current employees an opportunity to self-identify their LGBTQ status in addition to race/ethnicity, disability status, and veteran status. In this form, Battelle clearly states to applicants, new hires, and employees that Battelle does not discriminate on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression, and that Battelle's goal is for each employee to have the opportunity to grow their abilities and to achieve personal and organizational objectives. As part of this voluntary self-identification process, applicants, new hires, and employees are given this document with the following terms defined: bisexual, gay, gender expression, gender identity, lesbian, LGBTQ, queer, sexual orientation, and transgender. This form is given to all new hires during on-boarding and is accessible to all existing employees at any time, along with the forms on self-identification of race/ethnicity, disability status, and veteran status. Battelle underwent a target campaign in 2020

to educate employees on the importance of accurate self-identification and leveraged technology to make it easier for employees to do so throughout their career at Battelle.

## Mission First

Mission First is about ensuring that Battelle remains world class in technical advancements, is an employer of choice, and is continuously growing in order to fulfill our philanthropic and STEM education goals. Unity, Creativity, Collaboration, Excellence, and Appreciation are Battelle's values that form the foundation for Mission First, our collective effort to strengthen Battelle's culture. They signify how we work with one another and with clients, and they help ensure that we are all working toward the same goal and purpose. More than just ideals to strive for, our values are the attitudes, characteristics, and behaviors that guide our decision-making and actions, enabling us to be at our best.

We help our staff stay engaged and connected both to Battelle's mission and to that of the NEON program by giving staff the tools to be at their best. We want our staff to be innovative and creative, remain curious, have a "blue chip" mindset, and bring their best selves to work. Creating a Mission First environment began by hosting mandatory sessions for all employees to learn about our values and learn from one another how to implement these values. The next phase of cultivating the Mission First environment was to solicit champions to remind their colleagues of these concepts, and to help keep these concepts at the forefront of how we do business.

## Pronouns in the Workplace

Battelle published formatting recommendations for employees to add pronouns to their email signatures. This standard has been promoted and adopted throughout the enterprise. At Battelle, employees have the option of articulating their preferred name. Using a person's chosen name and desired pronouns is a form of mutual respect and basic courtesy. Everyone deserves to have their self-ascribed name and pronouns respected in the workplace.

## Human Rights Campaign Corporate Equality Index (HRC CEI) 2020

The HRC CEI is a national benchmarking tool that evaluates and assesses corporate policies and practices for LGBTQ employees. In its inaugural year of participation, Battelle received a score of 75/100. There were 1,059 businesses across the country that participated. Battelle is continuously evaluating its policies and practices to create a more inclusive environment for LGBTQ employees, vendors, and clients.

## Annual Pay Equity Analysis

Battelle conducts an annual pay equity analysis as it relates to women and minorities. Specifically,

Battelle reviews all its jobs and performs a statistical analysis to ensure that its employees are compensated fairly and equitably.

### Tracking

The National Ecological Observatory Network (NEON) program is one among hundreds of projects conducted annually at Battelle. Tracking each program separately is not practical, nor meaningful in most cases. A large portion of NEON program employees whose time is devoted 100% to the NEON program include field technicians and ecologists. The annual assessment toward affirmative action goals and pay equity are conducted for all job series. As a result, Battelle can and does monitor the percentage of women, minorities, individuals with disabilities, and veterans including those in the job series which include the NEON program field technicians and scientists.

### Hiring Activities

Battelle is committed to hiring qualified individuals to fill positions that contribute to the overall strategic success of the company. Each employee is hired to make a significant contribution to Battelle. It is Battelle's policy to promote an organizational culture that recognizes the importance of a diverse workforce and a commitment to uphold equal employment opportunity standards. As part of this commitment, all employees involved in the recruitment, selection, and hiring of Battelle employees will engage Battelle's Talent Acquisition and Recruiting team for the management of all internal and external recruitment activities. All NEON program positions will be advertised via Direct Employers Association to ensure Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs (OFCCP) compliance.

In the past fiscal year, Battelle has also engaged in the following activities to support DEI recruiting:

Outreach	Groups Reached	Dates
George Mason Career Fair	STEM Career Fair	10/2/2019
North Carolina A&T State Career Fair	HBCU	10/2/2019
Morgan State University Career Fair	HBCU	10/16/2019
Norfolk State University Career Fair	HBCU	10/23/2019
Society of Hispanic Professional Engineer	Hispanic/Latino	10/30/2019 - 11/4/2019
Annual Biomedical Research Conference for Minority Students	Minority Conference	11/13/2019 - 11/16/2019
The National Organization for the Professional Advancement of Black Chemists and Chemical Engineers	African American	11/18/2019 - 11/21/2019
University of Cincinnati SACNAS Event	Infosession	3/5/2020
American Military University	Veterans	5/20/2020

Upcoming		
Outreach	Groups Reached	Dates
American Military University	National Security	8/12/2020
The National Society of Black Engineers	Conference	TBD
National Urban League	Conference	TBD
The Ohio State Engineering Career Fair	Diversity Specific	TBD
Carnegie Mellon Technical Engineering Fair	Computer Science & Engineering	TBD

In addition to these activities, Battelle also engages in on-going activities to ensure that the pool of applicants it receives is as diverse as possible. Following is a list of activities that Battelle engages in regularly:

- Provide job listings to the requisite state job banks or local employment service delivery systems in a manner and format “permitted” by those entities.
- Send notice to requisite state job banks or local employment service delivery systems stating: (1) the company’s status as a federal contractor; (2) the desire for priority referrals of veterans for job openings at all locations within the state; (3) the name and location of each hiring location within the state; and (4) the contact information for the “contractor official” responsible
- Ensure that the “EEO is the Law” poster is available in job applications, on-site, and electronically on Battelle’s intranet
- Ensure that the appropriate Equal Opportunity clauses are flowed down to any vendors or subcontractors
- Provide job applicants and employees the opportunity to voluntarily self-identify their race or

ethnicity, disability-status, veteran-status, or LGBTQ status

- Provide job applicants and employees the opportunity to request a reasonable accommodation under the Americans with Disabilities Act
- Provide training to Talent Acquisition and Management on what it means to be an equal employment opportunity employer and unconscious bias through Manager Learning Experience and annual Code of Conduct and Business Ethics training

## Employee Resource Groups

Our Employee Resource Groups (ERGs) are key to fostering a culture of inclusion and provide opportunities for employees to develop their leadership skills, receive support and encouragement, and grow personally. Our ERGs are voluntary, employee-led teams that nurture a diverse, equitable, and inclusive workplace in alignment with our mission, values, strategy, and culture. Battelle will ensure that the employees supporting the NEON program are aware of these ERGs and afforded the opportunity to participate. Battelle ERGs include:

- **Embrace** advocates and champions for racial diversity at Battelle and leads efforts to recognize and celebrate employees' heritage through efforts including Black History Month and Hispanic Heritage Month.

In June 2020, Embrace led several town halls and plans to continue at least through the end of the calendar year, encouraging employees to continue the conversation on racial injustice. These town halls vary in topic from white privilege to intersectionality, also featuring external experts as hosts. These sessions are recorded and posted for all. In addition to the town halls, Embrace has curated an organization-wide book club. Employees are reading the book "What If?" by Steve Robbins. This participation is through "What If" book circles and posting on Yammer. "What If" discussion circles include 10 employees with participants following a designated reading schedule.

There were also several efforts around philanthropy. Embrace partnered with the Philanthropy team to include anti-racist organizations to our Always Giving platform and the corporate matches were doubled for the months of June and July. The Affinity Board hosted a "We Embrace Diversity Because" campaign, encouraging employees to create a sign sharing why diversity and inclusion is important to them. The challenge was, for every picture posted to Yammer of employees with their sign, Battelle would make a \$10 donation to the Equal Justice Initiative; a total of \$1,010 was raised. Battelle also made a



corporate donation of \$100,000 to both the Equal Justice Initiative and the United Negro College Fund.

- **Prism** advocates for Battelle’s lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and allied (LGBTQA) employees in a way that makes all people feel safe, supported and welcome regardless of their sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression so that employees, potential employees, customers and business partners see Battelle as an employer and business partner of choice. Through Prism, Battelle plays an active role in supporting Gay Pride Month through festivals and parades in the communities where our employees live and work.

One of Prism’s most important roles is to educate employees about LGBTQ+ issues and offer an open forum for discussion. In June 2020, Prism offered a webinar called LGBTQ+ 101. This session was part training, part discussion and covered topics including sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, pronouns and more. Prism also partnered with the multicultural ERG, Embrace, to host “Protests as Catalysts for Change”. This was a moderated discussion centered on the PBS documentary “Stonewall Uprising” and how current events are in parallel with the LGBTQ+ movement. Discussion questions were posted in advance of the event so that participants had time to reflect before the discussion. These events had exceptional attendance and engagement and received positive feedback from employees and senior leadership.

- **Women’s Network** raises employee awareness and fosters greater understanding and participation in events like Women’s History Month so that Battelle is successful in achieving its business goals and is increasingly recognized as an employer of choice for women seeking to reach their full potential. The Women’s Network also supports community efforts to support women in STEM careers. Organizations supported by the Women’s Network include:
  - **Women for Economic and Leadership Development (WELD)** Battelle is a corporate sponsor of the Central Ohio WELD chapter, allowing a limited number of Battelle employees to use corporate membership slots to participate in local events and expand leadership skills and professional networks.
  - **Ruling Our eXperiences (ROX)** is a local non-profit organization focused on empowering girls through evidence-based programming. In 2018, Battelle supported a national survey of

more than 10,000 girls to better understand the factors related to girls' abilities, perceptions and aspirations, resulting in the largest study of its kind, The Girls' Index™: New Insights into the Complex World of Today's Girls. Battelle employees also volunteer as guest speakers at ROX events, giving student participants professional female role models who they can relate to and aspire to emulate.

- **NextGen** advocates for early career and passionate business professionals within Battelle, as well as provide a strategic resource for improving Battelle's ability to attract, develop, retain and engage a diverse workforce.

# National Ecological Observatory Network (NEON)

## NEON Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Program Actions

The National Ecological Observatory Network (NEON) is a large facility project funded by the National Science Foundation (NSF) and operated by Battelle. In alignment with NSF core values, the Observatory is designed to advance scientific discovery and understanding while promoting teaching, training, and learning, and broadening the participation of under-represented groups.

In August 2020, the NEON program initiated a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) committee that integrates staff from across the Observatory. This Integrated Product Team (IPT) is charged with supporting efforts to promote DEI within the NEON program and the external community that it serves. The group's goals for the upcoming year include: to provide periodic review of DEI goals and strategies; to identify best practices for conduct in external engagement activities (Code of Conduct); to suggest mechanisms to improve DEI in education, engagement, and outreach activities that can be measured, tracked, and acted upon; and to make recommendations to leadership to ensure best practices are followed internally to institutionalize a culture of inclusion

As Battelle employees, the NEON staff have access to all the training for managers and employees. This includes annual business ethics and conduct training that is required for all employees. Other annual requirements include training on workplace harassment, with modules focused on both employees and managers. Battelle's Mission First culture training has been completed by nearly all employee on the NEON program (over 95% to date) and all new employees are required to participate in the program as part of their onboarding process. Additional training for managers and employees is available on Battelle's online training system and includes modules on unconscious bias and inclusion and a Manager Learning Experience for all new managers. All employees also have access to degreed.com, an online learning center with dozens of seminars and resources on diversity, equity and inclusion in the workplace.

## Domain-based Plan for Engagement with Diverse Groups

NEON program field employees actively seek opportunities to engage with and involve under-represented groups in STEM activities. A list of more than 780 contacts from Minority Serving Institutions (MSI) and other student and community groups focused on increasing DEI in STEM

was developed in the previous year to support this engagement. As part of this effort we have established a yearly goal for each domain field office to conduct at least one presentation or event focused on under-represented groups, with a broader goal to have at least 5% of all NEON engagement activities reaching these groups. We are also developing a professional development opportunity for NEON domain field staff, in partnership with the American Geophysical Union's Thriving Earth Exchange, to support NEON engagement with local communities. As we identify and establish relationships through our field science teams, additional engagement activities will be identified and assessed.

### Recruitment Engagement with Diverse Groups

NEON will use the list of contacts serving diverse groups to promote employment and training opportunities across these organizations and through the Environmental Data Science Inclusion Network (EDSIN). Two to three 'Explore NEON' workshops are planned each year to provide data skills training and introduction to NEON data. There is an application process for host institutions; in both recruiting and selection, Minority Serving Institutions are given preference. We plan to post NEON program openings at MSIs that are in close proximity to NEON field sites. We have established a goal of attending five diversity recruitment events annually.

### Workshop Participation Plan

Developed by NEON and its collaborators with funding made available through the long-running and successful NSF INCLUDES program (Inclusion across the Nation of Communities of Learners of Underrepresented Discoverers in Engineering and Science), the Environmental Data Science Inclusion Network (EDSIN) will continue to serve NEON as a network of colleagues leading efforts to promote DEI within the data science and environmental science fields. As the current network leader, NEON program employees have initiated an EDSIN Slack group to facilitate communications across network members and host monthly community calls. In December 2020, staff will be leading a virtual workshop to replace an in-person event originally scheduled in March 2020 at Spelman College. The workshop will allow members to contribute ideas to a shared vision, goals, and strategic activities to implement over the next year. During this time, NEON plans to transition its leadership role in EDSIN and remain actively engaged.

## **A Message from NEON Chief Scientist and Observatory Director**

With the rest of Battelle, the NEON program is committed to cultivating an inclusive culture and work environment that reflects the diversity of our community. Specifically, we aim to have a workforce that draws from across society and have in place a safe and welcoming environment that promotes retention, interaction, collaboration, and innovation. In the upcoming year we want to better understand diversity, equity, and inclusion approaches that will further improve our internal culture and our services to the scientific community and public. Whether you are a member of our NEON staff or part of the scientific and education community that we seek to enable with NEON data and infrastructure, I encourage you to reach out to us with any questions, concerns, or ideas for improvement.

Paula Mabee  
Chief Scientist and Observatory Director

***BATTELLE***

**It can be done**