

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 Thaer

At Battelle, we're driven by our mission "to translate scientific discovery and technology advances into societal benefit." Our success is made possible by attracting, engaging, developing and retaining the best and brightest individuals who solve some of the world's most difficult challenges.

Our employees, we call them "Solvers," come from all walks of life. Embracing and celebrating their diversity ensures that the widest range of perspectives are brought forth when tackling big problems. We work to make sure that every employee feels welcome, safe and valued so that they can bring their authentic self to solving on behalf of our customers.

We approach diversity with the widest lens possible to include race, color, ethnicity, age, sex (including pregnancy, gender identity, gender expression and sexual orientation), religion, national origin, educational background, physical ability, veteran and socio-economic status. Our focus on diversity doesn't end with recognizing what makes individuals unique, we also work to ensure that each Solver is treated equitably recognizing that some populations face disadvantages that have long been built into society.

Over the past several years, our work has paid off. Battelle scored a perfect 100 on the most recent Corporate Equality Index. We have robust processes in place to ensure pay equity. We have formed a new, internal networking partnership program called "Close the Gap" to bring people of color into networks with Battelle senior leaders for more visibility. And, understanding the value of providing students with meaningful STEM work experiences, we created the HBCU Consortium, a program that deepens the relationship between Battelle and partner Historically Black Colleges and Universities and their students.

In the pages that follow, you will see the progress we are making and our continued focus on investing in STEM education so that every student has visibility to the power of science and discovery. There is much more to do. And, at Battelle we are steadfast in our belief that "it can be done."

Lou Von Thaer
President and Chief Executive Officer

Acronym Guide

AABLE	African American & Black Leadership Excellence (ERG)
AIHEC	American Indian Higher Education Consortium
ANSEP	Alaska Native Science and Engineering Program
AY	Annual Year
DEI	Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion
EEO	Equal Employment Opportunity
ERG	Employee Resource Group
ESIIL	NSF Environmental Data Science Innovation and Inclusion Lab
HBCU	Historically Black Colleges and Universities
HRC CEI	Human Rights Campaign Corporate Equality Index
IPT	Integrated Product Team
LGBTQ(+)	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgendered, and Questioning
MLE	Manager Learning Experience
NCAR	National Center of Atmospheric Research
NEON	National Ecological Observatory Network
OFCCP	Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs
ROX	Ruling Our eXperiences
SACNAS	Society for Advancement of Chicanos/Hispanics & Native Americans in Science
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics
TEX	Thriving Earth Exchange
UIC	Ukpeaġvik Iñupiat Corporation
WELD	Women for Economic and Leadership Development

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Strategy

Building an inclusive culture does not happen without an intentional focus and commitment to equitable 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 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 - "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 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 who 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. All employees and new hires are required to complete annual Workplace Harassment training. 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; staff are made aware of the Battelle Ethics Hotline and Code of Conduct procedures.

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. The organization continues to leverage communications channels and employee resource groups to promote self-identification.

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. Creating a Mission First culture began by hosting orientation sessions required for all employees to learn about Battelle values, actions that support these values and how to implement these values. In addition, we asked interested and engaged participants to join our Mission First Champions, a group of Battelle employees that champion our Mission First culture within their teams or locations. Mission First Champions meet monthly to revisit key Mission First themes and learn new ways to bring Mission First concepts to life at the forefront of our business. As the Mission First concepts become more integrated into our everyday approach to our work and relationships, we are moving to have full Mission First sessions be a part of new employee onboarding. In AY23, Battelle will ensure that all NEON staff complete their in-person 'Mission First' culture training (a program on hiatus during the 2020-21 COVID-19 years).

Pronouns and Preferred Names 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)

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 (2020), Battelle received a score of 75/100. There were 1,059 businesses across the country that participated. By partnering with internal stakeholders, employee resource groups and continuously evaluating its policies and practices to create a more inclusive environment for LGBTQ employees, vendors, and clients, Battelle scored a 95/100 the second year and a perfect 100/100 on the 2022 index.

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.

Close the Gap

The Close the Gap networking partnership matches Battelle senior leaders with employees of color, with the goal of strengthening our culture and our business through more equitable practices and more inclusive behaviors.

Leaders gain a better understanding of the talents our employees possess and any obstacles they face at Battelle to better position them to positively impact the overall employee experience. Employees engage with leaders to gain insight into the priorities of individuals in senior roles, learn how to better navigate the unofficial professional networks of the organization, and strengthen their personal and professional networks through participation in cohort programming.

Within a networking partnership, leaders and employees create relationships that foster opportunities to listen and learn so that we can more effectively understand and close the gap. This is not an attempt to change the behavior or beliefs of employees of color. There is no requirement to participate, and there is no assessment of performance or potential through this program. Instead, it is an effort to broaden the understanding and perspectives of top decision makers and to foster a culture of inclusion at Battelle.

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.

Battelle also engages in ongoing 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 (ERGs)

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 and ethnic diversity at Battelle and leads efforts to recognize and celebrate employees’ heritage through efforts including the celebration of Black History, Arab American Heritage, Asian American and Pacific Island Heritage, Hispanic Heritage, and Native American Heritage months and well as personal/professional development sessions around intersectionality.

In 2020, Embrace led several town halls encouraging employees to continue the conversation on racial injustice. These town halls varied in topic and some featured 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. Around 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. 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.

Since then, Embrace members recognized the need to support the launch of an ERG that directly addresses the needs of Black and African American employees and provided partnership and support for the launch of the African American & Black Leadership Excellence (AABLE).

- **African American & Black Leadership Excellence (AABLE)** is committed to making Battelle an employer of choice for Black and African American employees by helping the company to best recruit, engage, retain and develop Black and African American talent at Battelle. In its inaugural year, AABLE hosted professional development sessions around bias, promoting racial equity, and stories of successful Black leaders at Battelle. This group is also heavily involved with the HBCU Consortium. As part of our long-standing commitment to increasing diversity and fostering inclusion within Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) careers, Battelle is investing \$200,000 over two years to provide students from Bowie State University and Morgan State University research opportunities as they progress from the classroom to employment. This is the first phase of the Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) Consortium, a Battelle program established to build meaningful, long-term collaborative relationships with the country's leading HBCUs.
- **Prism** advocates for Battelle's lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer employees (LGBTQ+) 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 2020, Prism offered a webinar called LGBTQ+ 101. In 2021, a panel discussion around authenticity in the workplace included the executive director of Kaleidoscope Youth Center, an LGBTQ youth and resource center. In 2022, The group focused on deepening understanding around the terminology and lived experience through DEI experts. 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.
- **Military Support** aims to bring together Battelle's military veterans, employees in the guard or reserve, and military families and friends to support those who served to defend our nation.
- **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

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 underrepresented groups in STEM.

Employee-led Advisory Group

In 2020, NEON 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. This group provides a periodic review of DEI goals and strategies, identifies best practices for conduct in external engagement activities (e.g., developed a NEON Code of Conduct, available on the NEON website), and suggests mechanisms to improve DEI in education, engagement, and outreach activities that can be measured, tracked, and acted upon. They solicit suggestions from NEON staff (can be anonymous) and make recommendations to leadership to ensure best practices are followed internally to institutionalize a culture of inclusion.

Training and Awareness

As Battelle employees, 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 full-time employees on the NEON program, 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 *LinkedIn Learning*, an online learning center with dozens of seminars and resources on DEI in the workplace.

Engagement with Diverse Groups

NEON program field employees actively seek opportunities to engage with and involve underrepresented groups in STEM activities. As part of this effort, we established a yearly goal for each Domain field office to conduct at least one outreach activity involving an underrepresented group in STEM as the primary audience. This concerted effort has resulted in 2021 and 2022 averaging an engagement activity rate of over 20% with these groups; we have implemented a broader goal to increase the number of all NEON engagement activities reaching these groups by least 2% in 2023. Additionally, we developed a professional development opportunity for NEON Domain field

staff in partnership with the American Geophysical Union's Thriving Earth Exchange (TEX) to support NEON engagement in local communities to work together to solve local challenges related to natural resources, climate change, and natural hazards. These NEON Community Fellows support communities' awareness and application of science to address specific community concerns and promote equity by ensuring that communities benefit from the opportunity to participate in, contribute to, and guide the use of scientific knowledge.

We support up to three 'Explore NEON' workshops 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. These are typically in person events; however, adapting to a virtual format during the COVID-19 pandemic has allowed NEON to reach broader audiences by reducing barriers to access, such as travel funds.

NEON strategically seeks out new partners and strengthens existing partnerships in order to build capacity and reach broader audiences across scales. Among our efforts to expand NEON partnerships, we attend Society for Advancement of Chicanos/Hispanics & Native Americans in Science (SACNAS) and American Indian Higher Education Consortium (AIHEC) meetings to engage students and faculty in our resources. NEON utilizes internships with Kupu and the Alaska Native Science and Engineering Program (ANSEP) to provide opportunities locally to native Hawaiian and native Alaska communities. In addition, NEON partners with Ukpeaġvik Iñupiat Corporation (UIC) to directly support NEON science by assisting with observational sampling. Partnerships with other environmental-science research institutions leverage existing training resources, best practices, and audiences to ensure a wide reach. For example, NEON partners with National Center of Atmospheric Research's (NCAR) Rising Voices and with the newly formed NSF Environmental Data Science Innovation and Inclusion Lab (ESILL).

Recruitment Engagement with Diverse Groups

NEON incorporates best management practices through the use of structured interviews and recruitment strategies that aims to provide greater equity in the hiring process. NEON hires hundreds of temporary field staff each year; this position provides a valuable early career opportunity for many applicants and may be a gateway to exploring longer term career and educational trajectories. A uniform interview experience and standardized evaluation rubric across the Observatory is intended to remove bias from the process. The effort continues to incorporate new practices as we improve accessibility for new groups, most recently neurodivergent interviewees.

We will continue to foster a culture of belonging by an increased level of engagement from managers and, where possible, providing staff with flexible work arrangements (e.g., remote vs. in-office). We will continue to develop an environment that is conducive to organizational growth around DEI. We will enable participation of several NEON leaders in the 'Close the Gap' program, a networking partnership program that matches Battelle senior leaders with employees of color, with the goal of strengthening Battelle culture and business. NEON staff are encouraged to participate in Battelle ERGs, particularly the Embrace ERG, which advocates for racial diversity and equity at Battelle.

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