

Strategic Plan

San Diego Oasis: Diversity Equity, and Inclusion Initiative

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Introduction

The Mission of San Diego Oasis is to ensure that adults age 50+ have opportunities to pursue vibrant, healthy, productive and meaningful lives. Through our academic classes, fitness and wellness classes, and volunteer opportunities, we encourage our members to find moments for socialization, active living and intergenerational connections. Diversity, equity, and inclusion are all central to this broader mission of life-long learning. When we engage with people of varying backgrounds and cultures, we are able to cultivate countless learning opportunities and relationships.

As an organization we are committed to ensuring that all people feel welcome at our centers. Therefore, we recognize that representation matters. San Diego is one of the most diverse cities in the United States, thus, we are dedicated to making our membership reflective of the broader San Diego community. Every community can offer unique insights into what it means to age well. Here at San Diego Oasis, we are open to listening to, and learning from these perspectives. While aging is a universal process, it is also evident that how we experience this process is inextricably connected to social and cultural background. Learning those specific lived experiences can help San Diego Oasis better provide for all older adults. Therefore, San Diego Oasis invites individuals of all race, ethnicities, socio-economic backgrounds, sexual orientations, gender identities, and religions to join us in the pursuit of redefining what it means to age.

Frequently Asked Questions

1. **What is diversity, equity and inclusion?**

Diversity is the variety of characteristics in a given group of people. These characteristics can range from our cognitive skills and personality traits, along with our identity (e.g. race, age, gender, religion, sexual orientation, cultural background, age, life experience, socio-economic class, national origin, ability and religion). **Inclusion** is an active and intentional commitment to valuing any and all differences whilst regarding those differences as assets rather than hindrances. An inclusive space should make all individuals feel safe, valued, and respected regardless of identity. **Equity** ensures that systemic barriers are accounted for when providing opportunity. Whereas *equality* offers the same opportunities regardless of circumstance, equity acknowledges that certain individuals can experience disproportionate consequences or challenges while others experience disproportionate benefits and privileges. Equity requires organizations to investigate these injustices and seek to provide opportunities for people who have had less access.

2. Why is DEI important?

DEI initiatives are declarative commitments to foster environments that reflect the broader community. DEI initiatives are plans for the future that communicate the needs of the community and the vision of what organizations can be. In a perfect world, DEI would not be necessary; however, given the large gaps in minority representation, it is clear that active work must be done for organizations to be representative of the community at large. DEI allows organizations to intentionally correct for demographic and systemic disparities whilst creating a future in which all people regardless of background are welcome.

3. How are diversity, equity, and inclusion connected?

Focusing on diversity without equity and inclusion is an unjust approach to solve for lack of representation. Simply increasing the number of individuals from marginalized or minority communities without correcting for systemic injustice can lead to tokenism and often reproduces and exacerbates the same racism and discrimination that diversity aims to correct. The addition of equity and inclusion requires organizations to focus on correcting for the systemic barriers that result in lack of diversity to begin with. We cannot focus solely on increasing minority representation, we must also address systemic injustice internally in order to truly make San Diego Oasis a diverse space.

4. What is the role of the Diversity Outreach Coordinator?

The role of the diversity outreach coordinator is as follows:

1. Increase recruitment and representation of minority communities.
2. Cultivate partnerships that support DEI goals.
3. Educate staff, volunteers, and members on issues of identity.
4. Actively evaluate progress of the DEI initiative.
5. Monitor equity, inclusivity and diversity in organizational projects (i.e. inclusivity of language, representation, accessibility, and equity of opportunity).

5. When will the DEI initiative be complete?

The work of DEI will be complete when all systemic inequalities have been eliminated for all people. Thus, this is an ongoing and continuous effort. Until equality is achieved, DEI efforts will be needed to continue cultivating safe spaces for all individuals by deconstructing and eliminating systemic and social inequalities.

Strategic Plan

This strategic plan represents the on-going planning process for the San Diego Oasis DEI Initiative and establishes a timeline for implementation. The key elements of the strategic planning process are outlined below.

The San Diego Oasis DEI Strategic plan includes the following sections:

Step 1: Mission, Vision and Values

Step 2: Statements and Acknowledgments

Step 3: Assessment of Current State (SWOT analysis)

Step 4: Goals, Action Items and Desired Outcomes

Step 5: Demographics and Geographical Analysis

Step 6: Metrics of Success/Performance Indicators

Step 6: Outreach Program Work Plan (timeline)

1. Mission, Vision, Values

The San Diego Oasis DEI Strategic plan reaffirms the mission and vision of the organization as well as a new commitment to foster diversity, equity, and inclusion amongst our staff, membership, and volunteers.

Mission

To make San Diego Oasis a safer, more inclusive, and diverse space starting with diversifying our membership, classes and class materials, committing to an anti-racist framework, affirming LGBT identities, and addressing accessibility.

Vision Statement

We are dedicated to promoting peace, justice, freedom, and dignity for all San Diego Oasis Participants.

Values

Values are San Diego Oasis' source of guidance for the DEI initiative.

<i>Respect</i>	<i>Intersectionality</i>	<i>Inclusivity</i>
<i>Honesty</i>	<i>Empathy</i>	<i>Accountability</i>
<i>Justice</i>	<i>Integrity</i>	<i>Fairness</i>

2. Statements and Acknowledgements:

The following statements address race, gender sexuality, and ability. These statements are intended to clearly indicate our intentions as an organization. Through these statements, we commit to an anti-racist framework, deconstruct colonization, affirm and uplift LGBT identities, and support individuals with disabilities.

Antiracism Statement:

San Diego Oasis affirms our commitment to not only recognizing all forms of racism and discrimination but also to addressing and working to eradicate these injustices. San Diego Oasis intends to ensure our membership, staff, and volunteers are actively combating racial, ethnic, and color discrimination. We understand statements can often be used as a performative tool; however, this statement will not be limited to empty language. **We humbly pledge to listen, learn, and take action in order to foster social justice and change.**

San Diego Oasis acknowledges racism is both conscious and unconscious. Whether intentional or unintentional, it is still necessary to call attention to the harms of both systemic and social discrimination. As a community of life-long learners we will purposefully strive to host difficult conversations regarding intentional or unintentional racism, structural inequalities, and the biases that prevent us from creating a diverse, equitable, and inclusive space. **We uplift the voices of our members, staff, and volunteers of color and affirm any and all experiences associated with ethnicity, race, color, and gender.**

As an organization we commit to the following:

- Acknowledging first and foremost that racism is an ongoing problem which necessitates continuous learning and unlearning.
- Acknowledging that racism is systemic. That is, racism is engrained within institutional structures and policies.
- Listening to Black, Brown, and Indigenous (BIPOC) members, staff, and volunteers to understand BIPOC experiences at our centers.
- Recognizing that while aging is a universal process, it is accompanied by historical and social contexts that shape and produce unique challenges and experiences. **We are firmly committed to learn from and with different intersecting identities.**
- Pledging to continuously reflect on our work towards ending systemic racism, discrimination, and oppression as we invite any person regardless of race, religion, gender, or socio-economic status to join the San Diego Oasis Community.
- Creating behavioral clauses and protections that specifically prohibit discrimination based on race, color, ethnicity, and country of origin.

Land Acknowledgement and Commitment to Reconciliation with Indigenous People:

Land Occupying/Settling: Kumeyaay

A Land Acknowledgement serves as a commitment to decolonization. It is a public recognition of the Indigenous Peoples who have been erased and forced out of their traditional lands as a result of colonization. It also serves as an expression of gratitude and thanks to the Indigenous People who have called and who continue to call this land home. As part of San Diego Oasis’ DEI initiative we offer the following statement:

San Diego Oasis recognizes that it is located upon the ancestral lands of the Kumeyaay Nation. San Diego Oasis acknowledges that the Kumeyaay people have been stewards of this land for generations, and continue to live and flourish in the San Diego community. We specifically acknowledge and pay respects to the elders of the Kumeyaay nation both past and present and offer our gratitude for their stewardship.

The purpose of this statement is to remind and encourage all SD Oasis staff, volunteers, and participants to recognize the first peoples upon whose ancestral lands we live, work, and learn. Through this acknowledgment of territory, we as an organization hope to demonstrate our respect for the Indigenous People of San Diego and our commitment to reconciliation.

As an organization, we commit to the following:

- Bringing Indigenous perspectives and voices into organizational processes through consultation with Indigenous communities.
- Humbly and truthfully reflecting upon the influences and legacies of colonialism within this organization where needed.
- Actively inviting the work, perspectives, and voices of Indigenous authors, artists, teachers, and experts in our classes, seminars, and events.

Statement of Affirmation: LGBTQ Identities:

In the United States today, about 1.5 million people over 65 identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender (LGBT). While all communities can expect to face some challenges as they age, LGBT seniors often face unique barriers. **We acknowledge that these challenges come as a result of lingering social and cultural prejudices, and laws which either intentionally or unintentionally exclude same-sex partnerships.**

Furthermore, Many LGBT older adults choose not to seek out senior centers or other community options due to fear of exclusion, harassment, or discrimination. **In an effort to correct these injustices, San Diego Oasis is committed to building a safe, and inclusive space for members of the LGBT community. We lift up the voices of and affirm the experiences of our LGBT staff, members, and volunteers and commit to seeking inclusivity and justice for the LGBT community.**

As an organization, we commit to the following:

- Ensuring gender inclusive language is used at all times.
- Revising behavior policies to include anti-harassment policies that specifically highlight protections for LGBT members, staff, and volunteers.
- Ensuring course materials are inclusive to all gender identities and sexual orientations.
- Monitoring and correcting for disparities in representation of LGBT members, staff, and volunteers by examining relevant data by sexual orientation and gender, including transgender identity.

Statement of Commitment to Accessibility:

Here at San Diego Oasis, we recognize that the disability rights movement is inseparable from the broader movement of DEI. We recognize that people with disabilities must be at the forefront of any successful quest for inclusion. Our DEI initiative is rooted in the firm belief that all people deserve respect and dignity regardless of ability. **We contend that everyone benefits when persons with intellectual and/or physical disabilities are included in our centers, classes, activities, programs, and events. We commit to ensuring that people with disabilities receive the supports they need to participate actively in all San Diego Oasis has to offer.**

As an organization, we commit to the following:

- Ensuring that our classes, programs, and events are accessible to all.
- Keeping the disabled community at the forefront of our DEI initiative.
- Understanding the challenges associated with disability and aging.
- Developing materials to support and accommodate individuals with disabilities who wish to participate in the San Diego Oasis community.
- Maintaining compliance with ADA requirements and regulations.

3. Assessment of Current State of DEI:

This is a broad assessment of San Diego Oasis' current DEI progress and does not constitute an extensive review. A more extensive review will be created overtime.

<p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Marketing materials are visually diverse and representative of the San Diego community.● The tablet program demographics show over 50% of participants are from an underrepresented demographic/community.● Both academic and wellness classes are positioned from a wide variety of cultural perspectives.	<p>Weaknesses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Demographic data shows that 85% of San Diego Oasis participants are white.● Marketing materials such as pamphlets, catalogues, and are only offered in English.● Tablet program is diverse demographically; however, materials are primarily in English.● Accessibility may need improvements.
<p>Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Tablet program gives us access to people who may be unable to leave their home due to ability. This program also gives us access to more people geographically.● Tutoring program presents an opportunity to increase community representation.● Potential opportunities to capitalize on connections with community leaders to establish relationships.● Volunteers are interested in DEI.	<p>Threats</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Potential push-back from members/volunteers.● Complacency. As this program grows, we cannot become complacent. We must continue to work even as we improve.● Implicit biases. (indirectly overlooking a particular community. Unintentional exclusivity).● Performative activism. (we have to make sure our commitments are followed by actions).

4. Goals, Action Items, and Desired Outcomes:

Goal: Increase Awareness and Education:

Understanding and brining awareness to the goals and purposes of DEI is a first step towards real change. Focusing on DEI requires a collective call to action and a cultural shift that raises organizational consciousness. Participants, staff, and volunteers must continually be made aware of the goals of the DEI plan so that it becomes ingrained into San Diego Oasis' culture.

Action Items:

- a. Weekly Eblasts Diversity Spotlight (human interest stories, educational conversations about race, sexuality, gender, citizenship status, etc.).
- b. Available classes that support DEI goals (e.g. race relations, LGBT topics, indigenous art/history, etc.).
- c. Recruit teachers who teach classes on the above topics.
- d. DEI trainings for staff and volunteers.

Desired Outcomes:

- a. Enhanced organization-wide understanding of diversity and inclusion issues.
- b. Increased participation in DEI discussions and outreach.
- c. Increased inclusivity and belonging.
- d. Improved cultural competency.

Goal: Cultivate Active Diversity Outreach

Because of implicit biases, systemic injustices, geographical barriers, and other factors, cultivating a diverse population amongst members, staff, and volunteers requires an active and concerted effort. In addition to reflecting on organizational culture, we must be willing to make DEI a priority and seek out communities where they are.

Action Items:

- a. Reach out to community leaders to foster relationships/partnerships.
- b. Distribute materials in community centers with diverse populations.
- c. Recruit volunteers interested in diversity.
- d. Recruit BIPOC/LGBT instructors.
- e. Recruit volunteers who are bilingual.

Desired Outcomes:

- e. Increased representation of minority communities amongst our staff, members, and volunteers.
- f. Increased visibility in underrepresented communities.
- g. Enhanced relationships between SD Oasis and minority community leaders.

- h. Improved language diversity amongst volunteers.

Goal: Develop Supportive Materials

Diversity, equity, and inclusion necessitates materials to support DEI efforts. In other words, materials that are consistent with inclusion and diversity goals.

Action Items:

- a. Create behavior policies that specifically protect individuals on the basis of race, gender/gender identity, sexual-orientation, and ability.
- b. Create a diversity corner on the website where people can access information.
- c. Review marketing materials.
- d. Assess/audit accessibility of online classes for folks with disabilities/English language learners.

Desired Outcomes:

- e. Increased accessibility for all individuals (language accessibility, disability accessibility).
- f. Easily accessible DEI plan for staff and volunteers to review when needed.
- g. Increased diversity in marketing materials.
- h. Increased protections for underrepresented individuals.

Goal: Maintain Accountability

Programs designed to increase diversity and inclusion in the workplace often risk tapering out unsuccessfully. For DEI initiatives to be successful, consistent reflection on progress and accountability is necessary.

Action Items:

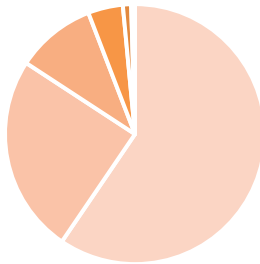
- a. Develop a survey to monitor DEI outcomes and member experiences.
- b. Create (both physical and virtual) DEI-specific suggestion boxes for member and volunteer input.
- c. Send out a call to actions for people to come forward with their own stories and experiences.
- d. Reach out to members and listen to their experiences.

Desired Outcomes:

- i. Be able to easily identify gaps in DEI.
- j. Be able to easily identify successes of DEI.
- k. Be able to recognize patterns, positive or negative

5. Demographics and Geographical Analysis:

Demographics



- White
- Asian-American
- Indigenous/Native American
- Hispanic/Latinx
- Black/African-American
- Pacific Islander/Native Hawaiian

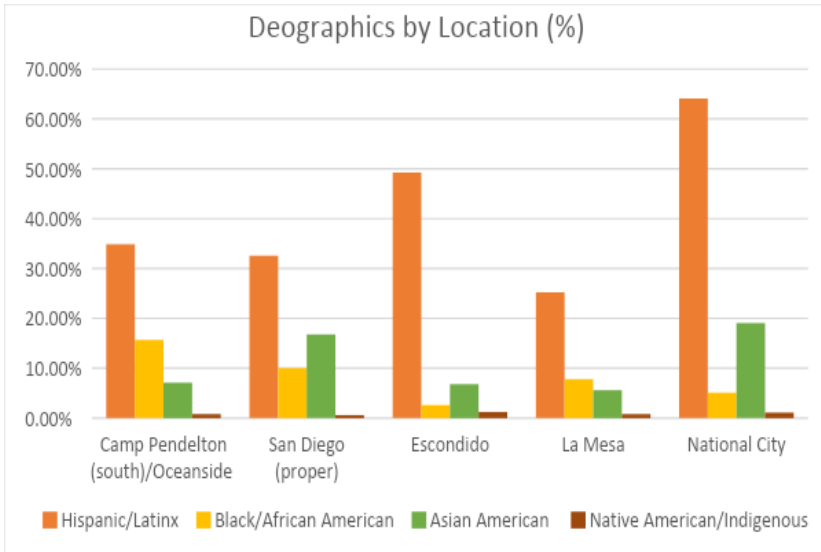
San Diego County Population: 3.39 million

Demographic	Percentage of Population
White	75.4%
Hispanic/Latinx	34.1%
Asian-America	12.6%
Indigenous/Native	1.3%
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	0.6%

City/Region Population

Camp Pendleton (south)/Oceanside North County	29,498
San Diego (proper) Central County	1.41 million
Escondido East county	151,300
La Mesa South East County	59,556
National City South Bay	61,121

Deographics by Location (%)



As census data related to race/ethnicity is not typically organized by region, the data compiled in these figures are intended to be representative of general regional demographics. Although these demographics statistics may vary from city to city, these locations represent the highest populations of minorities county-wide. Thus, these locations have been chosen to represent minority demographics of North County, Central County, North-East County, East County, and South County.

6. Performance Indicators:

The mission of diversity, equity, and inclusion is nuanced and complex. That is, what it means to be a diverse, equitable, and inclusive organization is not necessarily quantifiable. Thus, Conventional measurements that rely primarily on counting the number of people who belong to a category often fall short. While it is important that demographics and other statistics reflect the success of the DEI initiative, other factors must be considered. For this reason, the following performance indicators contain both quantitative and qualitative metrics.

- Increased percentage of entrances and exits that are accessible.
- Increased percentage of classes that are compliant with ADA regulations (e.g. closed captions, screen reader compatibility, tagged PDFs and word documents, etc.).
- Increased engagement on website overall.
- Increased representation of Black, Latinx/Hispanic, Asian-American, Indigenous, and Middle Eastern participants and volunteers.
- Increased representation of LGBT identifying people.
- Growth in participation and engagement overall.
- At least 1 DEI event held and attended each year.
- Reported feelings of inclusivity and belonging.
- Reported awareness and education on DEI topics.
- Increased interest in classes related to DEI topics.
- Donors/funders support DEI efforts.

7. Outreach Program Work Plan:

Objective 1:

Form partnerships with at **least four community-based organizations** that specifically serve older adults of diverse populations or diverse populations in general:

Activities	Timeline	Expected Outcome	Comments/Progress
Create a list of 8-10 organizations to contact that may not already be linked to older adults in the community. Narrow this list to 4 high-traffic, high-importance organizations serving older adults.	October. 1-November. 1	Establish contacts with key community organizations.	Complete (and on-going).
Identify a stable contact person at each organization and ask which events are coming up.	October. 1-February. 1	Build partnerships with at least 4 organizations.	In-progress (2 organizations so far).
Request and distribute flyers to visible places at these 4 organizations.	December. 1-March 1.	People will learn about Oasis and contact me.	Complete (and on-going).
For at least 1 site, be present at an event that draws older adults.	December. 1-March 1.	Diverse older adults sign up for classes	Complete (and on-going).

Objective 2:

Develop **at least 4 resources/collateral** available for access:

Activities	Timeline	Expected Outcome	Comments/Progress
Create a flyer/pamphlet to physically hand out when connecting with people.	October. 1-November. 1	Have a physical form of marketing collateral.	Planning in progress
Create a DEI related infographic for social media posts.	October. 1-February. 1	Visual, online content that people can engage with and share.	Planning in progress
Develop a white paper for tablet program and incorporate DEI	December. 1-March 1.	People will learn about Oasis and the effectiveness of our programs.	In-Progress
Film/record at least 3 diversity spotlight meetings for social media content.	December 1.-March 1.	DEI efforts become visual. People are also more likely	On-going

Objective 3:

Connect with diverse populations/community leaders **in at least 4 communities:**

Activities	Timeline	Expected Outcome	Comments/Progress
Identify at least 4 communities to target this year. <i>Southeast SD, Rancho Bernardo, Indigenous/Native community, LGBTQ community</i>	September. 1-October. 1	Have identifiable targets to reach out to.	Complete
Identify at least one community leader within each community.	October. 1-February. 1	A better understanding of community needs, specifically for older adults.	Complete
Work with Brandon Harding to create access to programs in these communities.	February. 1-March 1.	Equitable access to San Diego Oasis for diverse communities.	Planning in progress
Work with David Beavers to include these communities in the digital divide program.	February 1.-March 1.	Equitable access to San Diego Oasis for diverse communities.	On-going