

POLICY

Creating a Resilient Future Through Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

Introduction

The Soil Health Institute’s mission is to safeguard and enhance the vitality and productivity of soils through scientific research and advancement. We work toward securing a vibrant and sustainable future every day. We take a stewardship approach to agriculture focusing on our land, agriculture practices that encourage healthy soils, and the education and support for those who take care of it.

Moreover, we understand that achieving a robust and successful agricultural system, as well as a durable and accomplished organization, depends on the equity, inclusion, and diversity for all groups that have been historically marginalized. Under this canopy of marginalized, we include Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC); women; immigrants; people/individuals with disabilities; small-scale and limited resource farmers; LGBTQI+ communities; veterans and others.

Purpose

At the Soil Health Institute, a diverse, inclusive, and equitable workplace is one where all team members (i.e., board members, contractors, mentors, mentees, volunteers), partners, collaborators, and stakeholders; whatever their gender, race, ethnicity, national origin, age, sexual orientation or identity, education or disability; are valued and respected. We are committed to nondiscrimination on any basis and provide equal opportunity for employment and advancement in all our programs. We respect and value diverse life experiences and heritages and ensure that all voices are valued and heard.

The Soil Health Institute recognizes the advantages of having a diverse workforce and values the contributions of people from various ethnicities and cultures coming together to make our planet a better place for future generations. The Institute promotes an inclusive culture where all employees are encouraged to succeed to the best of their abilities. We recognize and embrace all employee differences and believe those differences bring valuable perspectives and make us stronger.

At the Soil Health Institute every team member is responsible for:

- Respecting the dignity and diversity of all people,
- Creating an inclusive environment that is free from discrimination and harassment,
- Enhancing awareness of potential unconscious bias and how that might hinder our ability to be more inclusive and collaborative with one another, and
- Focusing on conscious inclusion to be more intentional with our actions to drive diversity, equity and belonging.

Commitments

The Soil Health Institute commits to the following:

1. We acknowledge that we don't know it all nor have all the answers. Through DEI training we are learning, listening, and growing as an Institute, while making adjustments to advance the science of soil health systems.
2. We understand the systemic racism that has existed in US agriculture for decades and our strategy is to use this DEI learning to advance SHI's mission to the diverse communities of farmers.
3. Establishing recruitment and retention strategies so that SHI team members reflect the diversity of the very communities they serve. We commit to cultivating a workplace atmosphere where those historically marginalized feel valued, understood and accepted. This means a work environment that is devoid of potentially harmful workplace practices and culture so we can grow as an organization. We will incorporate the guiding principles of:
Humility: Every team member will embrace the continual giving and receiving of honest constructive feedback: what's working and what can be improved.
Transparency: We will exercise humility, admit that we do not always get it right and most importantly, commit to making it right. We commit to communicating openly with our members on our work toward equity and inclusion, and receiving and incorporating their feedback as our work continues.
Respect: We value one another's unique characteristics and experiences and assume that we will be made stronger as we benefit from these diverse characteristics and experiences.
4. Provide annual training for all team members and board members in the form of platforms that allow for open discussion and engagement (through team activities and projects) to address cultural bias, inclusivity and other topics pertinent to diversity, equity, and inclusion to increase knowledge, and ensure continued progress toward DEI goals.
5. Board members will be provided with all training dates and have the option to attend live trainings with team members or view the recorded training sessions at their leisure and complete activities by a requested date.
6. Externally, we are committed to maintaining our current partnerships and build new, sincere, and continuous partnerships with those organizations led by marginalized persons, marginalized groups, and other entities. This may include using our resources and platform to support shared goals, if available and applicable.
7. DEI is reflected in our work and all facets of SHI's programs. We will continue to evaluate and seek to advance our programs and other work to reflect our pledge to diversity, equity and inclusion. Once possible, we will also extend this goal to our promotion, supporting, and strengthening policies that elevate the needs of, and generate prospects for, marginalized farmers and landowners.
8. We will conduct an internal assessment and data collection to evaluate and measure our growth toward achieving and preserving these commitments.

Reporting

Information regarding the Soil Health Institute's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion policy, strategies and performance will be included in the Soil Health Institute's annual accomplishment report to the Board of Directors.

Review of Policy

The Soil Health Institute's Leadership Team may review this policy at any time, and the CEO may recommend formal changes to the policy to the SHI Board of Directors at any time. However, review by the SHI Leadership Team will be conducted annually at a minimum. Any revisions to the DEI policy will be documented in the Board minutes.