



**ASSOCIATION OF ORGAN  
PROCUREMENT ORGANIZATIONS**

**Saving and improving lives  
through organ, eye, and tissue donation**

***Leading Change into the Future***

**AOPO Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Task Force**

**Executive Summary**

**May 2021**

# Executive Summary

## Background

The Association of Organ Procurement Organizations (AOPO) is the not-for-profit trade association representing the 49 Organ Procurement Organizations (OPOs) that coordinate the organ donation process in the United States and Puerto Rico. Founded in 1984, AOPO provides support to its members through advocacy, education, and innovation. The leadership of AOPO consists of its Chief Executive Officer, supported by staff, and its president. The CEOs of the 49 member OPOs serve as the Board of Directors for AOPO. The work of the organization proceeds primarily through its 15 councils and various committees and task forces, overseen by the AOPO Executive Committee consisting of the President, President-Elect, Secretary-Treasurer, Medical Advisor, Medical Advisor-Elect, and At Large Member.

In the Fall of 2020, deliberating upon the heightened awareness of social injustice sparked by the murder of George Floyd, the AOPO Executive Committee sought to form an ad hoc committee tasked with addressing the issue of diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) within AOPO and its members. The charge of the task force consisted of the following:

- Define Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion for AOPO and its membership
- Develop recommendations for how AOPO can raise awareness of and foster diversity, equity, and inclusion within the OPO community
- Develop recommendations on how AOPO can instill diversity, equity, and inclusion on an ongoing basis within its programs and services.
- Develop metrics by which OPO's and AOPO can gauge progress towards improving diversity, equity, and inclusion within the membership

The committee was limited to 12 members and a 6-month timeframe was imposed to reflect the urgency the Executive Committee felt was necessary in addressing this issue. In selecting members of the task force, every effort was made to incorporate a diverse set of perspectives including race, ethnicity, religion, gender preference, urban, rural, and regional representation. Professional diversity consisted in ensuring the taskforce had administrative, information technology, education, support, governmental affairs, clinical, and hospital development representation as well. The committee's work was supplemented with an outside content expert in the field of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion.

Over the course of the Fall of 2020 and through the Winter and Spring of 2021, the committee met to identify DEI gaps within AOPO and establish available resources to develop targeted and broad ranging recommendations AOPO leadership can act upon now and in the coming years. Taskforce members identified DEI gaps in the following areas and formed subcommittees to research, develop and recommend actions incorporated into the final report:

- Assessment and Evaluation
- Communications
- Human Resources
- Programming
- Training and Development

Recommendations in this report will contribute to AOPO's continued work leveraging diversity, equity, and inclusion within the association and amongst its member OPOs. For the purposes of this report, the committee drew upon multiple resources to define Diversity, Equity and Inclusion as follows:

**Diversity** is a recognition that each individual is unique, and an appreciation of differences based on various dimensions, including but not limited to race and ethnicity, religion or faith belief, gender identity, sexual orientation, physical and mental ability, age, and ideological beliefs.

**Equity** is a commitment to social justice aims, including fair treatment, response to bias and enacting policies that prevent harassment and discrimination on the basis of difference. While diversity has more to do with recognizing unique differences and inclusion has more to do with creating access and opportunity to contribute, equity has more to do with eliminating barriers to access for marginalized groups in order to promote their mobility and advancement.

**Inclusion** is the intentional act of ensuring that all individuals, regardless of their unique differences, are included with equal access to resources, and afforded the opportunity to contribute through voice and action to the work and outcomes of the organization.

To achieve diversity, equity and inclusion from front line staff all the way to the highest levels of leadership within AOPO and member OPOs, there must be intentionality and actionable, measurable steps taken towards the realization of an equitable and inclusive culture throughout the entire OPO industry. The realization of this inclusivity will translate into diverse communities being served more equitably and ultimately result in more organ, eye and tissue donors and more lives saved.

The recommendations in this report represent the beginning of a process to address long-standing disparities between the diversity of the staff and leadership of OPOs and the communities they serve. Specific recommendations are listed in terms of short, medium, and long-range goals. As the work of the task force comes to a close, it is recommended that a permanent Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion [DEI] Council be formed within AOPO to continue the work of the task force and to see its recommendations come to fruition through the expansion of the work around Diversity, Equity and Inclusion that needs to be done. In addition, dedicated representatives of the DEI council should be integrated into each of the other councils to integrate the intentionality around diversity and elevate it throughout all the work in which AOPO is engaged.