

INSTITUTE ON THE ENVIRONMENT

IonE Equity Statement

MISSION

The mission of the Institute on the Environment (IonE) is to lead the way toward a future in which people and the environment prosper together. Environmental justice is central to that mission. There are deep inequities among those who are prospering in spite of the environmental destruction and those who bear the worst consequences of this destruction. We recognize that equity and justice need to be central in our work on the environment.

HISTORY

IonE as an institution has done far too little to address these environmental injustices. Many of us, historically, and currently, benefit from many forms of privilege. The composition of our staff, IonE affiliates, governing boards, and grant recipients have not reflected the diversity of our community. This privileged foundation profoundly shapes how we conceive of, prioritize, and aspire to individual and collective goals. As a consequence, we have perpetuated dominant knowledge, perspectives, and ways of knowing, which has limited our solutions to environmental challenges.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We acknowledge that our organization has sidelined equity, and race specifically, and has perpetuated the harms of white supremacy. As a collective organization we have silenced, ignored, and marginalized many voices, even as they have always been there (including within IonE) to hear. These voices include, but are not limited to, Black; Indigenous; Latinx; Asian American, Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander; LGBTQIA2S+, people with diverse gender identities; people with disabilities; women; people with differing political views, people from rural communities, people with low incomes, and the interests of the non-human environment. We will seek to build trust and repair relationships where possible.

OUR APPROACH

In the past two years, we've made initial steps. IonE realigned diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice (DEIJ) as a core criterion for our grant-giving, brought DEIJ into

our full-time employee performance expectations (e.g. in annual goal setting as well as professional development), and created new organizational structures to advance our DEIJ action plan and fulfill our commitment to organizational change.

We recognize that this is not enough. We commit to actively transform our efforts as an organization, starting with:

- Building an anti-racist culture within IonE, bringing in culturally diverse orientations toward the environment and creating an expectation of personal learning about race and other differences that allows for individual and collective progress.
- Integrating DEIJ in the many activities of IonE, such as our research, education, communications, grantmaking, and community engagement, including increasing our attention to issues of environmental justice.
- Prioritizing DEIJ in recruiting, supporting, and promoting persons in the many roles and institutions at IonE, including our staff, advisory groups, affiliates, students, grantees, community members, and partners.
- Holding ourselves accountable as we transform who we are, what we do, and how we do it, using critical feedback, metrics, and ongoing discussion to evaluate and guide our change.

MOVING FORWARD

This Equity Statement is not a detailed plan for change. It is a commitment which will serve as a foundation for IonE's work moving forward. The IonE website will be updated periodically to reflect action that has been taken in line with the commitments made here.

This work will require commitment and action by all members of our organization and extended community. We will also be guided by and work with the many people and organizations within our University, our State, and society that are working to center environmental justice. We accept and expect to be challenged and to be uncomfortable. We will falter, misstep, and even fail along the way. But we won't stop, we will learn from our mistakes. As a result, our organization, our work, and our lives will be more meaningful and more true to our aspiration that the environment and people prosper together.