

Northeast Regional Ocean Council | 2024-2028 Work Plan to Advance Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Justice (DEIJ)

GOAL

Advance diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice in the context of the Northeast Regional Ocean Council's efforts to promote regional solutions for sustainable ocean management in New England.

NEED FOR ACTION

There is a need to advance diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice by engaging with Tribes, environmental justice communities, and underrepresented groups to ensure that their voices, interests, and priorities are given equal consideration in the organization's work and related coastal and ocean management activities.

Strategy DEIJ-1: Integrate DEIJ into NROC's organizational structure

Actions:

- Convene ad-hoc group including at least one rep from each committee to advance DEIJ and meet in advance of each NROC meeting or as needed to identify strategies for highlighting DEIJ topics and sharing resources
- Develop NROC 'statement' on DEIJ that defines DEIJ terms and what they mean for NROC as a voluntary regional collaboration
- Review NROC structure and operating procedures to identify and pursue opportunities to advance DEIJ by ensuring representation and broadening partnerships, if necessary

Strategy DEIJ-2: Promote DEIJ among NROC Partners

Actions:

- Convene opportunities for dialogue on DEIJ topics among NROC members, partners, and others, including:
 - Incorporate sessions on EJ topics into NROC regular meetings
 - Pursue additional opportunities through other meetings or webinars as appropriate
 - Promote dialogue on NROC-related DEIJ topics through resource sharing and/or roundtable discussions
 - Invite guests to participate in discussions to broaden perspectives and to diversify representation
 - Collaborate with other regional partners (NESGC, NERACOOS, GOMC, etc.) to broaden the impact of efforts to advance DEIJ
- Engage with federal and state agencies to support efforts to integrate DEIJ into regional and national ocean and coastal management and planning
- Identify and share strategies, resources, best practices, and tools for advancing DEIJ among NROC partners. Examples include:
 - Tools such as the EPA EJ screening tool
 - Case studies
 - Best practices for communication, outreach, and engagement

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Strategy DEIJ-3: Advance DEIJ through NROC projects and activities

Actions:

- Integrate opportunities to advance DEIJ into the work of NROC's three committees – Coastal Hazards Resilience Committee, Ocean Planning Committee, Ocean and Coastal Ecosystem Health Committee
 - Expand committee membership, if necessary
 - Implement targeted efforts to expand engagement with Tribes in NROC project planning and implementation
 - Engage environmental justice communities and underrepresented communities in NROC project planning and implementation
 - Ensure that the voices, interests, and priorities of Tribes, environmental justice communities, and underrepresented communities are given equal consideration in NROC projects
 - Seek partnerships and/or additional funding to promote inclusion and diversity across NROC projects
 - Align outreach and engagement strategies with DEIJ best practices
- Identify new opportunities, if appropriate, for NROC to partner on efforts to advance DEIJ in the context of sustainable ocean management practices
- Expand outreach and communications to share updates regarding opportunities for engagement with NROC and the broader ocean planning community
- Identify and engage with organizations representing Tribes, environmental justice communities, or underrepresented organizations. Examples include:
 - United South and Eastern Tribes (USET)
 - Institute for Tribal Environmental Professionals (ITEP)
 - New England Environmental Justice Research Network (EJRN)
 - EPA Regional Tribal Operations Committee (RTOC)

Strategy DEIJ-4: Improve capacity for NROC to advance DEIJ

Actions:

- Ensure NROC's capacity for engaging with Tribes by continuing support for the Tribal Engagement Coordinator contract position created in 2023
- Integrate opportunities for engaging with Tribes, environmental justice communities, and underrepresented groups during the development of new projects and funding proposals