



ILLINOIS BOARD OF HIGHER EDUCATION

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Plan Fiscal Year 2021

Context for This Plan: The Illinois Board of Higher Education (IBHE) has responsibility for the coordination and regulation of postsecondary education in Illinois, including the preparation of budget recommendations, collection and reporting of data, and development and implementation of policies to promote student access and completion. Currently, the state has a 60x25 attainment goal, and we are not on track to meet this objective, particularly for students of color.

For many years, the IBHE has led a state-funded initiative to [Diversify Higher Education Faculty in Illinois](#) in order to ensure that students of color have opportunities to work with minority faculty – an important factor contributing to improving enrollment, retention, and completion rates of students of color in postsecondary education. The IBHE also makes data publicly available about the outcomes of students of color and other underrepresented groups such as students with disabilities at Illinois higher education institutions through the annual [Underrepresented Groups Report](#) and via the online [Institutional Profiles](#) tool.

On February 1, 2020, the IBHE appointed Ginger Ostro as Executive Director. In the intervening period, the following actions have been taken by the IBHE to address the state's equity gap in postsecondary education and in alignment with Board preparations to launch an equity-focused strategic planning process in September 2020:

- Raised and distributed [\\$700,000 in private monies](#) to support the most vulnerable students, including students of color, with immediate needs due to the pandemic
- Initiated and engaged statewide agency partnership to mitigate issues with Broadband access by developing a statewide [Wi-Fi hotspot map](#) and translating this map into Spanish
- Issued a [statement on racism and equity](#), as well as a [public statement by our Board Chair](#), in the wake of the tragic deaths of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and Ahmaud Arbery
- Carried out a [High School to College Transition Work Group](#) to publish key strategies to support Spring 2020 high school graduates, with a particular focus on underrepresented groups most at risk, in continuing with their postsecondary plans through the challenges exacerbated by the pandemic
- Created and launched a [“Stay the Course”](#) public information campaign to encourage new and continuing college students to stay on track with their college plans, particularly targeting supports for students of color, low-income students, and other vulnerable groups at risk of delaying, stopping out, or not pursuing postsecondary education
- Developed and implemented an equity-based funding formula to distribute federal Governor's Emergency Education Relief ([GEER](#)) funds to institutions of higher education
- Published on the IBHE website an interactive tool – [Equity Maps](#) – showing postsecondary attainment and attainment gaps in Illinois

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- Conducted a day-long retreat on July 15, 2020 with IBHE senior staff members, focusing on our purposes as an agency with emphasis on our role in closing postsecondary equity gaps
- Presented state data and engaged Board members in discussion on equity gaps – [8/4/20](#) and [9/15/20](#)

Purposes of This Plan: This Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Plan is intended to be a “living document,” expressing the ongoing work of the agency to close equity gaps in Illinois higher education. The objectives and actions outlined for each goal are designed to achieve transformational, systemic change in the agency and Illinois postsecondary education.

Key:

ED – Executive Director
 DDDO – Deputy Director, Diversity and Outreach
 DDIR – Deputy Director, Information and Research
 HR – Human Resources
 PIO – Public Information Officer

EDD – Executive Deputy Director
 DDFB – Deputy Director, Fiscal Affairs and Budgeting
 DEISC – DEI Staff Committee
 LA – Legislative Affairs
 SS – Senior Staff

Goal 1: IBHE staff understand, are committed to, and have operationalized DEI in agency goals, policies, practices, and operations.

Objectives	Strategies	Timeline	Accountability	Performance Measure	Progress Report
1.1 Agency staff participate in engagement opportunities and professional development to develop cultural intelligence and competence.	1.1.a. Draft DEI plan goals and strategies with senior staff.	9/25/20	EDD, DDDO	100% participation of senior staff members	Held senior staff meetings on 8/26/20, 8/31/20, 9/9/20, 9/16/20
	1.1.b. Conduct racial equity organizational assessment with senior staff team	9/11/20	EDD, DDDO	100% participation of senior staff members	Completed and discussed on 9/9/20
	1.1.c. Conduct staff baseline survey to assess perceptions and prior knowledge about DEI	10/30/20	EDD, DDDO	75% participation of staff members	



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Objectives	Strategies	Timeline	Accountability	Performance Measure	Progress Report
	1.1.d. Survey staff for interest and establish DEI staff committee to support DEI implementation plan	10/9/20	EDD, DDDO	DEISC established by deadline	Interest survey sent 9/24/20
	1.1.e. Provide initial training on racial equity and cultural intelligence	11/30/20	EDD, DDDO – with external support	100% participation of all staff members	
	1.1.f. Conduct and analyze employee post-training survey on implicit bias and cultural intelligence	12/15/20	DEISC, EDD, DDDO	Percent of staff who report growth or new knowledge after training	
	1.1.g. Plan professional development series on DEI based on staff survey, initial training, and DEISC input	12/31/20	DEISC, EDD, DDDO	Series outlined on deadline and information provided to all staff for calendars	
	1.1.h. Implement professional development series	1/1/21-12/30/21	DEISC, EDD, DDDO, HR	All staff participate in 75% of the series	
	1.1.i. Evaluate impact of the professional development series to make improvement and determine additional offerings	1/1/21-12/31/21	DEISC, EDD, DDDO	75% of staff report feeling more comfortable discussing DEI and/or have tools to do so	

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1.2 The agency will embed DEI in annual organizational performance system and all staff will use agency tools to assess the equity impact of agency initiatives and their contributions to meeting agency equity goals.	1.2.a. Create equity impact analysis tool	12/20/20	ED, EDD, HR,	Tool created on deadline	
	1.2.b. Conduct focused sessions with agency staff to use equity impact analysis tool to identify DEI gaps in ongoing projects	2/15/21	DEISC, EDD, DDDO	Agency staff learn how to use tool by participating in at least one session	
	1.2.c. Develop equity mission statement and Include improvements in DEI as an annual organizational goal	11/15/20	ED, SS, DEISC	Mission statement completed and organizational goals include DEI	
	1.2.d. Align staff performance review process to include improvements in DEI in annual performance evaluation and goal-setting-process	12/31/20	ED, SS, HR	Performance review documents updated	
1.3 Align board and agency policies and procedures to support the inclusion of diversity and equity	1.3.a. Review and revise policies and procedures	6/30/21	ED, SS	Policies and procedures documents updated	
1.4 The agency will increase the diversity of our staff as we have available openings.	1.4.a. Identify an expanded list of organizations that serve people of color and other underrepresented groups to advertise internship opportunities and open position searches	3/30/21	HR, DDDO, DEISC	Search list created	
	1.4.b. Actively recruit people of color and other underrepresented groups	As positions are open	ED, HR, EDD, DDDO	% increase in applicant pool; % increase in	

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	through appropriate networks, channels, schools, and including the DFI program			diversity of agency staff	
	1.4.c. Provide mentoring opportunities to support retention and professional learning of interns and staff	7/30/21	ED, EDD, DDDO, SS	Mentoring program created; % retention of staff	

Goal 2: The IBHE will include and reflect diverse perspectives in the development and implementation of policies and programs.

Objectives	Strategies	Timeline	Accountability	Performance Measure	Progress Report
2.1 Advisory and other stakeholder groups include a diverse group of members and participants.	2.1.a. IBHE staff liaisons to advisory groups use equity impact analysis tool with advisory group leaders to assess advisory group work through DEI lens	3/31/21	EDD, DDDO, IBHE staff advisory group liaisons	Standing advisory group executive committees – FAC, PAC, SAC, DAC – are provided information about the tool and options for their use in planning processes	
	2.1.b. IBHE staff engage a diverse group of participants in 2020-21 strategic planning	9/15/20-6/30/21	ED, EDD, DDDO	Lists/metrics of groups communicated with and as participants in process	
2.2 The agency expands opportunity for persons of color and other underrepresented groups to engage in state-level leadership.	2.2.a. Leverage and/or create internship programs to engage persons of color and other underrepresented groups in targeted agency work	7/30/21	ED, EDD, HR, DDDO	Number of interns engaged for FY22	



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	2.2.b. Engage with civil rights and other groups to bring diverse leaders into higher education policy discussions	9/15/20-ongoing	ED, EDD, DDDO, LA	List of groups engaged in policy development discussions and outcomes	
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Goal 3: The IBHE will lead efforts and provide tools to assist policymakers, higher education leaders, and stakeholders to close equity gaps in the Illinois higher education system.

Objectives	Strategies	Timeline	Accountability	Performance Measure	Progress Report
3.1 Board members will promote state understanding of equity gaps and set a vision for closing equity gaps in Illinois higher education.	3.1.a. Board meetings will feature presentations and conversations among state and national leaders about equity gaps and strategies for closing the same.	8/1/20 – ongoing	ED, EDD, DDIR – with external support	Agendas for at least three Board meetings FY21	Equity gap data presentations on 8/4/20 and 9/15/20
	3.1.b. Board members will set a vision for strategic planning that includes an equity lens.	8/1/20-6/30/20	ED	Evidence in strategic planning documents	Strategic planning meetings on 9/15/20, 10/19/20
3.2 The IBHE creates a multi-year strategic plan for Illinois higher education that prioritizes access and attainment of persons of color and other underrepresented groups.	3.2.a. Raise awareness about the nature and implications of equity gaps across all sectors of Illinois higher education through information presented to, and conversations with, stakeholders	10/30/20	ED, DDIR	Number of meetings held with stakeholder groups, including institutional leaders	Board Meetings on 8/4, 9/15; 12 public university mtgs, UCLC, and IMSSA 9/28-10/16

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Objectives	Strategies	Timeline	Accountability	Performance Measure	Progress Report
	3.2.b. Partner with Chicago State University to launch a work group to develop strategies to support postsecondary attainment of Black students; incorporate recommendations in strategic plan and policy priorities	3/30/21	ED	Work group products and inclusion of products in IBHE strategic plan	First meeting 9/10/20
	3.2.c. Engage minority-owned consulting firm to support the strategic plan engagement effort and to draft strategic plan	9/1/20-4/1/21	ED, EDD	Agreement with firm completed and work begun on the strategic planning process	UPD engaged in work
	3.2.d. Engage diverse pool of stakeholders in drafting the strategic plan via an advisory committee and design work groups, as well as other public engagement methods	9/1/20-3/15/21	ED and EDD with ICCB and state agency partners	% pool of diverse participants in the process	State survey sent 9/26/20
	3.2.e. Solicit feedback about draft strategic plan from a diverse pool of stakeholders	2/1/21-3/31/21	ED and EDD with ICCB and state agency partners	% pool of diverse participants providing feedback	
	3.2.f. Publish and implement strategic plan	6/30/21-Ongoing	ED, SS	Plan published on time	

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Objectives	Strategies	Timeline	Accountability	Performance Measure	Progress Report
	3.2.g. Adopt and seek legislation as needed for policies, practices, and budget recommendations to implement the strategic plan and close equity gaps	3/1/21- Ongoing	ED, LA, SS	Successful adoption of targeted legislation and budget recommendations	
	3.2.h. Establish P-20 statewide postsecondary equity benchmarks for attainment (60x25)	6/30/21	ED and ICCB with other state partners	Targets set and reported on annually	
3.3 Grant programs are aligned to agency goals to close equity gaps.	3.3.a. GEER funds allocated to support postsecondary enrollment and retention and to prioritize resources to persons of color, low-income, and other vulnerable populations	10/30/20	ED, EDD	Number of students served over the course of the period and enrollment/retention outcomes	
	3.3.b. Analyze statutory levers to recruit and retain DFI Fellows as faculty in Illinois postsecondary institutions. Advocate for Illinois institutions to consider DFI Fellows for open positions.	11/1/20	DDDO	Number of DFI fellows retained at Illinois institutions and in state agency roles	

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Objectives	Strategies	Timeline	Accountability	Performance Measure	Progress Report
	3.3.c. Each IBHE grant program is evaluated and restructured to ensure equitable access to resources.	Prior to next RFP going out (Nursing & Coop. Work Study grants)	SS	Revised grant documents and numbers of students served	
3.4 IBHE will protect students, especially those most vulnerable, through its regulatory review of institutions seeking operating authority and offering programs of study in Illinois.	3.4.a. Develop fiscal risk framework for Illinois postsecondary institutions	6/30/21	EDD, DDIR, DDFB	Framework completed	
	3.4.b. Annual analysis of PBVS programs includes an assessment of impact on diverse student populations	6/30/21 – Ongoing	SS	Baseline data collected and reported for demography of enrolled students	
	3.4.c. Review of requests for academic approval have an explicit analysis of impact on diverse groups and equity gaps	Ongoing	SS	Review documents include this information	
3.5 IBHE budget recommendations are aligned with state strategic plan and agency goals to close equity gaps.	3.5.a New approach to higher education budgeting reflects investment in equity and closing equity gaps	12/15/20 – FY22 budget recs.	DDFB	Change in dollars budgeted	
	3.5.b. New, equitable and adequate public university funding formula is developed to close equity gaps and keep them closed over time	12/15/21 (est. FY23 budget recs.)	DDFB	Funding formula developed; increase in diverse pool of students served	

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Objectives	Strategies	Timeline	Accountability	Performance Measure	Progress Report
3.6 IBHE uses data to identify and analyze equity gaps and strategies for closing these gaps.	3.6.a. Data tools support users in disaggregating information by race/ethnicity and understanding trend data pertaining to equity gaps.	12/31/20 - Ongoing	ED, DDIR	Number of website “hits” for data tools; number of new tools	
3.7 Higher education leaders and other key influencers are engaged in understanding equity gaps and their roles in closing these gaps.	3.7.a. IBHE annual public university trustee training provides university leaders with strategies for identifying and closing equity gaps in postsecondary attainment at their institution(s).	10/31/20	ED, EDD – with external support	Trustee training agenda and participant feedback about new understanding about their leadership role in closing equity gaps	
	3.7.b Agency board members are equipped with state-level data about postsecondary equity gaps to set a vision for strategic planning focused on equity.	10/1/20	ED, EDD, DDIR	Board meeting agendas and materials	Board meetings on 8/4/20 and 9/15/20
	3.7.c. Public higher education institutions develop equity plans that lead to elimination of equity gaps	12/31/21	ED	Number of public institutions that complete equity plans on time	
	3.7.d. IBHE monitors and public institutions of higher education implement plans to close equity gaps	1/1/22 - Ongoing	ED, SS	Outcomes data re. enrollment, retention, and graduation rates	

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Objectives	Strategies	Timeline	Accountability	Performance Measure	Progress Report
3.8 Website, social media, and other communication tools are accessible, highlight diverse perspectives and stories, and communicate the imperative of closing the equity gap in higher education.	3.8.a. Redesigned website includes a standing feature on equity	12/1/20	PIO	Completion on time; website data	
	3.8.b. Agency website translated into Spanish	3/1/21	PIO	Completion on time; website data	
	3.8.c. Agency website compliant with ADA requirements	3/1/21	PIO	Completion on time	
3.9 Agency reports include an equity lens to show the impact on improving educational outcomes for persons of color and other underrepresented groups in higher education.	3.9.a. Develop comprehensive list of agency reports	12/31/20	LA, HR	Task completed	
	3.9.b. Develop and implement internal review process to ensure alignment of agency reports to an equity lens	1/30/21	EDD, SS	Task completed; evidence of agency report content	