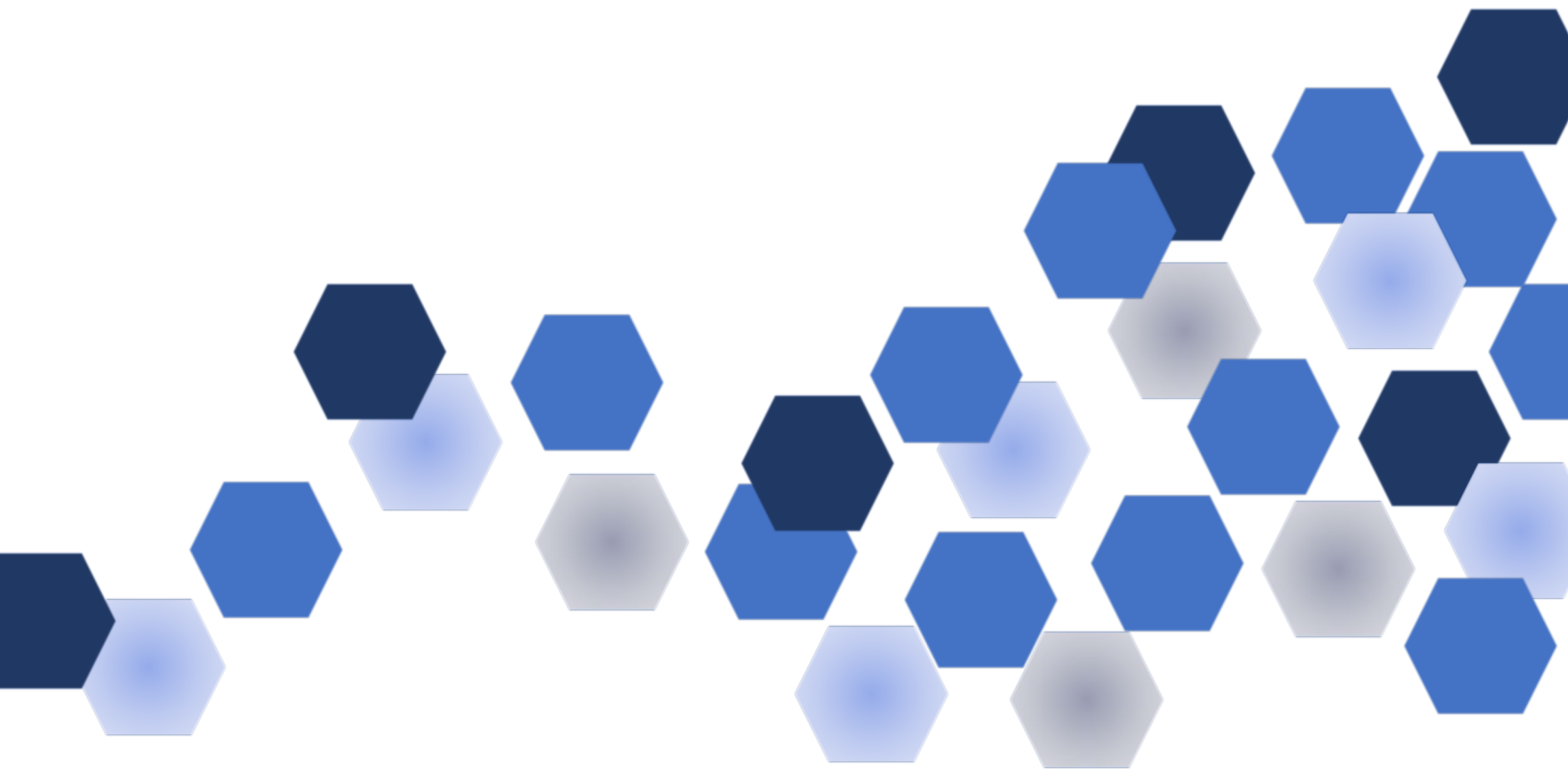


# Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion Working Group

A Year in Review  
2022



**Office of Executive Inspector General  
for the Agencies of the Illinois Governor**



# Introduction

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In July 2020, the OEIG formed an internal Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion (DEI) Working Group. This Working Group is comprised of OEIG employee volunteers from each division who work together to brainstorm, research, and implement steps to make the OEIG a more inclusive and equitable working environment that celebrates differences. During 2022, the Working Group had about 30 members. The DEI Working Group has three separate focus groups to concentrate on specific areas: 1) recruitment & hiring; 2) training; and 3) mentorship & development. Each focus group is designed to meet approximately once a month. The Working Group also developed OEIG Connect, an internal voluntary group that meets to discuss issues related to marginalized groups and identities, such as race, gender, and ability.

In 2022, the Working Group members began by coming together to discuss goals and priorities. Through brainstorming and discussions, the Working Group crafted a strategic plan to align resources more effectively with goals. This proved to be an efficient and rewarding strategy. Further, although the OEIG has a DEI Coordinator, the structure of the group is open to allow all members to share in the leadership and development of the Working Group. In this collaborative environment, we work to ensure that our methods for implementing our goals are thoughtful, grounded in research, and have been discussed and agreed upon by the group. While we have many goals still in mind, we accomplished a lot in 2022. This document summarizes those accomplishments.

More information about the DEI Working Group is located on the OEIG website, including the previous Year-End Report. For a direct link to the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion page, click here: <https://oeig.illinois.gov/employment/equal.html>.

## *Highlights of DEI Working Group Accomplishments*

- Expanded where the OEIG posts openings by over 50%.
- Updated OEIG position descriptions to ensure they are written with a focus on inclusivity.
- Standardized the onboarding of OEIG employees to ensure a baseline of inclusive connection in a hybrid work environment.
- Established an onboarding coordinator to assist in coordinating and facilitating the onboarding process.
- Updated the OEIG webpage to outline our commitment to DEI, prominently published our EEO/AA report, and added testimonials.
- Conducted in-office surveys to assess recruitment, development, and engagement.
- Updated the employment application to include the question: “Where did you hear about this opportunity?” to assist the Focus Group in determining the best use of OEIG recruitment resources.
- Brought in the Illinois Department of Human Rights (IDHR) to provide a half-day in-depth training to all OEIG employees. The training, entitled, Introduction to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, covered privilege, bias, microaggressions, and more.
- Provided leadership training to managers. This training included breakout rooms and thoughtful discussions about how we lead.
- Created a strategic plan for the DEI Working Group to effectively align our resources with our goals.
- Established a weekly all-staff email with information regarding holidays, cultural events, and important dates of recognition.
- Developed OEIG Connect – an internal voluntary group that meets to discuss issues related to marginalized groups and identities, such as race, gender, and ability. We have had separate discussions that focused on race, allyship, and implicit bias.
- Ensures that all new employees meet with the DEI Coordinator to get information about the Working Group and are invited to voluntarily participate.
- Updated OEIG position postings to include information regarding reasonable accommodations for completing the application, interviewing, and pre-employment testing.
- In March 2022, established an internal mentorship program that is open to all OEIG employees.

# Recruitment & Hiring

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During 2022, the Recruitment & Hiring Focus Group spent its efforts on evaluating onboarding processes and integrating new employees; updating position descriptions to ensure they are up-to-date and use inclusive language; and researching best practices for hiring.

First, this group reviewed current onboard processes and then worked to standardize the onboarding pieces related to employee integration. The goal was to ensure that all new employees receive certain information and opportunities to assist them in integrating and forming relationships to promote their success. With that goal in mind, the Focus Group developed an onboarding checklist that set forth a schedule of meetings with each OEIG department, topics for managers to discuss with the new employee, and directions regarding the buddy program for new employees. The buddy program pairs new employees with a “buddy” to provide another opportunity for the employee to form a connection in the office and facilitate greater inclusion in informal happenings.

Second, staff updated the position descriptions to change the way minimum requirements are explained and categorized; eliminated requirements that were not necessary for the position; and ensured the language in the description was gender neutral. They also added additional information about the availability of reasonable accommodations.

Finally, the Recruitment & Hiring Focus Group continued to research best practices in hiring and summarized its research and work into an OEIG Hiring Plan. The OEIG Hiring Plan outlines guidance for reviewing applicants, conducting interviews, and evaluating candidates. The Hiring Plan went into effect on January 1, 2023.



# Training

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When we started this focus group, key goals were to provide OEIG employees with trainings about topics related to diversity, equity, and inclusion. We wanted to bring trainings to the Office that would challenge employees and educate our staff on these important issues. We also wanted to make sure that training was not just a one-time experience, but an ongoing journey to a better understanding of these complex topics. In 2022, the Training Focus Group hosted a training presented by Equip for Equality that the entire office attended, hosted a training for managers about inclusive leadership, and created educational materials and planned an internal discussion about implicit bias.



The November 2022 Equip for Equality training was titled: “Disability Inclusion: Best Practices in Language, Etiquette, Accessible Meetings, and More.” This 90-minute training was attended by the entire office and included information about disabilities, etiquette, language, accessibility, and accommodations. The training included an interactive component where staff asked questions and shared thoughts and experiences. The DEI Working Group received positive feedback about the training and the opportunity to gain a deeper understanding of the topics discussed.

Also, the Training Focus Group worked with the Executive Inspector General to develop and lead a reflection exercise among managers to promote and share leadership strategies and goals. The training included small group discussions and allowed managers to reflect thoughtfully and deliberately about how they motivate, engage, and develop staff.

Finally, in June 2022, seven OEIG employees researched and led a peer discussion about implicit bias. This discussion was hosted as an OEIG Connect and is detailed more below.

# Mentorship & Development

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In 2021, the OEIG launched a pilot mentorship program to assess the logistics and strategies for implementing an internal mentorship program. In October 2021, the Mentorship & Development Focus Group hosted an office-wide panel discussion regarding time management and organization. During this event, OEIG staff from various positions served as panelists and moderators, and attendees asked questions about how they manage priorities and deadlines and their organization methods. This panel gave all employees an opportunity to learn new strategies for efficiency.

**March 2021**

The Mentorship & Development Focus Group began rolling-out the OEIG Mentorship Pilot Program.

**October 2021**

The Mentorship & Development Focus Group hosted an office-wide panel discussion regarding time management and organization

**March 2022**

An internal mentorship program was established based on the feedback and data the focus group received during the pilot program.

After completing the pilot mentorship program, the Mentorship & Development Focus Group was eager to apply the feedback and knowledge it acquired to establish the OEIG Mentorship Program. In March 2022, the OEIG Mentorship Program kicked-off. This internal, voluntary program works to provide support, guidance, development, leadership, and community for both mentees and mentors through one-on-one mentorship and group mentorship activities. The mentorship program is mentee driven and designed to allow mentees to establish their own uniquely tailored developmental goals that can be achieved through one-on-one mentorship. The mentee and mentor are paired for between six and nine months, depending on the goals and plan they develop.

The Mentorship & Development Focus Group administers this program by hosting information and orientation sessions for employees; providing guidance, resources, and check-in opportunities; and carrying out administrative functions for the program, such as pairing mentors and mentees, and developing and collecting forms and certificates. For example, the Mentorship & Development Focus Group hosted round-table discussions for the mentees and mentors to discuss and share methods they are using to achieve their program goals. OEIG employees have shared very positive feedback about the program.

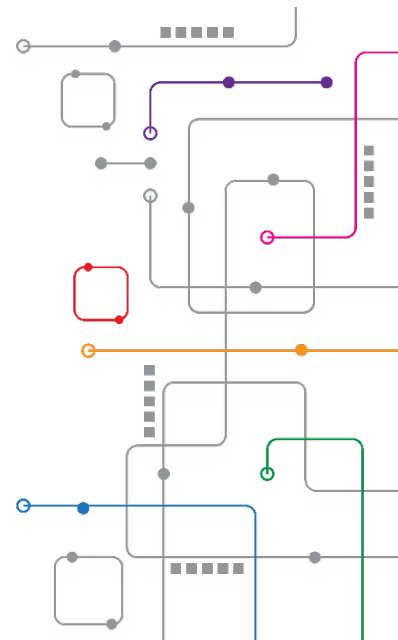


# OEIG Connect

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The DEI Working Group also continued to facilitate OEIG Connect—internal voluntary meetings designed to discuss issues regarding marginalized groups and identities, such as race, gender, and ability. Before these discussions, the Working Group members leading the Connect meeting circulate questions and topics, articles, and/or podcasts for review. OEIG Connect was developed to create an open forum for employees to share their identities, hear from others, and be seen as their whole selves. OEIG Connect is part of the DEI Working Group’s mission to build a community that talks openly and listens to other voices discussing topics related to diversity, equity, and inclusion. All OEIG employees are invited to participate by listening or sharing, and coming together with the goal of connecting on a personal level with colleagues.

This year we held two OEIG Connects: a discussion about implicit bias in June 2022 and a discussion about burnout in October 2022. In June 2022, seven OEIG employees researched and led a peer discussion about implicit bias. Prior to attending, the participants were given exercises to complete related to implicit bias, including an online training to take and an article to read. During the conversation, participants were challenged to openly share their thoughts, ideas, and experiences, discussed ways in which implicit bias can present itself in our work, and facilitators presented concrete steps for interrupting implicit bias. This discussion was voluntary and over one-third of the Office attended. After the implicit bias discussion, we conducted an anonymous survey to get feedback. The results of the survey were positive and several employees reported that they continued the discussion and learning after the event with family, friends, and colleagues.



In October 2022, five OEIG employees researched and led a peer discussion about burnout. Prior to the discussion, participants received an article with background information about burnout and tools and exercises to address it. The goals of this Connect were to: 1) learn about burnout and how to recognize it; 2) reflect on the prevalence of burnout; 3) learn tools to address burnout; and 4) generate a discussion about mental health. The Connect included breakout room discussions and a reflection and planning exercise. The DEI Working Group received positive feedback about this topic and the event.



# Conclusion

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The OEIG DEI Working Group is proud of its work over this past year. As we move forward, we reflect on projects we want to tackle and also the importance of spending time to strengthen an inclusive and supportive environment. We still have a lot of work to do, and we are eager to do it—together.

## DEI Working Group Members

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*Julie Africk*

*Tonya Neal*

*Ogo Akpan*

*Fallon Opperman*

*Christine Benavente*

*Tiffany Pryor-Wallace*

*Melissa Brandenburg*

*Katie Ruyle*

*Adam Bush-Emmart*

*Melissa Rollins*

*Lorena Contreras*

*Gina Rosas*

*Michael Cook*

*Francine Simmons*

*Natale Fuller*

*Janelle Skaloud*

*Latisha Haygood*

*Reginald Spears*

*Dinara Healy*

*Colleen Thomas*

*Daria Hernandez*

*Amanda Thomet*

*Antoinette Kwateng*

*Jasmine Velazquez*

*Viktorija Legge*

*Alexa Vouros*

*Angela Luning*

*Diana Zuver*

*Lisa McDonald*

*Edward Mroczkowski*

*Jacqueline Mullings*