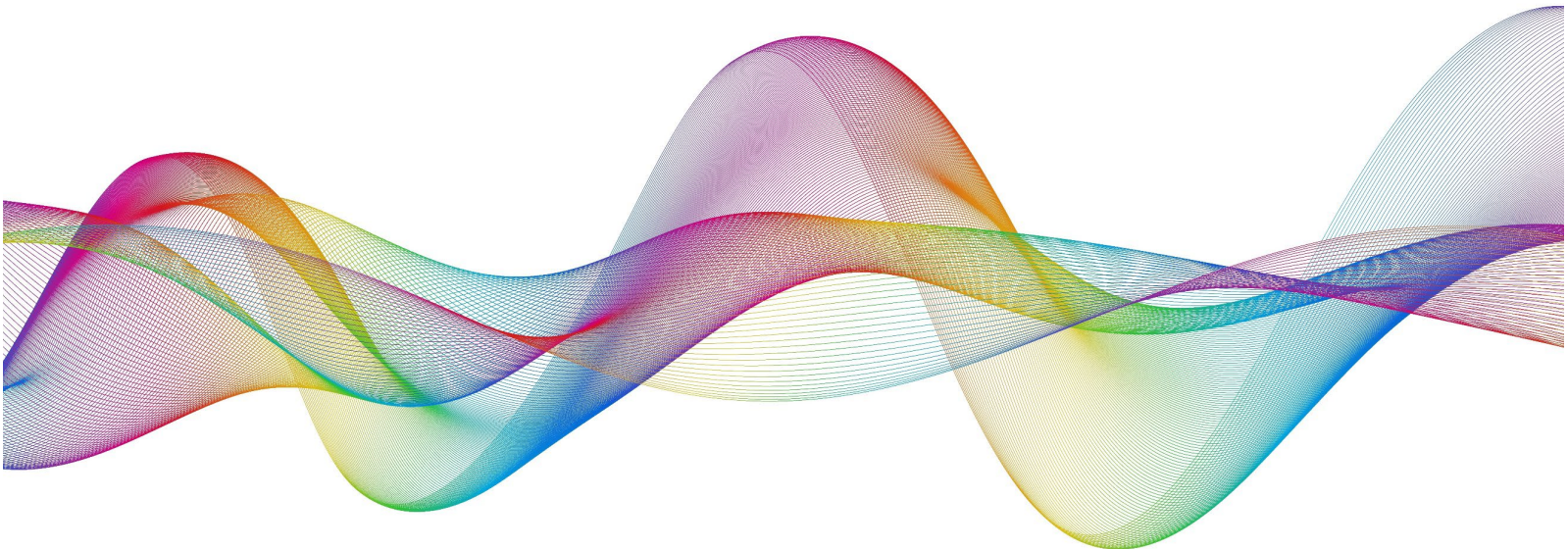# Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, & Accessibility Working Group

**A Year in Review
2023**

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

Introduction

- Recruitment & Hiring

- Training

- Mentorship & Development

- Employee Connection

The OEIG maintains an active internal Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, & Accessibility (DEIA) 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. The DEIA Working Group's focus areas include: 1) recruitment & hiring; 2) training; 3) mentorship & development; and 4) employee connection.

During 2023, the Working Group made efforts to increase transparency and communication with all OEIG staff by implementing office-wide quarterly meetings and an internal Teams site that hosts Working Group updates, information, and resources. The DEIA Working Group also developed a strategic plan to align resources more effectively with goals.

Although the OEIG has a DEIA 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 continuously work towards setting and meeting goals, our accomplishments in 2023 are noteworthy.

More information about the DEIA Working Group is located on the OEIG website, including previous year-end reports. For a direct link to the Diversity, Equity, Inclusion & Accessibility page, click here: https://oeig.illinois.gov/employment/equal.html.

Highlights of All DEIA Working Group Accomplishments

Expanded where the OEIG posts employment opportunities by over 50%.	Provided leadership training to managers. This training included breakout rooms and thoughtful discussions about how we lead.
Updated OEIG position descriptions to ensure they are written with a focus on inclusivity.	Created strategic plans for the DEIA Working Group to effectively align our resources with our goals.
Developed a New Employee Day for newer OEIG employees to connect with senior staff and each other and learn more about the OEIG's history.	Established a monthly internal email with information regarding holidays, cultural events, and important dates of recognition.
Standardized the onboarding of OEIG employees to ensure a baseline of inclusive connection in a hybrid work environment and then conducted a survey one year later to obtain feedback on the processes.	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, implicit bias, burnout, imposter syndrome, and microaggressions.
Facilitated all staff training by external trainers, including the Illinois Department of Human Rights (IDHR), Equip for Equality, and Nikk Selik (transgender expert).	Researched best practices for accommodations and made updates to our website, employment application, and processes.
Updated the employment application to include the question: "Where did you hear about this opportunity?" to gather data and focus recruitment resources.	Established an internal mentorship program that is open to all OEIG employees.

Recruitment & Hiring

During 2023, the Working Group continued to bring DEIA best practices to recruitment and hiring efforts. Specifically, the Working Group: gathered data about the onboarding process it standardized in 2022; continued to cast a wide net for posting employment opportunities; rolled out the OEIG Hiring plan; made updates to accommodate persons with disabilities; reestablished the intern program; and hosted an inaugural New Employee Day. Below is more information about these projects.

- In 2022, the DEIA Working Group standardized the OEIG's onboarding process to ensure a baseline of inclusive connection, among other things. In 2023, the Working Group surveyed the employees who were onboarded with the updated process and analyzed the feedback to determine if any changes should be made to the process.

- The Working Group continued to cast a wide net in posting positions at several colleges and law schools, as well as diverse organizations and bar associations.

- The Working Group rolled out a hiring plan for the OEIG, effective January 1, 2023. The OEIG Hiring Plan outlines guidance for reviewing applications, conducting interviews, and evaluating candidates. The Working Group held an informational session with managers and those involved in hiring regarding the plan and the reasoning behind its best practices.

- The Working Group also updated information regarding accommodations for interviewing. After researching best practices, the Working Group updated the OEIG website detailing how to apply for a position and included a direct link to the OEIG's accommodation procedures for applicants.

- The Working Group updated the descriptions of alternative text for images on the OEIG's website. Alternative text, sometimes referred to as "ALT text," is when text is used to describe an image for those who are unable to see or interpret it on their own. After researching best practices, we reviewed the OEIG's alternative text descriptions and made some recommendations that our IT department implemented.

- The Working Group reestablished the internship program. A team of volunteers outlined the logistics for the program, including resources needed, recruitment strategy, and program structure. After completing this planning, the OEIG posted the intern opportunities, interviewed potential interns, and selected two candidates for the Spring 2024 semester.

- The Working Group hosted our first New Employee Day. On August 9, 2023, the Chicago office Working Group employees hosted newer employees for a half day of events. The focus of New Employee Day was to provide connection and integration in the office. Eleven employees who started within the past year attended. The event included small group conversations with managers, a scavenger hunt with tasks aimed at learning about the office and interacting with coworkers, and a presentation regarding OEIG history. After work all staff were invited to a social event.

In FY 2023, our Equal Employment Opportunity/ Affirmative Action report reflected that we had no under utilizations in the Equal Employment Opportunity categories set forth in Illinois law.

Workforce by Ethnicity
Source: FY 2023 EEO/AAP Plan

- White
- Black/African American
- Hispanic/Latino
- Asian
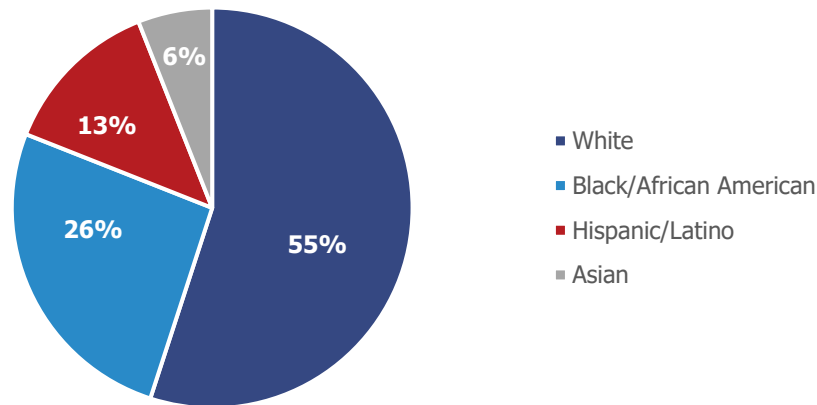
Training

The Working Group strives to bring trainings to our staff that challenge employees and educate them about these important DEIA issues. We also want to ensure that training is not just a one-time experience, but an ongoing journey to a better understanding of these complex topics. As part of that goal, all new employees take an online introduction to Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility training to provide them with an introductory understanding of various DEIA topics. In 2023, we also hosted a speaker to discuss gender identities.

In May 2023, Nikk Selik presented at the OEIG's All-Staff Conference. His presentation, "Transgender 101," included an introduction to concepts and terminology around pronouns, gender identity, and what it means to be transgender. The training included a question-and-answer portion and staff engaged in a thoughtful discussion of questions surrounding these topics. In an office-wide survey conducted after the training, 100% of respondents said that the training increased their knowledge of gender identities.

Mentorship & Development

The DEIA Working Group maintains an internal mentorship program available to all OEIG employees. This internal, voluntary program works to provide support, guidance, development, leadership, and community for both mentees and mentors through one-on-one 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 a period lasting between six and nine months, depending on the goals and plan they develop.

The Working Group administers this program by:

Hosting information and orientation sessions for employees	Providing guidance, resources, and check-in opportunities	Carrying out administrative functions for the program

The Working Group conducts a survey at the end of each program to gather feedback and assess potential changes to the program.

Employee Connection

The DEIA Working Group also continued to facilitate OEIG Connect— consisting of 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 DEIA Working Group's mission to build a community that talks openly and listens to other voices discussing topics related to diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility. All OEIG employees are invited to participate by listening or sharing, and come together with the goal of connecting on a personal level with colleagues.

This year we held two OEIG Connects: a discussion about imposter syndrome in June 2023 and a discussion about microaggressions in October 2023.
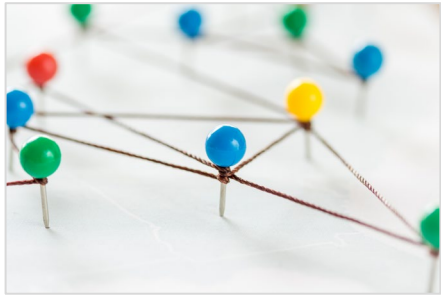
The OEIG Connect regarding imposter syndrome, led by staff volunteers, provided information about what imposter syndrome is and outlined strategies for combatting it. The leaders of the discussion shared a TED Talk about the statistics related to imposter syndrome among high-achieving individuals. The OEIG Connect also included breakout room discussions.

In October 2023, the DEIA Working Group held an OEIG Connect about microaggressions. A group of volunteers presented information and definitions about types of microaggressions, their impact, and how to respond if you commit a microaggression. The meeting included two breakout sessions, large group discussions, and an interactive activity that followed a person who experiences microaggressions inside and outside of work and how the microaggressions impacts them. For those who are interested in the interactive experience to illustrate microaggressions, you can visit https://fobettarh.github.io/Killing-Me-Softly/.

Another way the Working Group fosters connection is through a monthly email. Each month, the DEIA Working Group circulates information regarding holidays, cultural events, and important dates of recognition. The goal of this distribution is to ensure our employees are seen and heard by recognizing and celebrating the diversity that makes our office great.

The Working Group also organized two social events, one in each office, for staff to connect outside of work. The events included an office potluck lunch, meeting at a local restaurant after work, and bowling.

Conclusion

The OEIG DEIA Working Group is proud of its work over this past year. As we move forward, we continue to reflect on projects we want to tackle and the importance of spending time to strengthen an inclusive and supportive environment. We eagerly look forward to all the work we can, and will, do together.