



Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

Action Plan

2021



Our Mission

To empower Pierce County residents to achieve their financial dreams and to secure personal financial security through an integrated model of coaching and counseling.

Our DEI Commitment

Sound Outreach is committed to embracing cross-cultural diversity and actively participating in anti-racist work geared to disrupting the systemic inequalities in our community. We believe in the dignity, respect, and equitable treatment of all who find their way to our door. We will treat our clients, co-workers, and volunteers with fairness, caring, and inclusiveness. We respect the value of diversity in all of its unique ways, and pledge ourselves to create and maintain an environment that respects and includes diverse traditions, heritages, and experiences in all walks of life.

Our Anti-Racist Statement

Sound Outreach is committed to creating and sustaining a culture of equity, diversity, access, and inclusion in our organization and across our communities.

Our commitment begins with an immediate focus on becoming an anti-racist, multicultural organization that actively works to dismantle structural and institutional racism and condemns racist practices and behaviors in all forms.

In an effort to improve our standing on the continuum towards becoming an anti-racist organization, we will work toward achieving full-participation and shared power for diverse racial, cultural, and economic groups. We vow to intentionally and purposefully challenge issues of race and color and their impact(s) as we add our voices to the call to end systematic racism.

In addition to adjusting our policies and practices, we have expanded our strategy by developing a Diversity Committee and an organizational DEI plan. By drawing upon input from employees and other key stakeholders, we have charted a newfound mission to empower our fellow employees, community members, and future generations.



Our DEI Agreements

Diversity

In addition to actively empowering against systemic discrimination within the whole of our work, whether by race, gender, ethnicity, religion, nationality, sexual orientation, economic standing, or among the differently-abled, we will seek all opportunities to create a welcoming culture that celebrates the treasure of diversity. We will pledge to ensure that many identities are represented in all levels of the organization including our Board of Directors, Leadership, and Staff.

Equity

We will provide a culture that meets the diverse needs of our workforce, clients, and services. In understanding that Equity is not synonymous with Equality, and acknowledging that we each have different strengths and abilities, as well as disadvantages and/or barriers, we will strive to give all employees the necessary resources to complete their job duties in a safe environment, and support our clients toward a more equitable future.

Inclusion

We will provide an environment of inclusion and equitable access to opportunities and resources necessary to contribute to our organization's success. We pledge that all levels of organizational leadership will continually look for possible barriers and unconscious biases that prevent voices of marginalized identities from being heard and that regardless of identity or role, all voices are to be given space, and addressed with respect.

Summary of Goals

Goal 1:

We commit to create intentional systems for clients of BIPOC and other minority communities to actively shape the work of Sound Outreach, seeking to support their businesses and over-represent them in our client base. We challenge ourselves to understand and correct any inequities we may discover and gain a better understanding during this purposeful process.

Goal 2:

We commit to do more outreach, seeking further afield for opportunities to aid any disenfranchised groups beyond our home location in Hilltop. We will diligently advertise our services widely, and work with our alliances to make our service opportunities known. We will meet these new clients where they are, for those who cannot come to us, expanding our reach to often forgotten quarters of our county.

Goal 3:

We commit ourselves to prioritizing Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in our work both internally amongst our Board, Staff, and Volunteers, as well as our client base, and externally. We will intentionally reflect on and demonstrate Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and anti-racist practices in our everyday organizational systems, structures and actions. Ensuring respect and a voice for all, by practicing these intentions - we will be a safe space for those who engage with us in the work we have undertaken, and we will defend their rights in all dealings whether internally or in conjunction with other groups and organizations in which we ally.

Strategies and Tactics


Goal 1:

We commit to create intentional systems for clients of BIPOC and other minority communities to actively shape the work of Sound Outreach, seeking to support their businesses and over-represent them in our client base. We challenge ourselves to listen, learn, and correct any inequities we may discover and gain a better understanding during this purposeful process.

Action 1:

Sound Outreach will conduct and implement open-survey feedback communications with our client base on a quarterly basis, asking them for active feedback, and ways in which we can better serve their needs.

Sub-Action 1:



Through the expertise of our Employment Coaches and Financial Counselors, we will build surveys to be released to clients via email on a quarterly basis, with focus on the current trends of needs they are seeing at the time.

Sub-Action 2:

This feedback will be analyzed, broken into department-specific focus areas, and relayed by Leadership to the appropriate channels.

Sub-Action 3:

Action items for incorporating the necessary changes will be issued throughout the appropriate departments, including the folding in, incorporating, changing out, re-defining, and/or amending of the current strategies, processes, and programming to better fit the needs of our client base, within the requirements of grant or program-based restrictions.

Goal 2:


We commit to do more outreach, seeking further afield for opportunities to aid any disenfranchised groups beyond our home location in Hilltop. We will diligently advertise our services widely, and work with our alliances to make our service opportunities known. We will meet these new clients where they are, for those who cannot come to us, expanding our reach to often forgotten quarters of our county.

Action 1:

Sound Outreach will participate in community events in order to nurture a more just and inclusion-focused workplace. We will be willing to have difficult conversations about diversity, equity, and inclusion within our organization and with our business partners to promote antiracism and social equity.

Sub-Action 1:

Sound Outreach will audit and assess our current reporting metrics for demographics missing in our outreach, filling the



gaps of need directly within our access. Demographic research will include ALICE families, LGBTQ+, Other-abled, Veterans, Seniors, Adult learners, Single Parent families, and BIPOC community members. Department heads responsible for each demographic (as delegated by the Executive Director) will cull and report this data to the Leadership team within a set time frame.

Sub-Action 2:

Leadership will review these data reports and discuss best plans of action to fold in the outstanding disenfranchised subgroups, identifying the departments responsible for them, and Action Plans to more fully incorporate them into our outreach.

Sub-Action 3:

Monthly tracking of these specific new subset demographics will be reported by their departments, for grant and program success numbers as well as departmental accountability.

Action 2:

Sound Outreach will undertake language translation work on outreach materials and intake forms, building access and capacity to work with those with which English is a second language.

Sub-Action 1:

We will assess options and partnerships for language translation that will provide accessible materials in multiple languages.

Sub-Action 1:

Once access options have been identified, we will develop a plan to implement translation for client-facing resources, including paperwork, and educational materials.

Action 3:

Sound Outreach will actively work at reaching out to allies, and interspersed and disenfranchised communities within our county through community work. We make a pledge to seek further afield and engage with pockets of neighborhoods beyond our immediate surroundings.

Sub-Action 1:

We challenge our Manager of Community Engagement to seek out, contact, and perform outreach to two new community collectives (clubs, organizations, neighborhood groups, systems, co-ops, or other grouping identifiers) per month. The impetus will be to share our services and offerings with these groups and sign them up as community contacts and/or clients as needed. This would also provide access to native speakers and interpreters available to aid our Financial Counselors and Job Coaches on staff for the ease of our clients.

Action 4:

Sound Outreach will grow these connections through outreach, invitations, open forum discussions, classes, and more, crossing cultural barriers, and languages by building a volunteer base embedded within these areas.

Sub-Action 1:

We challenge our Program Manager and Leadership to develop and grow programs, to fit the requirements of our extended clientele based on their specific community needs.

Sub-Action 2:

Forming a SO Diverse Volunteer Subcommittee, we will build a volunteer program based on inclusion of all of these client groups, incorporating a diverse collective willing to donate time to help with interpretive work, mentorship, and active outreach along with our Manager of Community Engagement. The goal is to reflect and give voice to groups in other languages and cultures in order to achieve a more inclusive and comforting space for our clients.

Goal 3:

We commit ourselves to prioritizing Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in our work both internally amongst our Board, Staff, and Volunteers, as well as our client base, externally. We will intentionally reflect on and demonstrate Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and anti-racist practices in our everyday organizational systems, structures and actions. Ensuring respect and a voice for all, by practicing these intentions - we will be a safe space for those who engage with us in the work we have undertaken, and we will defend their rights in all dealings whether internally or in conjunction with other groups and organizations in which we ally.

Action 1:

Sound Outreach will form and facilitate a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion committee, made of volunteers from the Staff and/or Board. This committee (known internally as SO Diverse), will conduct meetings, and be an open, safe space for issues to be discussed and resolved.

Sub-Action 1:

Working in conjunction with subcommittees, the SO Diverse Committee will build foundational documents such as the DEI Action Plan, and Anti-Racist statement, identify and address internal issues within our organization via surveys and breakout discussions, and continue to work actively towards a more equitable environment for our staff and clients.

Sub-Action 2:

As the SO Diverse Committee identifies outstanding concerns, we will form recommendations for updated policies to be formed and submitted to HR, the Director, and Board for review, signature, and implementation.

Action 2:

We will undertake a self [828 Assessment](#) on an annual basis, in order to provide accurate and up-to-date transparency in where we align in our DEI goals, and where we need to focus our efforts for improvement.

Sub-Action 1:

The SO Diverse team will fill out the 828 Assessment, with the help of metrics from Leadership.

Sub-Action 2:


Findings of the Assessment will be reviewed by the SO Diverse team in order to identify areas for improvement. These items will be presented to the Leadership team for discussion and a move toward fleshing them out to action plan items.

Sub-Action 3:

Based on the feedback from Leadership, the SO Diverse team will help in any action item work in order to assist Leadership in the correction/implementation of changes, as needed.

Action 3:

With the recognition that DEI matters are of the utmost importance, we will undertake to raise and secure the funds needed - through organizational-wide efforts - to finance the procurement of a DEI Certified Specialist who will assist in the foundational work of our DEI Action Plan. We will assure this person is outside of our organization pool, to provide the most transparent,



open disclosure between them and our staff, in order to unearth and resolve any deep-rooted issues within our organization.

Sub-Action 1:

The SO Diverse RFP Subcommittee will identify the major issues needed addressing, and build a DEI Specialist RFP for review with the SO Diverse team.

Sub-Action 2:

The SO Diverse RFP Subcommittee will propose the RFP to the Board for their approval, along with an Ask for Funds.

Sub-Action 3:

Together the Board and SO Diverse will build an active plan for raising the necessary funds to secure the DEI Specialist needed, per the RFP plan, already agreed upon.

Sub-Action 4:


The SO Diverse RFP Subcommittee will release the RFP, and conduct interviews as needed. A final review will be undertaken by the whole of the SO Diverse team, before their recommendation is forwarded to the Board for final approval.

Sub-Action 5:

Once the DEI Specialist is secured, SO Diverse will turn over all surveys, assessments, breakout sessions minutes, and “final” draft of our DEI Action Plan for their study and use.

Sub-Action 5:

Should the DEI Specialist come to the conclusion, after their assessment, that the estimated time to complete our foundational structures, training, and/or organizational issues is not within the scope of the RFP timeline, the SO Diverse



subcommittee will reconvene with the Board to form a plan for revision of funds for the DEI work at hand.

Action 4:

Sound Outreach will dedicate to providing employee training and experiences to nurture a more just and inclusive workplace, and create space to listen to underrepresented voices, seeking out and supporting diverse thinking, perspectives, and experiences.

Sub-Action 1:

As part of our dedication to ongoing education and inclusiveness, our SO Diverse team, in tandem with HR and Leadership, will host an annual DEI awareness meeting, conducted by a professional DEI Specialist working within our community. Our purpose is to support not only a local business member, but also to refresh and rededicate to our DEI mission on an annual basis, signifying it's importance to our continual work as a leader in this community which serves disenfranchised populations.

Sub-Action 2:

The SO Diverse Committee will develop an anonymous mode of feedback and open communication within the Organization. The goal of this pipeline is to assure those with DEI issues needing resolution have a safe space to air their grievances, and bring their issues to the table. Depending on the grievance the SO Diverse team will either form a subcommittee for resolution in drawing up a recommendation, or forward the anonymous grievance to our DEI Specialist, Director, or Board, as needed.

Sub-Action 3:

We challenge the Leadership Team to draw up a clear and concise memorandum of understanding on the rights of our Counsellors and Coaches to turn away or terminate a client based on safety concerns, and/or inappropriate or Anti-DEI rhetoric aimed directly at our client-facing staff. This memorandum should include clear procedure for it's achievement of securing a swift and safe separation with clients, which parties are charged with this mission, and follow-up check-ins with the staff member in question. The request of separation/refusal may come from a staff member directly, or from the SO Diverse Committee on behalf of complaints put forward to the team.


Sub-Action 4:

In keeping with the 5 Staff Agreements as part of Sound Outreach, the SO Diverse team will undertake to continue in upholding and reinforce our company-wide pledge to:

- Create space for everyone's leadership, responsibility, and accountability
- When opportunities or challenges arise, get fully informed, be decisive, follow through, and communicate throughout the whole process
- Encourage a work environment where all voices are heard to create a space that uses multiple views and open dialogue
- Communicate professionally, directly, truthfully, and timely
- Respect one another and offer grace

Sub-Action 5:

The SO Diverse Committee will also serve in the capacity of an on-call mediator to inter-staff grievances, should the need arise. The parties in question may agree upon any one or number of SO Diverse Committee members (or alternative co-worker), to sit in and run a meeting or meetings, conduct



questions, and/or prove witness between disputing Staff members regarding anything falling within the DEI umbrella. If the Committee members deem it necessary, they will take the issue to the SO Diverse team under the guise of anonymity, and request either extended council, or a session with a DEI Specialist and/or HR, for final dispute resolution.