



Overview of RLF's Plan for Advancing Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

Resources Legacy Fund (RLF) builds alliances that advance bold solutions to secure a just and resilient world for people and nature.

Equity has been part of RLF's environmental strategy since some of its early work 20 years ago. In 2019, RLF made a commitment to do more and launched a formal effort to deepen staff and board's understanding of the principles of diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) and develop a plan to advance DEI internally and externally. Since launching this effort in 2019, RLF staff and board have participated in trainings covering topics such as implicit bias, anti-racism, cultural humility, and the history of the conservation movement, which has been marred by exclusion and racism. In 2020, we developed and shared our [DEI statement](#), a commitment to breaking down systemic social, cultural, and economic inequities and helping to advance a new reality in which decision making and leadership are as diverse as the communities we engage.

Building on this, we developed and began implementing a comprehensive DEI plan to guide us in our efforts to build a more inclusive workplace culture and to advance DEI through partnerships, grantmaking, and advocacy. The full plan is organized by four commitments and supporting goals, strategies, and time-based tactics that will be part of staff workplans and quarterly RLF board meetings. An abbreviated version of that plan can be found below.

This work is long-term and will evolve over time. As we learn and grow, our plan, and the work it informs, will evolve. We look forward to tracking our progress and providing updates to our funders and partners.

Diversity:

Diversity includes all characteristics and experiences that define each of us as individuals. It includes race, gender, sex, ethnicity, age, religion, national origin, disability, sexual orientation, communication style, work style, socio-economic status, political orientation, etc.

Equity:

The guarantee of fair treatment, access, opportunity and advancement while at the same time striving to identify and eliminate barriers that have prevented the full participation of some groups.

Inclusion:

The act of creating environments in which any individual or group can be and feel welcomed, respected, supported and valued to fully participate. An inclusive and welcoming climate embraces differences and offers respect in words and actions for all people.

Our Commitments and Goals

Commitment 1: Build a workplace more reflective of the diversity of the communities in which we work, where all staff feel valued and have a sense of belonging, and where we embrace the challenge and opportunity of growth on DEI issues at all levels of the organization.

Goals

- 1a) Improved recruitment, hiring, and training practices result in more diverse staff
- 1b) Competitive and equitable salary ranges and benefits help retain staff with high levels of job satisfaction

- 1c) Clear staffing structure and professional development opportunities allow staff to see pathways to leadership and growth at RLF and in the field
- 1d) RLF has an inclusive workplace culture, and staff feel equipped and comfortable having difficult conversations (including fiscally sponsored projects, to extent possible)
- 1e) RLF leadership and board hold themselves accountable to implement the DEI Plan

Commitment 2: Build trust-based partnerships with our grantees and community partners that advance DEI, amplifying the voices and perspectives of the most negatively impacted communities, and sharing our DEI goals and values with funders, grantees, contractors, and academic partners to ensure our collective work leads to a more equitable and just world.

Goals

- 2a) Improved engagement with grassroots and community partners result in more equitable and mutually beneficial partnerships
- 2b) Sharing DEI goals and values with funder, grantee, and community partners help identify mutual priorities and enhance collective impact
- 2c) Clear, consistent, inclusive communications help strengthen relationships and enhance RLF's reach and impact

Commitment 3: Engage in grantmaking that explicitly promotes DEI by using dollars to actively re-allocate power to those who have been marginalized and build long-term capacity within those communities.

Goals

- 3a) Program strategies include a DEI lens and focus on outcomes that bridge conservation and equity (e.g. diversify grantee portfolios, advance equitable outcomes, build inclusive coalitions)
- 3b) Flexible, accessible, and less burdensome grantmaking practices contribute to a more diverse grant portfolio
- 3c) Beyond-the-dollar support to grantees helps strengthen their capacity

Commitment 4: Support and engage in advocacy for public policies that spur new investment and opportunity and remove barriers faced by marginalized communities, enabling their members to live full and healthy lives.

Goals

- 4a) RLF helps redistribute power and make progress toward specific outcomes by setting priorities for policy engagement in collaboration with partners
- 4b) Guidelines for Tribal engagement help identify policy goals, build relationships, and secure additional support from funders
- 4c) Program strategies that include support to community organizing and advocacy contribute to increased community voice and power in policy-making processes
- 4d) Advocacy for public funding mechanisms and equity focus in these mechanisms result in greater funding available to marginalized communities