

# AN EQUITY-CENTERED APPROACH

At Sierra Nevada Journeys, equity is a core value that equity happens with intent and focus.

## Timeline of Our Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Work

### 2017

- The California Endowment (TCE) has been a longtime partner in programs with Sierra Nevada Journeys. TCE's Building Healthy Communities is a 10-year, \$1 billion comprehensive community initiative to advance statewide policy, change the narrative, and transform health inequities of 14 California communities most devastated by poor health into places where all people have an opportunity to thrive. Sacramento is one of these 14 identified cities and Sierra Nevada Journeys not only leads youth programs in Sacramento, but many participants that attend our outdoor education camp, Grizzly Creek Ranch, located in Portola, California, come from the Sacramento region and through TCE's initiative.
- To further our work with TCE, their program officer and its team met with Sierra Nevada Journeys to encourage us to set big goals for Equity and Inclusion. In response, we set out a goal to hire an education staff made up of at least 50 percent Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) for our instructors at Grizzly Creek Ranch. This effort kicked off a process for Sierra Nevada Journeys to move toward an equity-centered organization.
- In November 2017, we created a Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee to expand access to nature and science to reach an increasingly diverse population of future scientists and environmental stewards.

### 2018

- Sierra Nevada Journeys met our internal goal of hiring 50 percent instructors of color for 2018, and learned one valuable lesson after another, such as building systems to ensure a positive culture for increased diversity on our team is more important than setting hiring goals.
- We relied on partnerships with TCE, Sierra Health Foundation, and others focused on historically marginalized communities to find fantastic employees.
- Sierra Nevada Journeys' DEI Committee created and administered the first employee survey to capture demographic data and the perspective of employees at all levels regarding the state of equity and inclusion at the organization. As a result of the survey, regularly held professional development activities have been implemented focusing on cultural relevancy, trauma-informed practice, and mitigating implicit bias.
- Two members of Sierra Nevada Journeys' leadership team were accepted into the two-year Working Towards Equitable Organizations (WTEO) Institute, facilitated by The Lawrence Hall of Science and Justice Outside (formerly Youth Outside). As part of the institute, Sierra Nevada Journeys also sent three employees to the industry-wide Professionals of Color Building Capacity Institute.

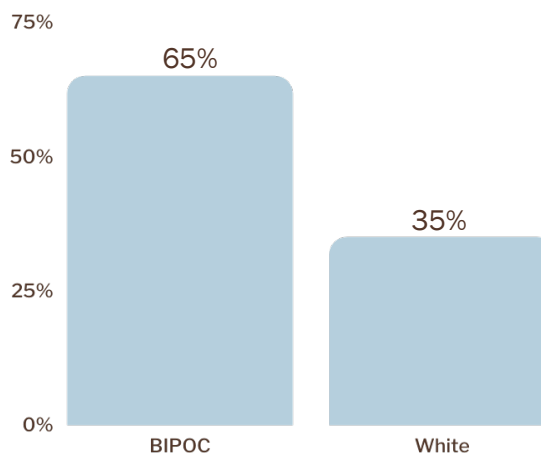




## 2020

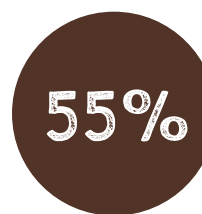
- Sierra Nevada Journeys held a DEI strategic planning workshop, facilitated by partners at the Lawrence Hall of Science's BEETLES program and Justice Outside, to develop a vision statement and outline a three-year action plan for a more inclusive and equitable Sierra Nevada Journeys. Participation included front line employees, managers, leadership and board members.

### Participant Demographics



## 2019

- Sierra Nevada Journeys hired a full-time human resources director tasked with materially improving systems for hiring and retention, and focusing on a more culturally and racially diverse staff.
- We implemented gender inclusivity policies for Grizzly Creek Ranch's camp programs. Additionally, we created gender introduction protocol for educators to introduce themselves using their gender pronouns during field experiences, and created a resource sheet for chaperones and teachers explaining the practice.
- Sierra Nevada Journeys implemented Land Acknowledgements for student programs across each of our locations. The purpose of these acknowledgement statements is to recognize and respect the land we are on is unceded native territory, remembering the local tribes that are the traditional stewards of the land, and honoring their presence on these lands.

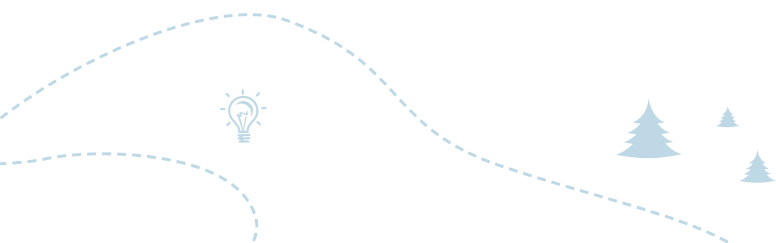


Low-Income

- Over the past three years, we have been tracking student demographics to demonstrate the outcomes of our efforts to increase access to high-quality STEM and outdoor education experiences. To date, the majority of students that attend our programs are from communities that historically and currently lack access to outdoor environmental education.



2018, 2019 and 2020 average



# Current Organization-Wide Initiatives

- Each member of the staff leadership team has a quarterly SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, time-based) goal related to DEI.
- We've expanded community partnerships with organizations that work with underrepresented communities. Examples include:

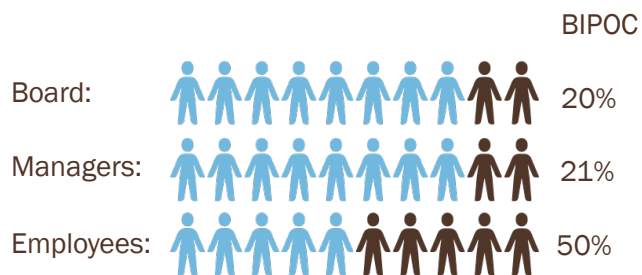
The Native Voices Project, a collaboration between Sierra Nevada Journeys, the Plumas County Office of Education, and the Mountain Maidu community in Plumas County. The project has developed new outdoor science learning experiences that incorporate the Maidu perspective and traditional ecological knowledge.

Improve Your Tomorrow, Black Youth Leadership Project, Square Root Academy and Amplify Life, are new community partners serving populations underrepresented in outdoor education. Collaborations with these partners are delivering valuable outdoor experiences, Social Emotional Learning and environmental science programs to their youth participants.

- We've introduced a new employee handbook incorporating equity and inclusion-based updates to employee policies.
- Job descriptions have been updated to include a statement about our equity, diversity and inclusion priorities, and have been edited to mitigate bias and barriers to potential applicants.
- We've hired a DEI consultant who specializes in supporting environmental education organizations, to guide us in DEI-related improvements with our organization.
- We undertook a Community Needs Assessment focusing on interviews with youth, teachers, and community-based organizations representing youth with the least access to high-quality STEM education and outdoor experiences. Feedback is directly informing program redesign.
- Ongoing staff DEI efforts include planning for internal DEI trainings, revising recruiting and hiring processes, and participating in a monthly equity and inclusion reading and discussion group open to all employees.

## 2021

### Employee Demographics



*Note, each of these numbers are rounded estimates accounting for the voluntary nature of our team's disclosures.*

- In 2021, we launched an initiative to quantify the demographics of applicants and team members, to support our efforts to manage equity and inclusion goals in the same way as other organizational goals.
- The data shown above represents the impact of four years of work: refining job descriptions, building partnerships, cultivating a workplace culture that is welcoming to all. At the same time, we recognize that we have significant room to grow, particularly in the areas of leadership and management, and have plans underway to address this disparity.



SIERRANEVADAJOURNEYS.ORG