

**OEA HUMAN AND CIVIL RIGHTS STANDING COMMITTEE REPORT TO THE
SPRING 2024 REPRESENTATIVE ASSEMBLY**

Darine Rees – Chair
Rachel Hara-Nicholson – Co-Vice Chair
Katie Fuller – Co-Vice Chair

Katie Barber
Erica Bardon
Andrea Beeman
Robin Blathers
Elena Boyle
Derek Burtch
Dana Calloway
Liz Casey
Lauren DiMauro
Ian John Dunlap
Amanda Fehlbaum
Rob Fetters
Regina Fuentes

Jacquia Hearn
Jada Jackson
Melissa Kmetz
Diana Long
Dawn Massey
Alexander Myers
Carol Nance
Jeff Rhoades
Digna Taveras
Stephanie Taylor
Willie Terrell
Tiffany Thomas
Crystal Wicker

The Human and Civil Rights Committee shall be responsible for identifying current issues and trends impacting the human and civil rights of students and members and recommending to the OEA Board of Directors and other appropriate entities the creation of OEA strategies to promote social justice and diversity within the Association and in the larger community.

Committee Charge for 2023-24:

Expanding capacity for member diversity, equity, and inclusion training through external partnerships.

Following up on previous assessments of OEA’s capacity to provide union-led training to members related to diversity, equity, and inclusion, identify opportunities for expanding capacity through external partnerships. Review available data on existing training, outcomes of those trainings, and any barriers to participation. Based on this review, the committee will identify existing OEA-led training programs that should be continued with recommendations for how to effectively expand the reach of those programs. The committee will also identify programs offered by values-aligned outside organizations that OEA should consider endorsing and promoting with its membership.

The Human and Civil Rights Committee’s deliberations relative to Board Charge have resulted in the following:

The recommendations of the committee:

The committee reviewed the internal OEA training currently available prior to discussions on how the internal programs can be expanded and what outside value-aligned outside partnerships can be promoted. The committee also proposed criteria for selecting both statewide and local partnerships.

The deep discussions of the committee resulted in the following recommendations:

1. Improve communication and marketing of available training related to Diversity, Equity, Inclusion (DEI) and OEA Strategic Priority number four (4).

After deep discussions, the committee believes that not all locals are aware of the current DEI trainings offered. The committee recommends that the OEA work on being proactive in communicating the existing trainings related to DEI to OEA districts, locals, and members. Potential measures include establishing a live annual calendar on the OEA website dedicated to display tentative training plans categorized by region and centralized trainings and to continue to promote stories in the OEA magazine related to DEI.

Local presidents should be encouraged to promote these calendars on their respective local pages to maximize accessibility. In addition, not all of the OEA locals turn in Local Development plans, and some do not include activities aligned with Strategic Priority number four (4). We recommend that examples of successful local development plans that include activities related to DEI and Strategic Priority number four (4) are presented to local leaders. Included should be activities that included local partnerships with organizations that align with OEA’s values. Working with locals, OEA staff should discuss the benefits of including DEI in local development plans.

In addition, creating and distributing a short document that explains the OEA/NEA micro-credentialing program focusing on the DEI modules (stacks). Included should be ways to collaborate with administration and LPDC committees to ensure credentialing to creating mutually beneficial outcomes for both members and the school districts.

2. Improve training participation, build incentives, and collaborate with OEA Districts

To further increase member participation in DEI training opportunities, the committee proposes that OEA consider developing and implement various incentive programs to motivate participation in trainings, particularly those that work with outside organizations that are aligned with OEA’s strategic priority number four. Examples include:

- OEA assist locals in providing scholarships or stipends tailored to the needs and resources available to members attending specific DEI trainings.

- Create awards and recognition programs for individuals or locals demonstrating exceptional engagement in equity-focused training.
- Facilitate sharing success stories and best practices among participating locals to inspire and motivate hesitant peers.
- Develop communications that focus on available grant and funding opportunities from OEA, NEA, and various foundations to support locals in implementing DEI initiatives.

3. Improve the member-to-trainer ratios and expansion of staff:

The committee identified the obvious limitations of having only two great trainers to cover the entire state's training needs. To address this insufficiency and provide more proactive support to members at the regional and local levels, we propose exploring the possibility of expanding the training team. Specifically, the committee proposes that OEA hires a staff person for each OEA region aiming for a more suitable member-to-trainer ratio across all four OEA regions. Given the diversity of the Regions, more localized trainers would foster a deeper understanding of local issues and member needs thereby ensuring more accessible and tailored training for its members, empowering them to effectively advocate for their rights and contribute to a stronger union. We recommend that the OEA explore the viability of this staff expansion by looking at the current and future budget.

4. Additional OEA DEI Training resources: Micro-Credentialling

Micro-credentialling is available from the OEA with “stacks” of courses related to DEI specifically available. The OEA should explore using this training as a baseline at the local level for identifying potential member trainers. The program is free for members and OEA could examine the feasibility of piloting a project at a specific local within each district and/or region. Using a local development plan, the pilot local could apply for funds for meetings of those participating in the local pilot project. It was suggested to start with teachers within a district willing to do the work should be a starting point to show success of how the training can be beneficial. Showing that success can then be a starting point to bring the program to more locals.

The committee also believes that the micro-credentialling program should be marketed more widely. Only 5 of 17 present HCRC committee members were aware of the existence of the micro credentialling program. The committee looked at a draft outline of a short introduction to micro-credentialling that can be the starting point for the potential pilot project. Advertisement of the program within the OEA magazine should include a description of the program along with QR Code.

5. Empowering Local Engagement Through Regional Trainers (Train-the-Trainer):

To address the vast geographical reach of OEA and to adequately serve our diverse membership, we propose OEA utilize current staff to create a member-based train-the-trainer program. This would increase the number of trainers, aiming for a more balanced member-to-trainer ratio across all OEA regions. One option is to collaborate with locals to create a team of members who complete the OEA micro-credential stack related to DEI. A staff facilitator would work to discuss the training in real-time. This would include getting CEU's approved by the LPDC committee and buy-in from administration. This could provide a spark in members who might want to become trainers.

These trainers would also be more effective at gathering and voicing the diverse needs, strengths, and weaknesses of DEI training and Strategic Priority number four. These trainers could leverage their expertise to build robust member networks and foster a strong sense of community within each region. The establishment of a regular reporting system where regional trainers share their successes, challenges, and insights with OEA would bring a deeper understanding of the gap that exists between diverse member perspectives. The Committee asks OEA to commit to providing training opportunities that comprehensively address the diverse needs and experiences of its members. We recognize the presence of inequity issues based on ethnicity, gender identity, religion, gender, and socio-economic status, among others. Therefore, we advocate that this training program actively represent and address the specific challenges faced by various local groups, including but not limited to BIPOC, LGBTQ+, economically challenged and other marginalized communities.

6. Build effective tools to assess and implement efficient training.

The committee recommends that the OEA establish robust tools and data collection systems capable of evaluating the efficacy of in-house and partner-delivered training initiatives. These instruments and the data they gather should play a vital role in shaping customized training plans, prioritizing OEA's DEI work objectives, and comprehensively assessing the success and areas requiring improvement within these training programs. Included should be a follow-up with those who have participated in the training programs to determine ensure program effectiveness and participant engagement post training.

7. Strategic Partnerships

The committee reviewed the list of partners that OEA already uses, and we recommend that OEA continues to verify that these organizations still align with our values. The committee recommends that in addition to statewide partner organizations, the OEA could assist locals to actively seek and collaborate with locally based partner organizations that represent diverse groups and share our vision of an equitable and inclusive educational environment. These partnerships would create an avenue for geographical expertise,

resources, and connections to reach wider audiences and co-train with partner organizations to deliver relevant locally based training.

- A. The committee identified some specific partnerships, however, the OEA or locals are not limited to these groups:

NAACP - currently has local high school chapters (partnerships) called ACTSO, with access available across the country and most expenses paid by NAACP. This program requires teacher mentors and teachers willing to work and participate to identify students for scholarships and ways to support NAACP.

Local colleges and universities that are aligned with OEA values to collaborate on DEI training for members in the surrounding areas as well as future educators.

GSA Network - Game of Life (k-12 version) – incorporate this short but impactful training into training and/or the train the trainer modules. The committee suggests some conflict resolution training and historical background for anyone delivering the training.

Erase the Space - This organization connects students, teachers, and communities in a collaborative, non-competitive exchange to provide authentic experiences with difference and debate that mirrors the problem-solving situations found in life outside of the classroom. By engaging young people in exchanges early in their high school careers, this organization helps to prepare students to take on the most pressing social challenges with empathy and collaboration.

D.R.E.A.M- Diversity Recruitment Educators Association of Miami Valley. This organization is focused on recruiting and retaining educators of color. The mission of DREAM- the Diversity Recruitment Educators Association for Miami Valley is unifying efforts to recruit, support, and mentor Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) educators by coordinating recruiting, mentoring, and growing professionals across the Miami Valley.

- B. Proposed criteria for selecting external partners for DEI outside partner organizations.

The committee recommends that criteria be set for selection of partner organizations at both the state and local levels. By carefully considering these criteria, the committee believes that OEA can select partner organizations that will contribute significantly to developing and delivering DEI training programs that are comprehensive, impactful, and resonate with the diverse needs of their members.

Alignment with OEA's Values: Does the organization share OEA's commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) in education? Do their mission and values explicitly prioritize inclusivity and address systemic inequities?

Demonstrated Expertise: Does the organization have a proven history of delivering effective DEI training programs? Do they possess expertise in addressing various inequity issues faced by diverse groups?

Community Engagement: Does the organization have strong connections and relationships with diverse communities relevant to OEA's membership? Do they actively engage with these communities to understand their unique needs and perspectives?

Experience and Qualifications:

Training Team: Does the organization have a qualified team of trainers with diverse backgrounds and lived experiences? Are they skilled in facilitating engaging and transformative learning experiences?

Training Content: Does the organization offer training programs that cover a broad range of DEI topics relevant to OEA's members? Are the programs evidence-based and designed to be culturally responsive and applicable to local contexts?

Evaluation and Assessment: Does the organization have a robust system for evaluating the effectiveness of their training programs? Do they track and measure positive outcomes and impact on participants and communities?

Flexibility and Adaptability: Is the organization flexible and willing to tailor their training programs to meet the specific needs of OEA and its members? Are they open to collaborating and co-creating solutions with OEA staff and locals?

Communication and Transparency: Does the organization openly communicate their approach, methodology, and resources? Are they transparent about their successes and challenges, and willing to share best practices?

Shared Vision and Goals: Is the organization genuinely committed to working towards shared goals with OEA, beyond just a transactional relationship? Do they believe in building long-term partnerships and collaborating for systemic change?

Diversity of the Organization: Does the organization itself reflect the diversity of the communities it serves? Do they have diverse leadership and staff representation?

Cost and Budget: Does the organization offer their services at a reasonable cost that aligns with OEA's budget and resources? Are there potential funding opportunities or partnerships to support collaboration?

References and Testimonials: Can the organization provide references from past clients or partners who can speak to their effectiveness and impact?

Rationale:

The committee met four times, twice in person and twice via zoom to deliberately include all voices on the committee to speak about the charge and the enormity of the system in which the charge lives. The Chair, Co-Vice Chairs and Board of Director members of the committee met several times outside of the full committee to ensure data and inclusivity were established. Our overall goal is to ensure that OEA continues to be a resource for members in terms of building their awareness and providing opportunities to understand DEI and its impact on members, students and the systemic issues that keep conversations related to and trainings related to DEI from improving and expanding. We believe OEA needs to empower and provide the training to educators to address these issues in school and community settings. This can be done both through increasing internal capacity but also by building state and locally based partnerships.

The committee recognizes that the work of advancing DEI is difficult and is long term for both members and OEA. To assess the progress made and the effectiveness of the work being done it is critical that the OEA conducts short- and long-term follow-up with those locals/members who were trained. Expanding the work to include member trainers is important to localizing and integrating the work at the local level.

It is also critical that the OEA, leaders, members, staff etc., understand that this work will be difficult and long term. Small victories and changes occur one person at a time and should be celebrated and shared throughout the system. We also believe that we should strive for continuous improvement through assessment and change and expansion of DEI work. This includes recognizing that the work looks different in different locals and given the demographically and geographically diverse locals that make up the OEA.