

Get to Know the MN Chapter DEI Task Force Members

Jenny Ng, National Co+op Grocers, DEI Chair



What does DEI mean to you?

Making sure everyone feels safe, seen, heard, invited, welcomed and supported. Speaking up and having the uncomfortable conversations and making actionable changes. Making sure people are seen and represented at events.

Why did you want to join the DEI committee?

I felt a strong call to action and wanted to make a commitment towards racial, social justice and systemic change. That started with creating a mission statement and task force to help educate and lead actionables changes in our chapter, events and industry.

What is your favorite DEI resource or advice you have learned?

You have to make time for DEI work. I like podcasts about DEI since you can learn a lot and also engage in powerful conversations.

Amanda Sullivan, Jaffe Management, DEI Chair



What does DEI mean to you?

DEI to me means creating a space that is welcoming and inclusive and where differences in opinion, experience and thought are encouraged as a way to learn and grow.

Why did you want to join the DEI committee?

I joined the DEI task force in order to continue my learning and support our chapters efforts to make DEI work integral in our industry.

What is your favorite DEI resource or advice you have learned?

What I have learned as I've been supporting this work and working on my own learning is that I have to be willing to get uncomfortable if I want to grow and learn!

Natalie Leadem, Madden's on Gull Lake

What does DEI mean to you?

DEI is important to me because it recognizes that everyone is welcome and can show up each day without fear of being themselves. I like to visualize DEI as a triangle, as all three pieces (or sides) support each other equally. Diversity supports inclusion in the workplace, equity ensures that the programs in place are fair and impartial, and inclusion provides equal opportunities and resources for all people. Learning about DEI also means understanding privilege and bias, and how these impact our society and the world.

Why did you join the DEI committee?

I recognized the need for this work in myself and in my community, so joining this committee was an opportunity for me to learn and grow.

JR Treto, the College Board



What does DEI mean to you?

To me, DEI means belonging. It is beyond someone being included in something (organization, group, community). One can be included, but not necessarily made felt like we belong there.

Why did you join the DEI committee?

I wanted to add to the diverse representation on the committee. I wanted to contribute to amazing work the committee has been doing this past year and hopefully bring a different perspective.

What is your favorite DeI resource or advice you have learned?

I am the Vice Chair for our PRIDE affinity Group at the College Board and am constantly visiting the [HRC](#) and [Out & Equal](#) websites

Andrea Rouse, Merchant Advisory Group



1. What does DEI mean to you?

DEI means continually and proactively taking steps to seek out and embrace diverse people and perspectives in all activities, events and overall strategies. It also means making sure that differences in thoughts and opinions are welcome and appreciated.

2. Why did you join the DEI committee?

To add a missing perspective to the Chapter leadership and to bring more diversity to the committee and ideally to the Chapter as a whole.

3. What is your favorite DEI resource or advice you have learned?

Listing DEI as a benefit is very different from actually implementing full diversity and inclusion so that it is impactful. True diversity and inclusion means respectfully having difficult conversations from which everyone can grow and learn.

Elaiza Shepherd, the 180 Group, Inc.

4. What does DEI mean to you?

DEI is more than just the words, it's actions. It's living every day to be inclusive of the individuals around me.

5. Why did you join the DEI committee?

I originally joined the DEI committee to become more involved in my local chapter. Now, I stay committed to this committee because I want to be a part of the change that our industry needs.

6. What is your favorite DEI resource or advice you have learned?

Take the time to listen. I believe this goes beyond DEI, and can be applied to so many situations in life. If we take a moment to listen with the intent to learn and understand to a community or individual who is hurting, instead of listening with the intent to respond, we learn more and we have an opportunity to really be empathetic.