



DEI Affinity Group Guide
"Support to Connect and Succeed"

Thank you for your interest in Diversity, Equity & Inclusion (DEI) Affinity Groups. This resource defines and gives guidelines for requesting an Office for Diversity, Equity & Inclusion endorsed Affinity Group on the Eastern Washington University campus.

An affinity group, also known as an employee resource group (ERG), brings together employees of shared interests. Affinity groups provide a supportive space to celebrate, educate, discuss, and process issues within specific communities. Affinity groups are found to help foster deeper connections in the workplace, boosting relationships, collaboration, and productivity. In addition, offering affinity groups improves the recruitment and retention of employees, enhances onboarding efforts, and creates a more inclusive environment. Affinity Groups are primarily intended for faculty and staff.

DEI-endorsed Affinity Groups must align with EWU's commitment to diversity on campus and must meet the following criteria:

- 1) Affinity Group members have a shared interest in recruiting, promoting, and retaining historically underrepresented and/or marginalized populations; and,
- 2) Shared commitment to personal learning and development to champion DEI efforts on campus.¹

DEI Affinity Groups must also align with our Eastern Washington University values:

ACCESS - We expand access to opportunity and success for students.

STUDENT-CENTERED LEARNING ENVIRONMENT - Students are the reason we exist.

INCLUSIVENESS - Our diversity makes EWU a stronger community.

INTEGRITY - We foster a culture of respect, commitment, and honesty.

QUALITY - We strive for excellence in everything we do.

¹ Employees who wish to form an affinity group around a common interest that does not meet these criteria should contact Human Resources for additional options.



To request to form a DEI Affinity Group on campus, please read through this guide first, and then submit an application through our website: <https://inside.ewu.edu/diversityandinclusion/affinity-groups/>

Objectives of DEI Affinity Groups:

- Provides opportunities for social and professional networking between faculty and staff who share an interest in promoting DEI on campus
- Creates a community of support for EWU faculty and staff of shared interests
- Plays a role in fostering respect, inclusion, and advocacy for all EWU faculty and staff
- Supports the growth and professional development of all EWU faculty and staff
- Promotes and celebrates faculty and staff contributions and achievements
- Builds the confidence and self-efficacy of EWU faculty and staff
- Broadens cultural awareness on campus
- Recognizes the direct connection between diversity and excellence
- Provides activities to enhance learning and growth in relation to diversity, equity, and inclusion
- Assists the University in recruiting, engaging, and retaining employees
- Allows a collective voice for the work of diversity, equity, and inclusion.

DEI Affinity Groups are voluntary, employee-led groups that express the values of mutual understanding and shared community. Faculty and staff may use these spaces to authentically express themselves in a supportive and understanding environment.

Each DEI Affinity Group should have two Employee Coordinators who:

- Oversee the function and meetings of the group
- Ensure that the established guidelines for the Affinity Groups are supported and outcomes are successful.
- Ensure that the Affinity Group complies with all applicable EWU policies
- Act as the main contact between the Office for Diversity, Equity & Inclusion and the Affinity Group members.
- Provide periodic updates to the Office for Diversity, Equity & Inclusion on the Affinity Group
- Request funding or support on behalf of the Affinity Group
- Respond to general communications with the Office for Diversity, Equity & Inclusion
- Understand and uphold the university's commitment to diversity and EWU's values within the Affinity Group.

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EWU expands opportunities for personal transformation through excellence in learning.



Participating in DEI Affinity Groups

1. Members must be employed by Eastern Washington University and their primary relationship with EWU must be as an employee rather than as a student.
2. Participating in DEI Affinity Groups on campus is completely voluntary and is considered to be personal time. Employees must work within the guidelines of their departments to request time off during work hours to participate.
3. Eastern Washington University employees may NOT force or coerce any employee into joining or participating in DEI Affinity Groups.
4. Membership in DEI Affinity Groups and participation in events must be open to any and all interested employees, regardless of identity. Affinity Groups must not discriminate on the basis of a protected status as required by EWU Policy 402-02 (Diversity & Nondiscrimination).
5. In order to be included in Office for Diversity, Equity & Inclusion communications, and receive funding and resources, groups must apply and be endorsed as a DEI Affinity Group by the Office for Diversity, Equity & Inclusion.
6. Groups endorsed as DEI Affinity Groups must uphold the university's commitment to diversity and EWU values within the Affinity Group.
7. The Office for Diversity, Equity & Inclusion reserves the right to rescind its endorsement of any DEI Affinity Group that does not meet the standards outlined in this guide.
8. DEI Affinity Groups are not intended to and shall not duplicate or replace the activities of the recognized bargaining units at the University.

Funding, Resources, and Space

Funds: The Office for Diversity, Equity & Inclusion may be able to fund some programs, activities, and/or supplies needed by DEI Affinity Groups. This is dependent upon availability of funds, appropriate use of resources, and alignment with the purpose of the Affinity Group and the values of the Office for Diversity, Equity & Inclusion.

Resources: The Office for Diversity, Equity & Inclusion may be able to provide resources from the Center, such as books, supplies, copies, and/or staff assistance. A limited amount of university resources may be used for participating in DEI-endorsed Affinity Groups consistent with section 2-2 of EWU Policy 901-02 (Appropriate Use of University Resources).

Space: DEI Affinity Groups can request use of the Center for Inclusive Excellence space for meetings and/or activities, as available.



Funds, resources, and/or space can be requested by the Affinity Group Employee Coordinator(s) via email to the Center for Inclusive Excellence at CIE@ewu.edu.

Applying for Office for Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Endorsement

Submit applications through our website:

<https://inside.ewu.edu/diversityandinclusion/affinity-groups/>

The following questions must be answered completely to apply for endorsement. Please gather this information for the online application:

1. Proposed name of DEI Affinity Group
2. Name(s) of Employee Coordinators (at least two required) with contact information
3. Description – A brief statement of the Affinity Group’s purpose and goals
4. Benefits – Define the benefits of joining and participating within the Affinity Group.
5. Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion- Clearly describe how this Affinity Group aligns with, promotes, and encourages diversity, equity, and inclusion on Eastern Washington University’s campus.
6. Values- clearly describe how this Affinity Group aligns with Eastern Washington University’s values.

If you need more information or have questions about DEI Affinity Groups, please contact the Center for Inclusive Excellence at CIE@ewu.edu or (509) 359-4811.