



## Post-Landfill Action Network

603.608.9859 [www.postlandfill.org](http://www.postlandfill.org) 2401 Walnut St. Philadelphia, PA 19103  
1 Washington Street Mills Suite 320 Dover, NH 03820

# Fostering a New Movement for Zero Waste: Our Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Mandate

## Introduction

We want to note that the following strategic plan, and the work we are building, are living and breathing- something that we commit to revisit, rethink, and update at least bi-annually.

We also want to note that our work and focus as an organization is within the broader system of higher education. By operating here, we are inherently supporting a global capitalist system built on patriarchy and institutionalized white supremacy. We come together around this strategic plan to acknowledge systemic oppression, but we cannot fix these systems by ourselves nor with this statement alone. We write this as a guiding principle to push our organization, the movement we are building, and the students and staff that we work with to fight harder. We fundamentally believe in the power of the people to collectively deconstruct systems of oppression through a wide diversity of actions and tactics.

## We Want to Hear From You!

Let's build this movement together. We welcome your feedback, thoughts, ideas, and criticisms, and we are eternally grateful to each and every one of you that dedicate your emotional energy to helping us. While we don't have capacity to provide compensation to everyone who voluntarily submits feedback, we are open to compensating folks for professional consultation and trainings on a case-by-case basis. A section of the feedback form provides space for folks to express interest in working with us in this capacity. Thank you!

## Statement of Intent

The Post-Landfill Action Network (PLAN) recognizes that diversity, equity, and inclusion are integral to the mission of the organization and the success of our collective movement(s).

We define diversity as the incorporation of people who have various lived experiences, especially those that are not recognized in the dominant master narrative, into our work and programming. Inclusion is the act of sustaining a sense of value and empowerment to anyone that works alongside us. Equity is ensuring that everyone has a fair access to resources and experiences.

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Reparations are an attempt by the dominant culture or government to make amends to communities that have experienced colonization, slavery, red-lining, mass incarceration and other wrongdoings. PLAN enacts reparations primarily through our work of acknowledging these systematic forms of oppression and providing access to funding to experiences and resources primarily to Black, indigenous and/or undocumented folks.

In order to create new, JUST, systems, we are committed to supporting the intersectionality and variety of these solutions. We will work against bigotry, hatred, white supremacy, misogyny, racism, sexism, heterosexism, transphobia, ableism, xenophobia, neo-colonialism, ethnocentrism, ageism, classism and other forms of systemic oppression<sup>1</sup>. Our organization seeks to build and recognize leaders who are restructuring broken systems for lasting change, with a focus on developing solutions to the waste crisis. Our concerns and efforts do not function within a vacuum, nor do the values and identities of the students that we work with. We will frame our work in this way as we support students and young leaders who have the passion to catalyze movements.

At PLAN we believe in recognizing, valuing, and amplifying the voices and the work of people who are systematically marginalized by oppressive, unjust systems. While we have built many of the below strategies and goals into our operations and policies, it is important that we incorporate them into every aspect of this movement to move towards decolonization and reparations.

In the Summer of 2016, we wrote a 5-year strategic PLAN that outlined five goals, the third of which was to **“Highlight the intersectionality of waste within the context of the broader social and environmental justice movements.”** The following Strategic Plan on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion builds and expands on this goal to articulate internal and external approaches that foster equity and inclusion.

*To date, we have not done enough to address white supremacy culture within our organization and within our movement, and we need to. The following strategic plan represents our commitment to do so.*

<sup>1</sup> Language within movements is constantly being created, evolving and changing. We want to recognize that systems of oppression may be missing from this list. We encourage you to [call us in](#) if we omitted oppressive systems that should be named. PLAN also commits to revisiting this list often and updating it accordingly.



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### Strategic Plan - The Goals, Strategies, and Tactics

#### **1. A Commitment to Diversity in Leadership - from the Board to the Staff**

To build an inclusive movement we must foster diversity internally, prioritizing voices and identities that have been historically marginalized within our organization's decision making and leadership roles. To avoid tokenization of identities, we will ensure these positions are not transactional, but built off of intentional interpersonal relationships that enable reconstructive change throughout the organization.

We commit to:

**A. Ensuring that our Board is representative of people with various lived experiences and capable of being responsive to the needs of students and the movements that we support**

Traditionally, Boards are considered to be primarily responsible for fundraising, which inherently requires a Board made up of individuals with significant access to privilege and wealth. At PLAN, our staff have committed to raising the majority of the funds needed for organizational operations, as they have done since the beginning of the organization's development. While at times the board will be asked to participate in fundraising efforts, they will not be required to do so. The Board's primary responsibility is advisory in nature: to oversee the Co-Directors' management of the organization and to advise on the organization's operations and strategic direction. By 2022, at least 50% of the members of the Board will be made up of current or recently graduated students, and/or people who have been historically marginalized by oppressive, unjust systems, with preference for those who have experience fighting against waste and pollution. This will allow us to ensure that we understand and can showcase the connection between the waste we produce daily, the companies that create and proliferate that waste, and the people that are most directly affected.

**B. Developing Three Advisory Councils to the Board of Directors - with the Long-Term Goal of Shifting Organizational Leadership**

For the last five years, PLAN's Board has been primarily made up of individuals who have expertise in nonprofit startup and management. As the organization moves out of its start-up phase, and into national prominence, we must develop a Board that can properly advise the organization on the strategic management of our various projects and operations, in alignment



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with our organizational values. To begin the process of this necessary development, we created three advisory councils as of January 2018. The councils will provide direction to the current Board on what the focus and makeup of the Board should be in the next 3-5 years, and how that direction will be established.

The three advisory councils are:

1. Current students and recent alumni
2. Staff and administrators from campuses we work closely with
3. Movement leaders and staff from partner organizations

### **C. A Hiring Policy focused on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion**

When it comes to people's experiences and job qualifications, a 'level playing field' does not exist because of structural injustices that form our society. We believe that employment equity is a necessary practice to challenge these injustices. To this end, we intentionally prioritize hiring staff and interns that have various lived experiences and skills for communicating and engaging with communities. PLAN believes that employment equity is a proactive measure to recruit people from groups who have been historically marginalized by our society. A non-comprehensive list of these groups includes folks who identify as: womyn or femmes, indigenous folks, people of color, queer people, non-binary and transgender people, single parents, working class people, religious minorities, immigrants, and people with disabilities<sup>2</sup>. We strive to recruit and retain team members that are from communities most impacted by environmental, social, and economic injustice. We will annually assess our team to ensure that we have representation that will push us to execute our mission and vision as an organization. To address these concerns, we implemented our Hiring Policy.

## **2. A Commitment to Equitable and Inclusive Internal Organizational Practices, Management Procedures, and Decision Making Processes**

In order to reduce the influence of white supremacy culture and the paternalistic structures that accompany it, we will strive to make decision-making within the organization more horizontal.

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Specifically, we will continue to adhere to the following:

### **A. Co-Directorship**

In March 2018, PLAN's Board of Directors unanimously approved changes to the organizations By-Laws to establish a system of Co-Directorship. This system ensures that executive leadership lies in the hands of two individuals, in contrast with the traditional hierarchical executive model. The Co-Directors are required to come to consensus over final decisions related to staffing and budget, whereas all other decisions within the organization follow the process described below.

### **B. Maintain a clear decision making process for all team decisions, big and small**

It is imperative that all PLAN staff are included in all major organizational decisions, especially those that affect our collective work. At a staff retreat in January 2018, the PLAN staff implemented a new system for internal decision making, as follows.

- i. Organizational decision-making practices are divided into three categories:
  1. Decisions that require full team decision-making through a consensus-based model.
  2. Decisions that require full team discussion, brainstorming, and input - but ultimately can be passed off to the third category.
  3. Decisions that can be made by a small team, with an update on the final decision to the full team.
- ii. This process will be reviewed as a team at every staff retreat. At any time, staff members may propose new decisions to be reviewed as a team and be categorized accordingly.

### **C. Develop Internal Organizational Values that challenge systemic paternalism, and white supremacy culture**

In accordance to our Safer Space Policy and Community Agreement, we ensure that our staff remain committed to the following: <sup>3</sup>

- i. Reaffirming our commitment to this statement at least twice a year and during the onboarding process for all interns and staff.
- ii. Ensuring that all staff and interns are educated about the impacts of the non-profit industrial complex and the dominant narrative and culture of patriarchal white supremacy during their onboarding process.
- iii. Creating a culture of nurturance and appreciation of ourselves and each other; where we appreciate and affirm each other and our hard work,

<sup>3</sup> Many of the following items in this list were directly inspired by this resource: Dismantling Racism: A Workbook for Social Change Groups: Identifying and Overcoming White Supremacy Culture



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- recognize that everyone makes mistakes, and separate the person from the mistake when offering feedback.
- iv. Valuing the quality of our work and relationships over the quantity.
  - v. Developing and committing to realistic expectations, timelines, and goals.
  - vi. Building transparent systems of decision making and power sharing, where most decisions are made collectively and horizontally (as noted above in 2b).
  - vii. Committing to introductions at the start of every meeting that invite individuals to share their name and pronouns, and saving space for emotional and personal check-ins.
  - viii. Ensuring that all conversations are well-facilitated with a designated facilitator, note-taker, and timekeeper. Trained mediators may be brought in for special circumstances, especially those that involve conflict. This applies to everything from internal meetings to major events.
  - ix. Preserving a culture of consent; should our Safer Space or sexual harassment policies be violated by anyone, the violator shall be dismissed from the premises immediately with the appropriate repercussions enforced against them. Should any of our full time or contracted staff violate these policies, disciplinary steps as outlined in our Employee Handbook will be taken.
  - x. Committing to a diversified teamwork system where we support and value each other through sharing goals, information, responsibilities and tasks.
  - xi. Ensuring that process goals are included in planning - not just what we want to accomplish but how we want to accomplish it.
  - xii. As an organization we strive to build environments that allow all of our staff to thrive. To do this we have developed the following support systems and plan to build this list as need and organizational capacities arise. These benefits are available to all full time salaried staff members. For non-salaried staff a conversation can be had with supervisors about benefits. PLAN also remains responsive to additional needs expressed by our team, and develops new policies as needed.
    - 1. Living wage (determined by location)
    - 2. 200 hours of PTO - with overtime hours banked for future use
    - 3. Technology stipend
    - 4. Cell phone plan
    - 5. Health insurance stipend
    - 6. Extended leaves of absence (both paid and unpaid)
    - 7. Flexible work schedules
    - 8. Per-diem for work-related travel



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9. Monthly travel stipend for use of public transit

### **D. Commit to regular trainings with Board and Staff**

In order to ensure that we embody this Strategic Plan, we commit to ensuring that all Board members, current staff, and new staff attend regular anti-oppression and social justice trainings led by members of communities who have been historically marginalized and oppressed. This includes trainings that strengthen our interpersonal relationships, give us the tools to move anti-oppression work, and guide us in building community with each other and our movement partners. These trainings will equip us to dream about and move towards collective liberation.

### **3. A commitment to provide equitable and inclusive access to PLAN's programs, resources and organized physical and digital spaces**

#### **A. Develop the Equitable Access Fund**

*The goal of this fund is to broaden our work, continue to formalize and strengthen our solidarity within the movement, and to further develop young people's leadership skills through a Zero Waste lens.*

Since our founding we have provided a significant percent of our services to students and campuses at discount rates or for free. While we have never turned away a campus or student for lack of funds, we are making a renewed commitment to reaching students, campuses, and communities that we are not currently connected to. The equitable access fund will reach out to and prioritize students at Minority Serving Institutions (MSIs) as well as students of color at predominantly white institutions, taking into consideration all who ask for support.

We intend for the Equitable Access Fund to be a form of redistribution of wealth, building towards reparations.<sup>4</sup> This fund works in tandem with all of our programming to ensure that campuses and individuals who can pay a full price are encouraged to do so and increase their payment to contribute to the fund. This fund will be available to students of color and MSI's for a variety of uses:

<sup>4</sup> The Movement for Black Lives has called for Reparations for past and continuing harms, and defines one such method of reparations as: "full and free access for all Black people (including undocumented and currently incarcerated people) to lifetime education including: free access and open admissions to public community colleges and universities, technical education (technology, trade and agricultural), educational support programs, retroactive forgiveness of student loans, and support for lifetime learning programs." Read more on our website.



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- i. Free or reduced rates for campus membership fees, online workshops, and leadership trainings;
- ii. Free or reduced rates for travel and tickets to our annual Students for Zero Waste Conference, particularly for individuals with limited financial capacity to attend on their own;
- iii. Free or reduced rates to our on-campus events, workshops, trainings, and tour stops.
- iv. With the growth of this fund we would like to pursue the following forms of support:
  1. Seed funding for student run, on campus projects
  2. Funding and travel support for students to attend conferences led by PLAN movement partners
  3. Tuition scholarships for individuals with an interest in waste systems and/or from directly impacted communities

### **B. Outreach to Minority Serving Institutions (MSIs) to utilize the Equitable Access Fund**

*In the summer of 2018, we will develop a plan to recognize and build intentional relationships with students and staff at MSI's with the goal of creating spaces more accessible and equitable through the Equitable Access Fund.*

In the United States, more than 20% of all college students attend an MSI. These institutions "...emerged in response to a history of inequity, lack of minority people's access to majority institutions, and significant demographic changes in the country. Now an integral part of American higher education, MSIs—specifically Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), Tribal Colleges and Universities (TCUs), Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSIs), and Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander Serving Institutions (AANAPISIs) – have carved out a unique niche in the nation: serving the needs of low-income and underrepresented students of color.”<sup>5</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Minority Serving Institutions: Educating All Students- linked on our website



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### **C. Ensure that our Trainings, Workshops and Events are Equitable, Accessible and Inclusive**

*At all trainings, workshops, and events facilitated by PLAN, we will:*

- i. Open all major events, such as our conference and tour stops, by making it clear that all are welcome and distributing our Safer Space Policy and Community Agreement.
- ii. Facilitate spaces in which conflict can be addressed appropriately, and where necessary remove detractors when they become disruptive, disrespectful, or in any way violate PLAN's Safer Space Policy & Community Agreement.
- iii. Recognize the stolen land on which we hold our events and intentionally acknowledge the effects of colonization that have harmed indigenous peoples for centuries and continues to harm them today.
- iv. Continue to build intentional relationships with Indigenous people, organizations, and companies. Through these relationships, continue to explore what the needs of these communities are, and how we can use our positionality to support those needs and build a fully inclusive and thriving movement. This is an area we need to improve on. An example of this work looks like:
  1. For the last four years, PLAN has been working with members of the Penobscot Nation in Maine, who have been fighting against a "mega-landfill" expansion that encroaches on the sustenance rights they have to the Penobscot River and surrounding areas based on treaty rights dating back to 1833. Every summer, our staff and interns compensate the members of the Tribal Council for their time and services as they spend a few days with us, educating us about the relationship they have with their land, and their efforts to preserve and protect their way of life. For more information, we wrote a blog post about one of these trips in 2015.
- v. Thank everyone who made the event possible, especially the working class folks who provide food and services to the spaces we occupy.
- vi. Build in time at major events for attendees to get to know each other in authentic ways in an effort to limit biases and assumptions.
- vii. Support affinity spaces for the identities of individuals who have been systematically marginalized.
- viii. Provide framework for white people to understand how to combat white supremacy and systemic oppressions.
- ix. Provide interpreters at our in-person events when requested, advertising these services in all promotional material.



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- x. Ensure that online videos with audio have captions.
- xi. Ensure that events provide a diverse representation of staff, speakers, and trainers, and specifically that voices of those who have been systematically marginalized are represented, recognized, and heard.
- xii. Offer payment up-front to all speakers and presenters at events for travel and accommodations, with final payment for honorarium being delivered immediately upon completion of services, in person if possible.
- xiii. Ensure that physical event spaces are ADA compliant and service animal friendly.
- xiv. Provide childcare services when requested, advertising these services in all promotional material.
- xv. Provide spaces that are gender inclusive and neutral, through logistics like bathrooms, language, and nametags.
- xvi. Honor those fighting on the frontlines against landfill and incineration expansion by ensuring our events and large gatherings make every effort to be zero waste.
- xvii. Declare solidarity with, collaborate with, and materially & financially support social and environmental justice organizations working to support frontline communities and activists, uplifting their stories and sharing them with students and the public.
- xviii. Continue our current work towards translating all of our manuals to Spanish and work on future translations as the need arises.
- xix. Ensure that food options at events are as accessible as possible. This includes a commitment to providing vegan and vegetarian meals that are familiar, approachable and filling. Special requests will be available for allergies or other preferences.
- xx. Make feedback forms readily available online and at in-person at events for anonymous suggestions and criticisms.

### **D. Ensure that our social media and online presence reflects our commitment to Diversity, Equity and Inclusion**

We commit to the following for all @PostLandfill online accounts:

- i. Follow, recognize, share, tag, and amplify on social media the voices of those who have been systematically marginalized.
- ii. Use our platform to share powerful examples of solutions in action, particularly in regards to the work being done in frontline communities.
- iii. Use our platform to create space for recognizing where the Zero Waste Movement is failing, and how that is related to systems of oppression.



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- iv. Bring attention to examples of systemic oppression, and issues facing frontline communities, what these communities are doing to fight back, and how the Zero Waste Movement can commit to help.

### Acknowledgements and Resources

We want to give props and thanks to the leaders that came before us that paved the way for us to build the knowledge and resources to put this strategic plan together. Thank you to all who have worked to educate us, call us out or in, and provide us with opportunities for growth. In addition to those who have encouraged us to grow over the years we would like to extend heartfelt gratitude to Felicia Teter and Marla Robertson who have coached and guided the PLAN team through this process. If you, your group or your organization are looking to build and work towards anti-oppression, equity, and inclusion, you can reach each of them at:

#### **Felicia Teter**

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#### **Marla Robertson**

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#### **Staff and Board who edited and reviewed this process:**

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**PLAN Board:** Joe Van Gombos, Yusi Wang Turell, Warren Daniel, Kate Bailey, Lia Colabello, Jennifer Allott, Colby Gamester, Reid Butler and Mike Bellamente

#### **Thank you to those who researched and wrote the following resources:**

- Everyday Feminism: 8 Ways People of Color are Tokenized in NonProfits
- Movement for Black Lives Platform: Reparations
- Olivia LaPierre: Inclusivity in the Zero Waste Movement
- The Building Movement Project: Alternative Models for Distributing Power and Decision Making in Nonprofit Organizations
- Dismantling Racism: A Workbook for Social Change Groups: Identifying and Overcoming White Supremacy Culture
- Minority Serving Institutions: Educating All Students
- NonProfit AF: 7 Things You Can Do to Improve the Sad, Pathetic State of Board Diversity
- The Jemez Principles
- The 17 Principles of Environmental Justice.
- MIT: Living Wage Calculation by City, State
- PowerShift Network AO Trainings and Resources
- Justice and Equity Coordinator Position at [350.org](http://350.org)

(sources above can be found linked on our website at [postlandfill.org/diversity-equity-inclusion-mandate/](http://postlandfill.org/diversity-equity-inclusion-mandate/))