



DEI AUDIT

December 2020

THE INCLUSION PLAYBOOK

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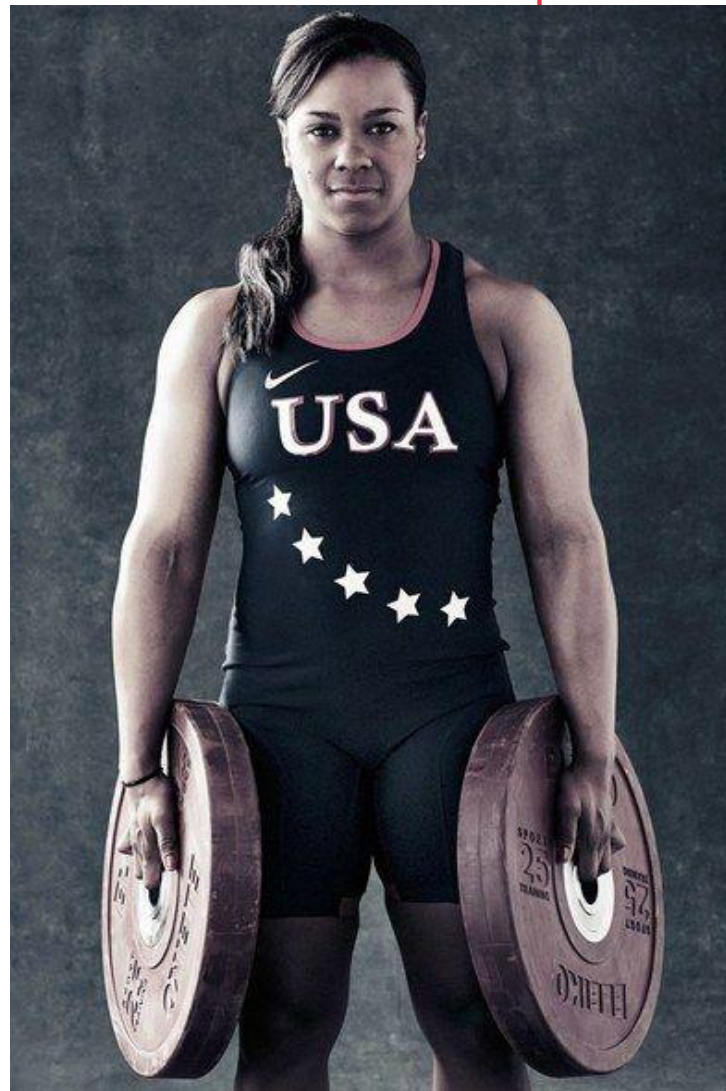


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BRIEF HISTORY OF THE PROJECT

The Inclusion Playbook's was contracted in October of 2020 to provide a comprehensive Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Audit for USA Weightlifting (USAW).

The Inclusion Playbook Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Audit is a multi-faceted assessment of USAW's people, policies, and practices that highlights specific strengths, challenges, and opportunities in advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion. It is based upon information shared and policies provided by USAW staff.

INTENDED OUTCOMES

This assessment provides a clear snapshot of where USAW stands in terms of key DEI factors and provides critical feedback to help you achieve your DEI goals.

The DEI audit is broken down into three main assessments: **people, policies, and practices** across three key diversity dimensions: **racial justice, gender equity, and LGBTQ inclusion**. To advance DEI in your sport, it is essential for all these elements to be aligned.



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Key Takeaways

USAW is currently in a strong position to expand its DEI platform and create more diverse, equitable, and inclusive spaces in weightlifting. In terms of demographics, USAW has made notable strides in expanding racial and gender diversity in its staff, Board, and membership. USAW has also started several key DEI initiatives in 2020 that have the potential to further increase diversity in target areas such as coaching and staffing.

While these are excellent first steps, USAW's DEI efforts would benefit from key updates in DEI-related policies and practices, including its:

- Non-Discrimination Policies
- DEI Training Practices
- DEI Budgeting Practices
- DEI Task Force Selection Process

Fortunately, **USAW has a solid foundation** from which to advance its DEI work. This includes USAW's:

- HBCU Mentorship Program
- New diversity-based hiring procedures
- New community partnerships

PEOPLE AUDIT

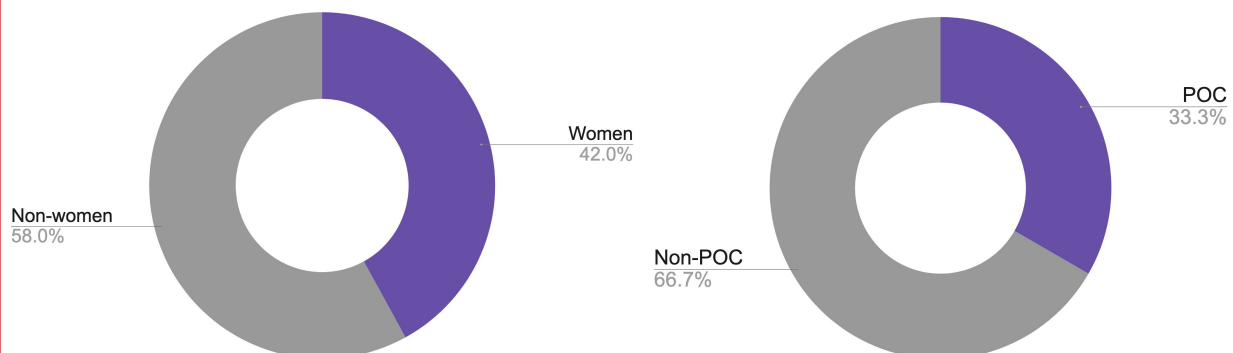


Having a diverse roster of talent on all levels, from leadership to staff to members, is essential to (1) achieving your DEI goals and (2) growing your sport. Below is a snapshot of the diversity of your Board, staff, coaches, and members.

While not an exhaustive list of demographic categories and identities, this audit focuses on the proportions of women, people of color (POC), and LGBTQ people that exist in various stakeholder groups at your organization.

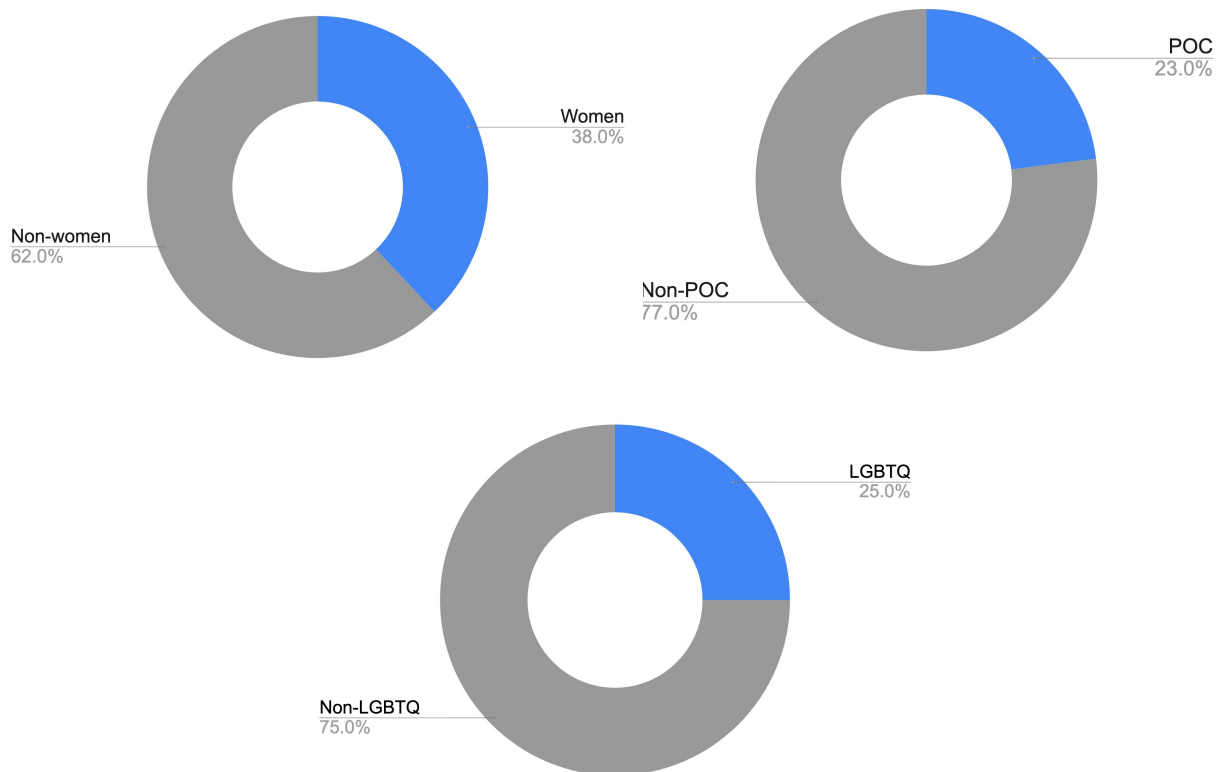
Women, people of color, and LGBTQ people all face unique and pervasive barriers when accessing or thriving in sports, and especially do so at the intersection of these identities. In order to best create an environment where these athletes, coaches, members, officials, fans, and more can thrive, USAW needs to evaluate whether these perspectives are present at the organization.

Board of Directors

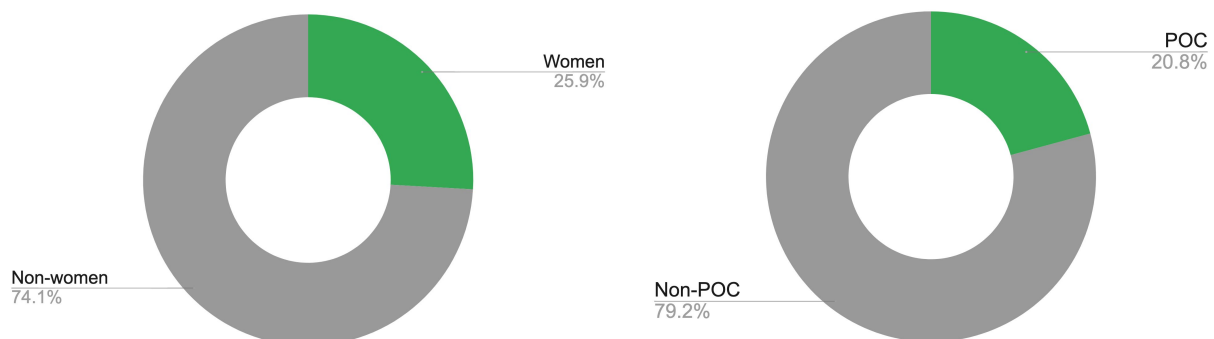


PEOPLE: PROPORTIONS OF WOMEN, POC, AND LGBTQ PEOPLE AMONG STAKEHOLDERS

Staff

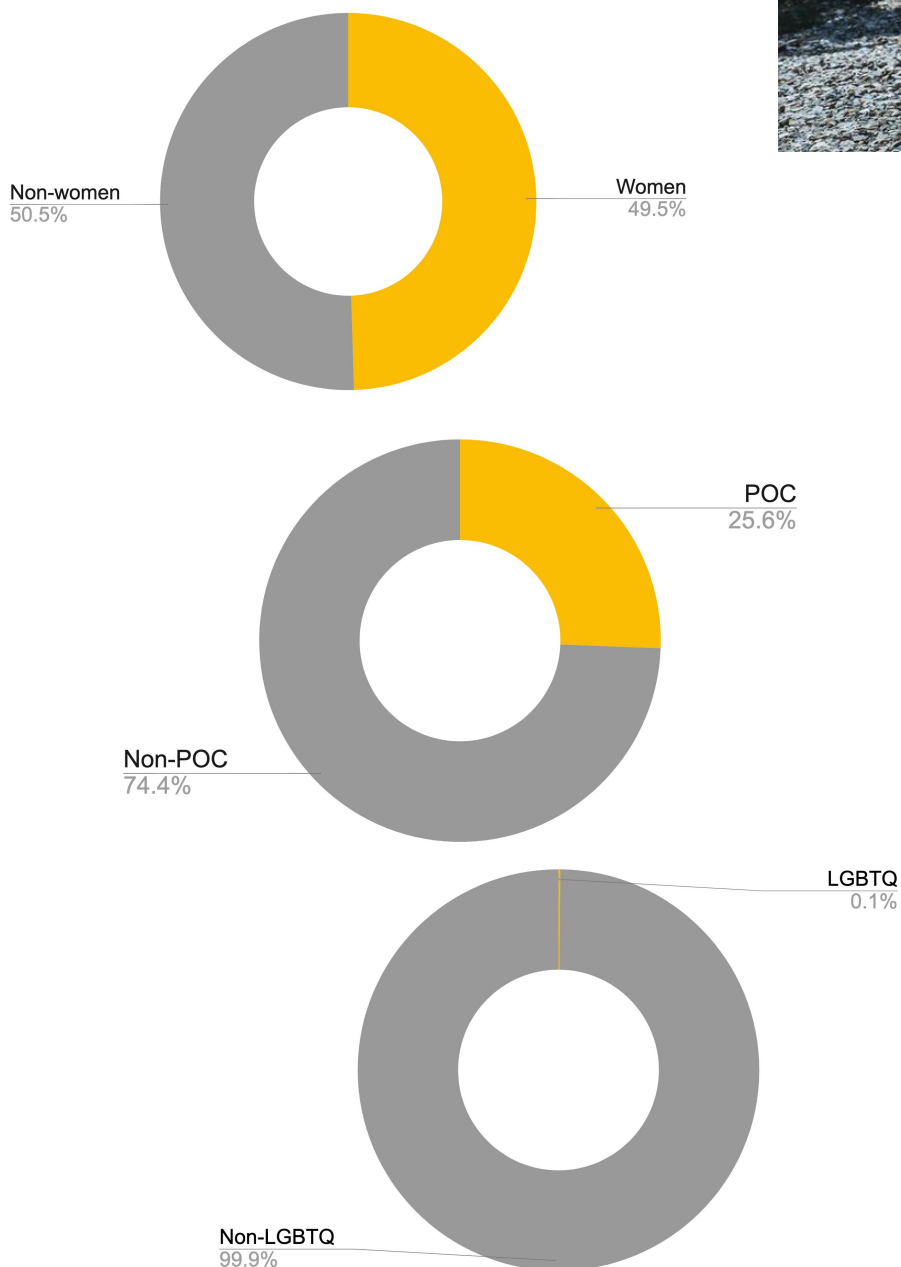


Coaches



PEOPLE: PROPORTIONS OF WOMEN, POC, AND LGBTQ PEOPLE AMONG STAKEHOLDERS

Members



PEOPLE: GROWTH AND PROGRESS

Reportedly, USA Weightlifting has experienced an explosion of growth in the last decade which has brought a flood of new members, coaches, and athletes. This growth has allowed USAW to reach gender parity within the membership and near-parity on the Board. These are two significant diversity accomplishments. Moreover, while there is still room to grow, USAW currently has a solid representation of people of color on the Board, on staff, and in membership.

USAW, however, could use improvement with gender equity in coaching -- where the rate of women coaches is significantly lower than the rate of women in membership. Further, LGBTQ representation among membership and coaches is extremely low. This may be due to data collection challenges, but nonetheless highlights an area for growth.



PEOPLE: MISSING LGBTQ DATA

While USAW does have some LGBTQ data collection processes, data are still missing about the proportions of LGBTQ people among coaches and board members. This highlights an opportunity to collect more diverse demographic information, including LGBTQ identity, from USAW's Board, coaches, and other stakeholders.



RECOMMENDATION SERIES ONE

PEOPLE

USAW has already taken an essential step to address the disparities found in their employee demographics by updating hiring practices, implementing a mentorship program, and reaching out to new community partners. Other potential strategies to address these disparities include:

Improving Data Collection

Consistently track data on NGB demographics, especially on LGBTQ inclusion. This will help you set benchmarks and measure your success.

Investing in a More Diverse Pipeline

The current unpaid mentorship program could be strengthened by converting it into a paid internship program to ensure underserved communities have the economic resources to participate in the program and amplify recruiting efforts.

Investing in diverse community partners

Consistent investments in organizations that target underrepresented communities help eliminate potential economic barriers and foster new interest and participation in weightlifting. This investment can be monetary and/or educational but should go beyond the coaching level.

POLICY AUDIT

USA Weightlifting DEI values should be reflected in your policies. Internally, policies offer guidance to your staff about how to best represent and execute the plans of your organization. Externally, they signal your organization's culture and commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion. Further, your policies lay the foundation for more diverse, equitable, and inclusive practices.

Below is an assessment of **key DEI policies** at **USAW**.

EEO Non-discrimination	Needs Attention
LGBTQ Non-discrimination	Needs Attention
Equity Hiring Statement	Needs Attention
Salary Equity Statement	Needs Attention
Criminal History Disclosure	Sufficient
Minimal Education Requirements	Needs Attention
Paid Family Leave	Needs Attention
Athlete Code of Conduct	Needs Attention
Athlete Protest Protection	Best Practice
Fan Code of Conduct	Needs Attention
Trans Athlete Inclusion	Needs Attention
Gender Neutral Facilities	Needs Attention
Bid Selection Non-discrimination	Needs Attention
Non-discrimination Protections for Vendors	Needs Attention

RECOMMENDATION SERIES TWO

POLICIES



Policies lay the foundation for more diverse, equitable, and inclusive practices. Below are recommendations on how USAW can strengthen them.

EEO Non-discrimination:

The EEO statement should strike “sexual preference” as it is an outdated term. Instead, it should include “sexual orientation” and “gender identity.”

LGBTQ Non-discrimination:

There should be a clause in your handbook specifically prohibiting employment discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity.

Hiring Statements:

All job descriptions should include a statement that encourages underrepresented groups to apply for employment.

Minimal Education Guidelines::

Requiring a college degree for all positions might deter otherwise qualified members of marginalized communities. You should also consider applicants with relevant non-college experience.

Salary Guidelines:

Salaries appear to be confidential and no guidelines appear to be present. The absence of transparency or guidelines can lead to pay disparities for marginalized groups.

Paid Family Leave:

Employees do not appear to be provided with paid family leave (e.g. parental leave). The absence of a paid family leave policy negatively impacts women and LGBTQ workers. USAW should explore implementing an inclusive leave policy.

RECOMMENDATION SERIES TWO

POLICIES (CONT'D)



Athlete Code of Conduct:

USAW has a solid Athlete Code of Conduct that outlines expectations and penalties. However, key language should be updated. For example, "sexual preference" should be removed and replaced with "sexual orientation." "Gender Identity" should also be added in to protected categories

Fan Code of Conduct:

USAW should explore implementing a fan code of conduct to help ensure events are welcoming for diverse fans and highlight USAW's DEI values.

Trans Athlete Inclusion:

The current policy language and requirements would benefit from an update to reflect best practices, especially for participation of trans youth.

Gender Neutral Facilities:

USAW should clarify its policy on gender neutral facilities. USAW does not appear to have a policy on gender neutral facilities for employees, members, and/or fans. Further, it is unclear if transgender employees and members are permitted to use the facilities matching their gender identity.

Bid Selection Non-discrimination Requirements:

USAW currently does not require event sites to meet any nondiscrimination requirements. USAW can help promote and ensure events are welcoming and inclusive by adding a provision in their contracts/bid selection process that ensures USAW's principles of nondiscrimination are upheld.

Non-discrimination Protections for Vendors:

USAW currently does not require vendors to meet any nondiscrimination requirements. USAW can promote and ensure their vendors are welcoming and inclusive by adding a provision in their contracts/vendor selection process that ensures USAW's principles of nondiscrimination are upheld.

PRACTICES AUDIT

USA Weightlifting's practices are where the rubber meets the road-- it's where your people and policies converge into action. These actions can thwart diversity, equity, and inclusion. Or, when done consistently and effectively, these actions help create more diverse, equitable, and inclusive spaces in your sport.

Below is an assessment of **key DEI practices** at **USAW**.

Diverse staff recruiting / retention program	Sufficient
DEI Training for Staff	Needs Attention
Dedicated DEI Staff Member	Sufficient
Dedicated DEI Task Force	Sufficient
Dedicated DEI Budget	Needs Attention
DEI Training for Board Members	Needs Attention
Targeted DEI Board Recruitment Strategy	Needs Attention
Board Get / Give Program	Best Practice
Minority Supplier Program – Preferred Vendors	Needs Attention
Recruiting – Diverse Athletes	Needs Attention
Recruiting – Diverse Coaches	Sufficient
Recruiting – Diverse Community Partners	Sufficient
Diverse Community Partner Investments	Needs Attention
Fan Diversity & Inclusion Initiatives	Sufficient
Resources / Content on Website	Sufficient
Multi-lingual Website and Forms	Needs Attention
Gender Identity & Pronouns Category – Forms	Needs Attention

RECOMMENDATION SERIES THREE

PRACTICES



An organization's practices are where the rubber meets the road-- it's where your people and policies converge into action. Below are recommendations on how USAW can strengthen theirs.

Diverse Employee Recruiting / Retention Program:

USAW currently has an active program to recruit diverse talent through a mentorship program. This can help grow USAW's pipeline of diverse talent if there is adequate follow-up with mentees who go through the program. Since this program is new, an active strategy needs to be put in place to ensure the HBCU mentee-positions are filled.

Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion Training for Staff

Training is essential to creating and maintaining diverse and inclusive spaces in both your organization and sport. This training should be mandatory. At a minimum, staff should be trained on how to create inclusive sports spaces in these key areas: Racial Justice, Gender Equity, and LGBTQ Inclusion.

Dedicated DEI Staff Member

While it might not be feasible now, a long-term goal for USAW should be to have a staff member dedicated to promoting DEI work.

Dedicated DEI Task Force

USAW has a solid DEI Task Force with a broad mix of external volunteer stakeholders.. However, the DEI Task Force could be strengthened by more staff representation. Moreover, USAW should recruit members with DEI backgrounds instead of solely depending on an election process.

DEI Training for USAW Board and Staff:

USAW Board and staff members do not currently receive DEI training. At a minimum, board members should be trained on implicit bias and sports DEI 101 to increase their DEI leadership skills. This training should be mandatory.

RECOMMENDATION SERIES THREE

PRACTICES (CONT'D)



Dedicated Budget for DEI Work

A dedicated DEI budget is essential to your success because it accomplishes two things: (1) it equips USAW staff with the resources to effectively execute your DEI plans and (2) it shows USAW is truly investing in DEI. Until there is a dedicated budget for DEI, staff should track the hours they spend advancing USAW's DEI goals so USAW can show some form of measurable investment.

Targeted DEI Recruiting Strategy for Board Members:

USAW lacks a DEI recruiting strategy for its Board. Recruiting diverse Board members should be a high priority for USAW as DEI changes start with Board leadership. USAW should review its Board policies and recruiting strategies to assess changes that will promote more diversity.

Board Get / Give Program:

Currently, USAW does not appear to have a get/give requirement. Not having restrictive Board requirements will help with future efforts to recruit diverse talent for Board service.

Minority Supplier Program – Preferred Vendors

USAW can show its continued commitment to DEI at all levels by implementing a vendor program that intentionally cultivates relationships with certified minority owned businesses.

Targeted Recruiting – Diverse Athletes

No current program exists to recruit racially diverse athletes. USAW should partner with minority-lead community organizations to help cultivate a new pipeline through education and active recruitment.

Targeted Recruiting – Diverse Coaches

USAW has a solid Black Coaches recruiting program. It should, however, attempt to grow its scholarship program and raise its profile via diverse community partners in more POC communities. .

RECOMMENDATION SERIES THREE

PRACTICES (CONT'D)



Targeted Recruiting – Diverse Community Partners:

USAW has started targeted outreach to increase engagement with select diverse community partners in the weightlifting space. While more sustained and expanded work is needed, it is a great first step. USAW should appoint a person to maintain consistent communication with these partners.

Diverse Community Partner Investments:

There does not appear to be sustained investment in or exchange of resources with diverse community partners. While the Black Teachers Project is a great start, more can be done in this space, including donating much-needed equipment, coaching services, and financial support.

Fan Diversity & Inclusion Initiative(s):

USAW has implemented powerful yet limited fan engagement initiatives around Black History Month and Pride Month. These efforts could be amplified by working with community partners to attach relevant educational programming.

DEI Resources or Content on Website:

The USAW website has very helpful DEI content. However, this content is not easily accessible. USAW should highlight its content in a separate DEI section of the website with DEI resources, including diversity initiatives.

Multi-lingual Website and Forms:

USAW website and forms are only available in English. USAW should translate key parts of the website and forms into at least Spanish.

Gender Identity and Pronouns Category on Forms

Current USAW forms do not include inclusive categories for gender identity. They also lack a way to track someone's gender pronouns. Adding these categories is an easy way to reflect you are LGBTQ inclusive.

RECOMMENDED NEXT STEPS

Elevating DEI in 2021



USA Weightlifting has an incredible opportunity for growth through future diversity, equity, and inclusion programs. However, deciding where to start is a challenge for any organization. Based on the results of your 2020 DEI Audit, The Inclusion Playbook recommends the following four-step plan to ensure a higher performing culture.

1. Dedicate a Budget to DEI Work

A dedicated DEI budget is essential to the success of your DEI efforts because it accomplishes two things: (1) it equips your staff with the resources to effectively execute your DEI plans and (2) it shows that USAW is truly investing in the work. Until there is a dedicated budget for DEI, staff should track the hours they spend advancing USAW's DEI plan so USAW can show some form of measurable investment.

2. Make a Plan to Address DEI Policy Gaps

Inclusive and equitable policies are an essential foundation for building diverse, equitable, and inclusive sports spaces. Make a plan to update key DEI policies over 2021. While it might not be possible to address every DEI policy gap, USAW should prioritize updating non-discrimination statements in all employee, vendor, and athlete materials to ensure they are LGBTQ inclusive.

3. Train Staff and Board on Essential DEI Issues

Training your Board and staff on key DEI issues in sports is a fundamental step in achieving your DEI goals. At a minimum, Board members should be trained on implicit bias and sports DEI 101 to increase their DEI leadership skills. Other essential trainings are on Racial Justice; Gender Equity; and LGBTQ Inclusion.

4. Finalize and Unveil an Official DEI Action Plan

USAW's DEI Task Force should leverage external thought leaders and community partners to create and support a 2-5 year DEI action plan with a goal to release an official and externally version by the end of Q1 2021.

MEET ASHLAND JOHNSON

**President and Founder
The Inclusion Playbook**



An attorney, equity and inclusion strategist, and former Division I athlete, Ashland Johnson has over a decade of civil rights experience working with social justice communities, advising sports leaders, and serving in leadership roles in advocacy organizations.

Ashland has extensive experience working with major sports leagues and associations, including the NBA, NCAA, USOPC, MiLB, and various national governing bodies to strengthen their social responsibility programming, policies, and platforms at the intersection of inclusion, race, gender, and the law. She recently authored the groundbreaking report, *Play to Win: Improving the Lives of LGBTQ Youth in Sports* which provides critical insights and action steps for more inclusive sporting spaces.

Ashland was member of the Varsity Women's Basketball team at Furman University and holds a law degree from the University of Georgia School of Law.

THE **INCLUSION** PLAYBOOK

The Inclusion Playbook is a sports impact consultancy. We help sports leaders leverage their social responsibility resources and initiatives for greater returns— both for their sports organizations and for their target communities. What sets us apart is our unique expertise in sports, policy, and social justice.

**Elevate your Inclusion
Game**
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