



DEI AUDIT

December 2021

THE INCLUSION PLAYBOOK

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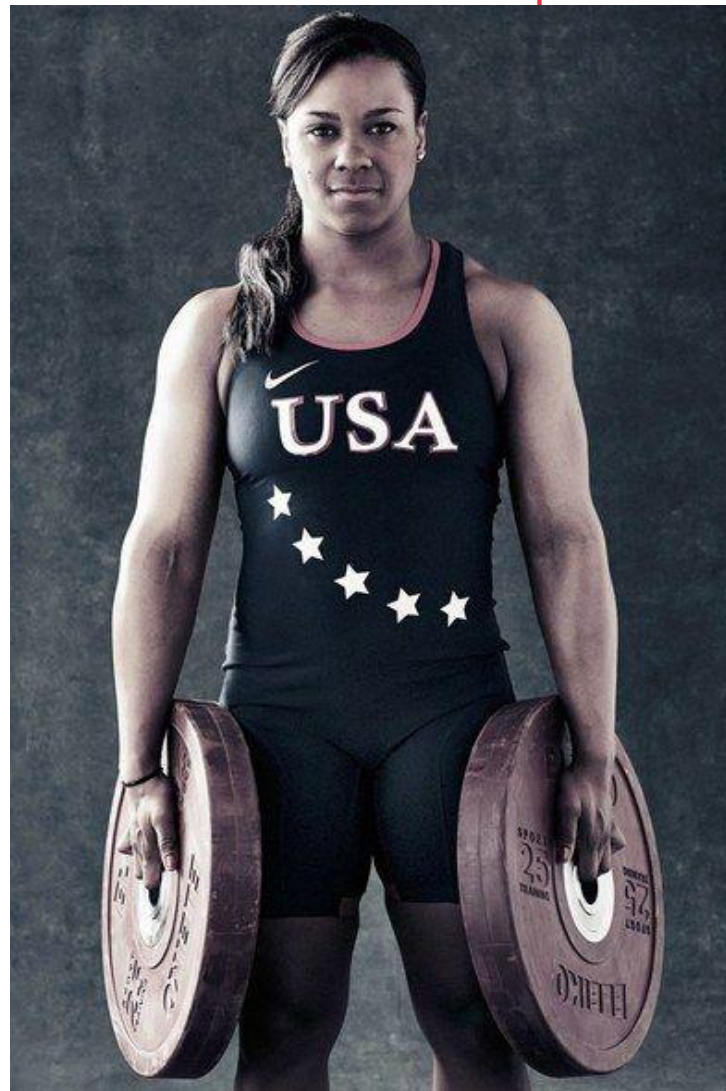


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BRIEF HISTORY OF THE PROJECT

The Inclusion Playbook was contracted in November 2021 to provide a comprehensive Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Audit for USA Weightlifting (USAW).

The Inclusion Playbook's 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 these elements to be aligned.



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Key Takeaways

USAW has made tremendous strides since its 2020 DEI Audit, especially in terms of non-discrimination policies, training, and DEI budget. USAW has also built on its solid diversity in staff and made strides to diversify the population of coaches.. 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. Unfortunately, however, USAW was not able to fully sustain its efforts on several 2020 DEI outreach strategies, particularly as it pertains to diverse partnerships..

Overall, USAW made notable progress, However, its DEI efforts would benefit from more sustained and targeted engagement around key DEI practices, including:

- Recruitment of Athletes of Color
- Outreach to Diverse Stakeholders
- Outreach to Women Coaches and POC Coaches
- Benchmark Setting for Outreach Efforts

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

- Strong DEI Task Force
- Non-Discrimination Policies
- Allocated DEI Budget

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.

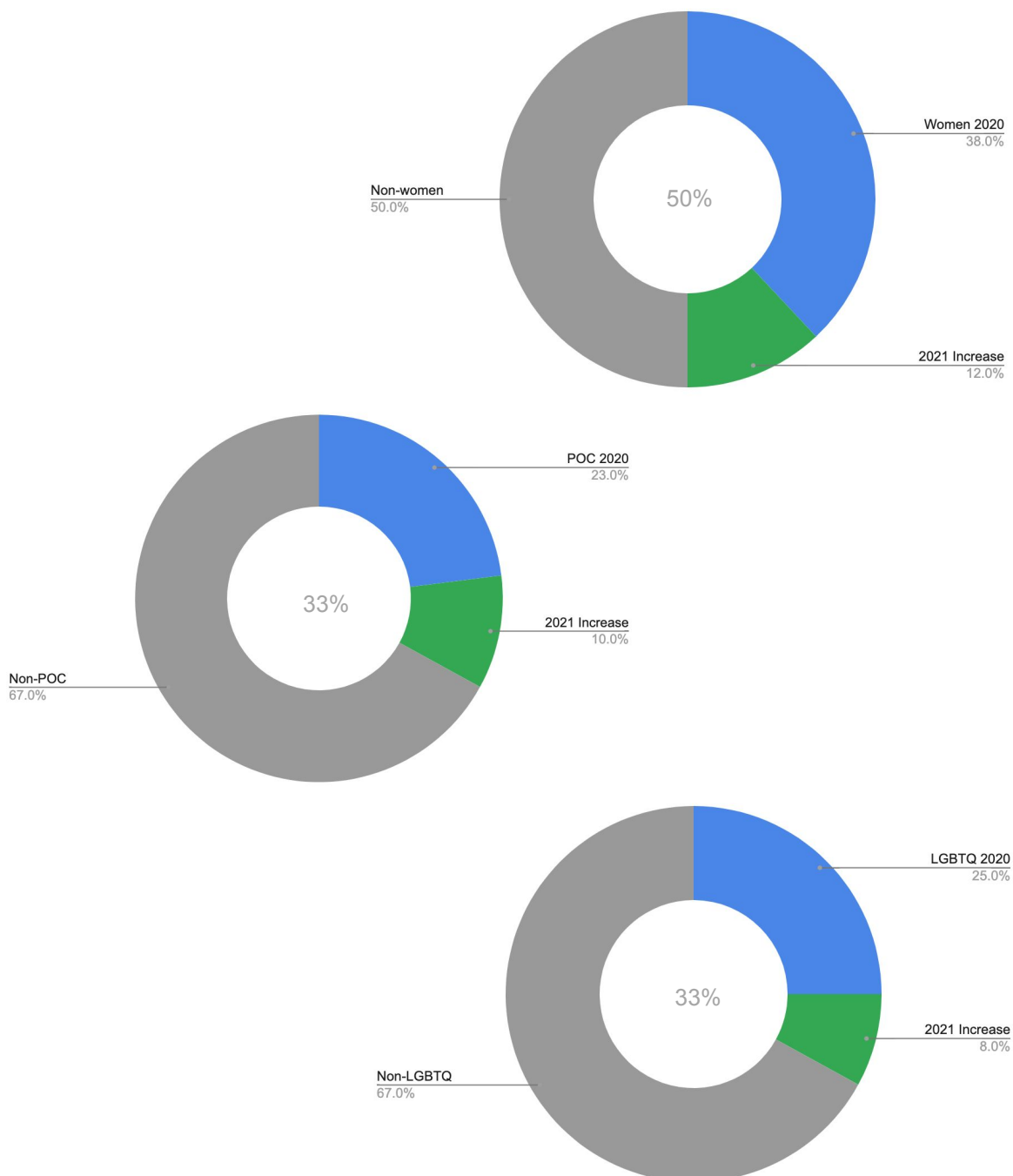
While not an exhaustive list of demographic categories and identities, this audit focuses on the proportions of women, people of color (POC), and LGBTQ people that exist in various stakeholder groups at your organization.

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.

Furthermore, USAW should strive to diversify its stakeholder groups over time, ensuring that more perspectives are represented and engaging with the sport. As USAW conducted an Equity Audit in 2020, the following visualizations will show an increase, decline, or no change in demographic percentages from the previous audit's value.

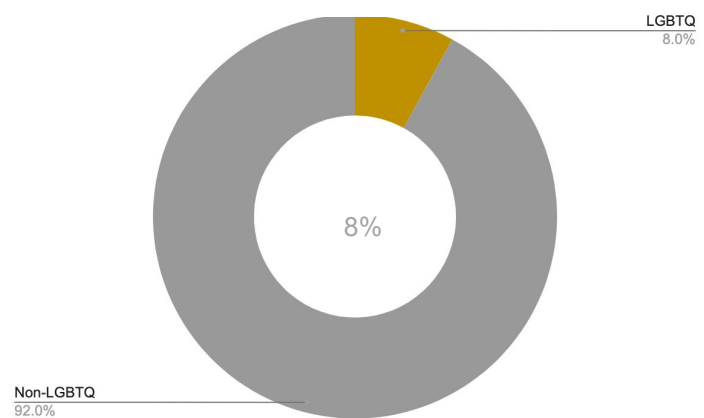
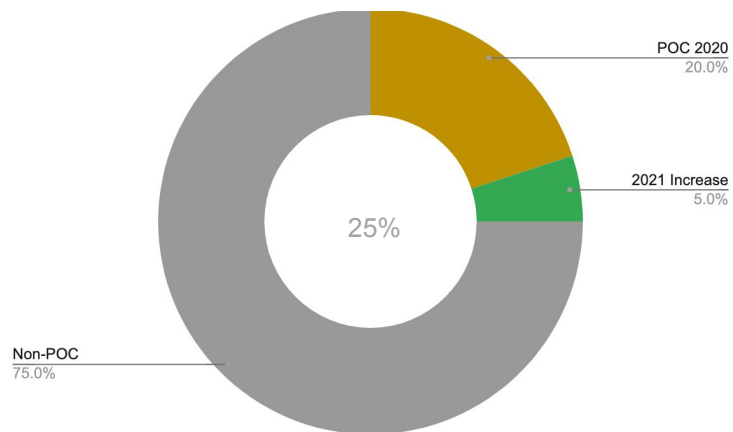
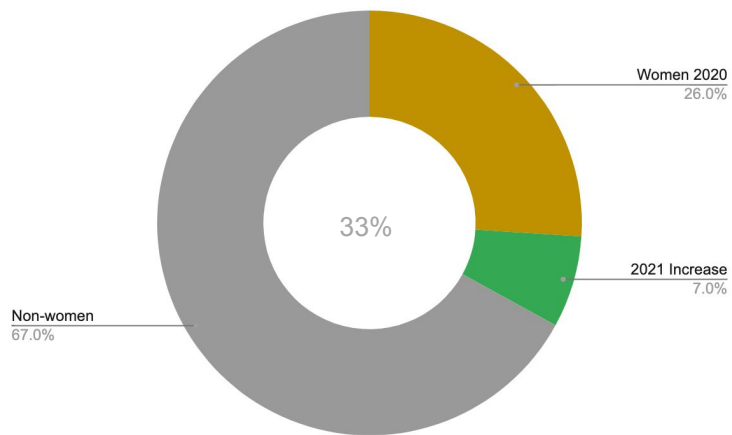
PEOPLE: PROPORTIONS OF WOMEN, POC, AND LGBTQ PEOPLE AMONG STAFF

Staff



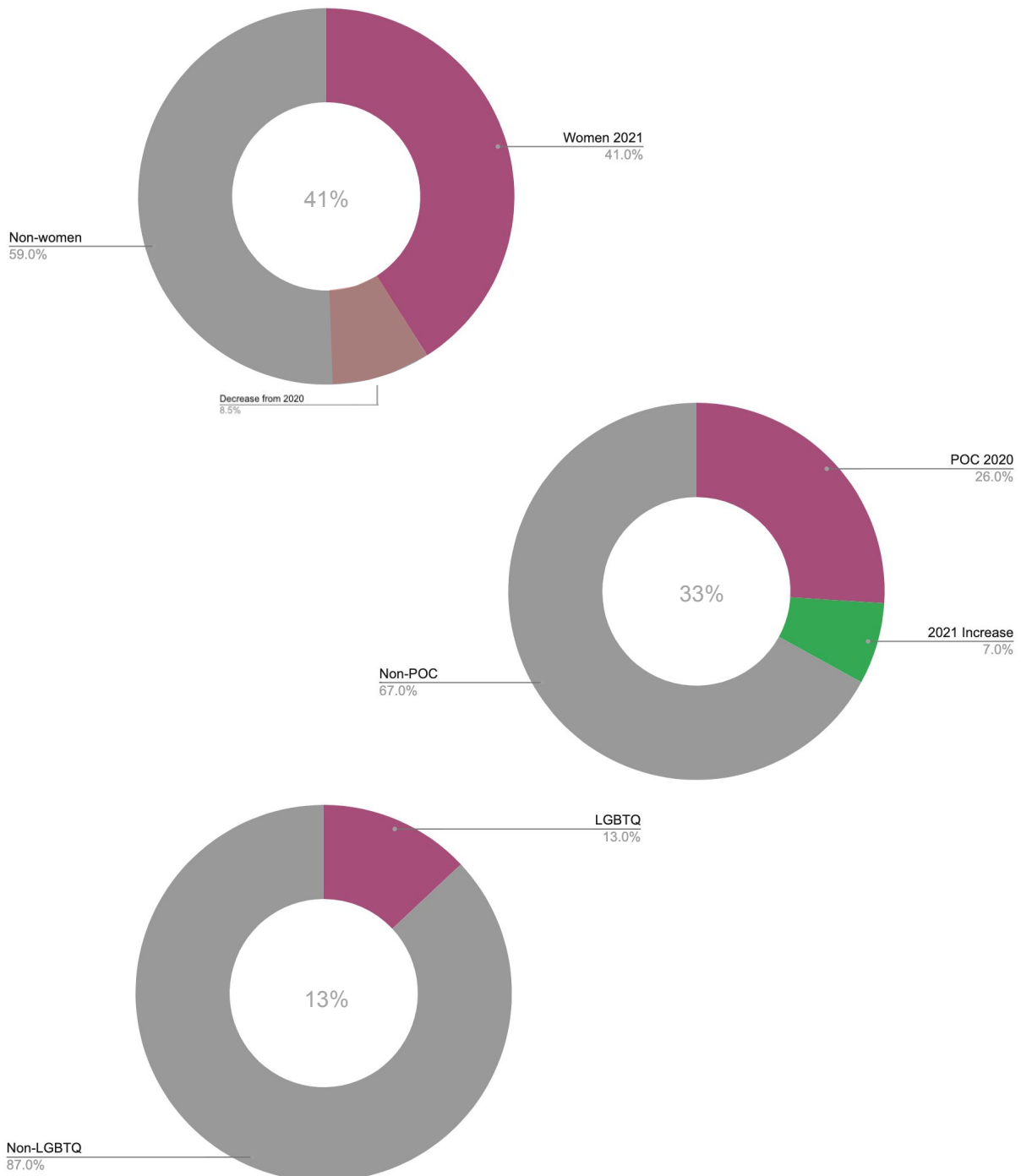
PEOPLE: PROPORTIONS OF WOMEN, POC, AND LGBTQ PEOPLE AMONG COACHES

Coaches



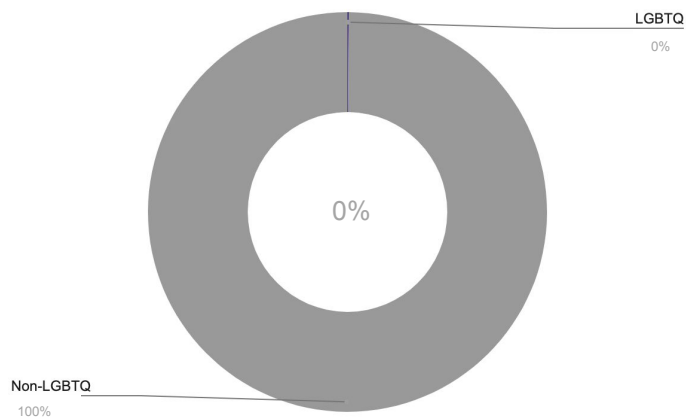
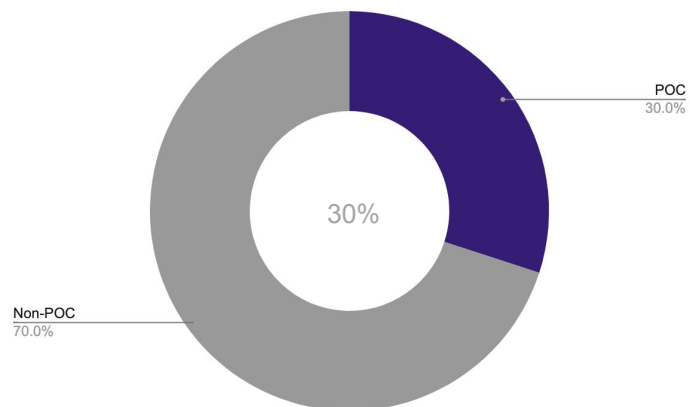
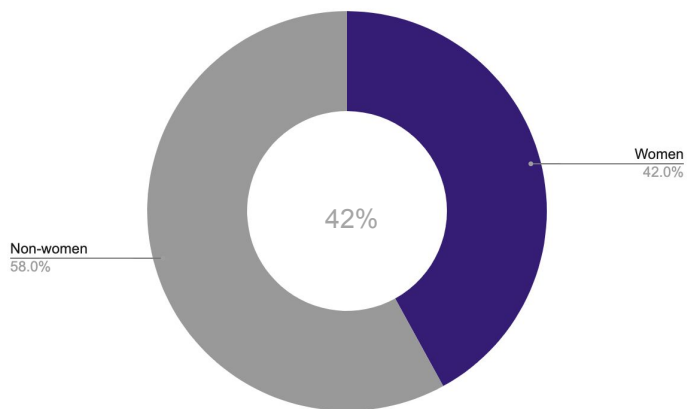
PEOPLE: PROPORTIONS OF WOMEN, POC, AND LGBTQ PEOPLE AMONG MEMBERS

Members



PEOPLE: PROPORTIONS OF WOMEN, POC, AND LGBTQ PEOPLE AMONG BOARD MEMBERS

Board Members



PEOPLE: GROWTH AND PROGRESS

Over the past year, USA Weightlifting has made significant progress in terms of diversifying stakeholder groups. The most prominent growth has occurred at the staff level - where USAW has increased the percentage of women, people of color, and LGBTQ staff members. In addition, there was some small but promising growth for coaches and members of color.

USAW did not see much growth among their women members - and saw no change at the Board level. Improvement in this area will require a continued commitment to tracking demographic information, diversifying pipelines to the organization, and addressing policies and procedures to align with equity-related best practices (especially as it pertains to the Board.)



PEOPLE: IMPROVED LGBTQ DATA COLLECTION

Following 2020's Equity Audit, USAW implemented demographic data collection about LGBTQ identity. Aside from the Board membership, USAW's community generally meets or exceeds national demographic numbers of LGBTQ people - which is a promising result. This is crucial information to continue including in demographic data collection and to track over time.



RECOMMENDATION SERIES ONE

PEOPLE

Improve and grow data collection efforts

Continue consistent tracking of demographic information - especially as it pertains to gathering longer-term data on LGBTQ identities. Consider low-effort ways to regularly ask these questions of your stakeholders - such as on registration forms.

Continue growth through programmatic efforts

Continued diversification of stakeholder groups requires consistent effort. Expose weightlifting to new communities and circles by implementing or growing mentorship programs, internships, recruitment programs, marketing campaigns, partnerships with community organizations, or other initiatives.

Diversify Board Recruitment

Depending on Board bylaws, it can be challenging to meaningfully diversify the Board in a single year. However, USAW can consistently lay the groundwork for a more diverse slate of Board candidates - especially as it pertains to LGBTQ members.

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

RECOMMENDATION SERIES TWO

POLICIES



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

Salary Guidelines

While USAW has a strong salary equity nondiscrimination policy, 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.

Criminal History Disclosure

The current background check policy should clarify that it is a "criminal" background check. USAW should also review the employee policy to eliminate offenses that disproportionately impact minority communities, especially from the "unappealable" list.

Trans Athlete Inclusion

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

Bid Selection Non-Discrimination Requirements

USAW should explicitly require their new non-discrimination agreement to be included with each RFP proposal. USAW should also develop a transparent decision-making process around the new bid selection questions.

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 Recruit/Retention Prog.	Sufficient	↑
DEI Training for Staff	Best Practice	↑
Dedicated DEI Staff Member	Sufficient	-
Dedicated DEI Task Force	Best Practice	↑
Dedicated DEI Budget	Best Practice	↑
DEI Training for Board Members	Best Practice	↑
Targeted DEI Board Recruitment Strategy	Needs Attention	-
Board Give/Get Program	Best Practice	-
Minority Supplier Program – Pref. Vendors	Sufficient	↑
Recruiting – Diverse Athletes	Needs Attention	-
Recruiting – Diverse Coaches	Sufficient	-
Recruiting – Diverse Community Partners	Sufficient	-
Diverse Community Partner Investments	Sufficient	-
Fan Diversity and Inclusion Initiatives	Best Practice	↑
Resources/Content on Website	Best Practice	↑
Multilingual Website and Forms	Needs Attention	-
Gender Identity and Pronouns on Forms	Best Practice	↑

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

While USAW has increased its outreach to HBCU's and currently has an active program to recruit diverse talent through a mentorship program, more needs to be done to ensure applicants are applying. Since this program is still relatively new, an active strategy needs to be put in place to ensure the HBCU mentee-positions are filled. These positions must also be paid.

Dedicated DEI Staff Member

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

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. USAW should recruit and appoint members with DEI backgrounds instead of solely depending on an election process.

Minority Supplier Program—Preferred Vendors

While USAW encourages minority vendors to apply, it can show its continued commitment to DEI at all levels by implementing a vendor program that intentionally cultivates relationships with certified minority-owned businesses. This program should include benchmarks and an updated supplier form.

RECOMMENDATION SERIES THREE

PRACTICES (CONT'D)



Targeted Recruiting—Diverse Athletes

No current program exists to recruit racially diverse athletes. USAW should partner with minority-led 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.

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 strive for at least monthly contact with community partners.

Diverse Community Partner Investments

There does not appear to be sustained investment in or exchange of resources with diverse community partners. Investments can include donating much-needed equipment, coaching services, and financial support.

Fan Diversity and Inclusion Initiative(s)

USAW has implemented powerful yet limited fan engagement initiatives around national events, Black History Month, and Pride Month. These efforts could be amplified and expanded by working with more community partners to attach relevant educational programming. USAW should also set a benchmark for at least three campaigns in 2022.

RECOMMENDATION SERIES THREE

PRACTICES (CONT'D)



Multilingual 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.

RECOMMENDED NEXT STEPS

Elevating DEI in 2022



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 2021 DEI Audit, The Inclusion Playbook recommends the following three-step plan to ensure a higher performing culture:

1. Include DEI Objectives in Director-Level Performance

Management Goal

While true culture-shift is a team effort, this change starts at the top and requires goal setting and accountability. To ensure DEI is infused in every aspect of USAW's work, DEI objectives should not only be included in your strategic plan but also be included in the performance-management goals (or SMART goals) of every director-level position. This will ensure DEI values will remain a priority throughout your organization. It will also signal the importance of diversity, equity, and inclusion to your staff and members.

2. Set Benchmarks for Community Outreach Efforts

Now that USAW has a staff member steering the DEI work and a solid DEI Task Force, USAW should start adding benchmarks to its outreach goals with key stakeholders such as coaches, athletes, fans and community partners. These benchmarks should be aligned with your DEI goals and bandwidth. In 2022, we recommend USAW start with at least three inclusion-focused campaigns based on goals and bandwidth.

3. 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 two-to five- year DEI action plan with a goal to release an official and external version by the end of Q2 2022.

MEET ASHLAND JOHNSON

**President and Founder
The Inclusion Playbook**



An attorney, equity and inclusion strategist, and former Division I athlete, Ashland Johnson has more than 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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