

January 4, 2021

Dear NDEO members,

Happy New Year! Over the past year NDEO has strived to support our members and the field during the challenging covid-19 pandemic. Onward to 2021! This year we will be working with Maryland Nonprofits to review the organization and our programs through the lens of justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion (JEDI). This year long initiative will help provide a roadmap for organizational and programmatic changes over the next few years as NDEO embodies its commitment to becoming an anti-racist organization.

The 2021 JEDI initiative will:

- Convene a 50-member work group representing NDEO Board Members, staff, Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Access (IDEA) committee members, and additional members selected through an open application process. *To apply to join the JEDI Working Group, please complete this form by XX date.*
- Conduct meetings that lay the groundwork for sensitive conversations to be held around antiracism, systemic oppression, race, equity, culture and beyond that respects and values the lived experiences of everyone.
- Assess both the leadership and membership.
- Execute the work in four phases:
 - Discovery and Design ~ understand and identify areas that need to be strengthened for the organization's growth.
 - Planning and Co-Design ~ Conduct and analyze a membership survey and develop a unified vision of the proposed plan of action.
 - Implementation ~ Activate 50-member work groups to initiate the organization and program review.
 - Action and Accountability ~ conclude with an action and accountability plan outlining concrete steps to be taken in subsequent years.

Research shows that organizations experience greater engagement, creativity, and innovation when they embrace the work of justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion. Moreover, a thorough evaluation of systems and programs can foster transformational change within the organization. The JEDI review is an important step toward this endeavor.

I am excited about embarking on this important work. While the organization engages in this work, the NDEO programs and member services you rely on will continue. While some of the recommendations from the JEDI review will be implemented quickly, we know that many will take time and are committed to a multi-year endeavor. We know that all members will benefit from this effort.

Wishing you all a safe and healthy new year. Most of all Dance on!



Susan McGreevy-Nichols
Executive Director/CEO

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