The Association for Animal Welfare Advancement

The State of DEI in Animal Welfare

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Cultural Audit
May-July 2021

Analysis Report

Prepared by MSM Global Consulting, LLC

Overview

In the Fall of 2020, the Association embarked on a partnership with MSM Global Consulting, a firm specializing in organizational change and diversity, equity, and inclusion. The purpose of this relationship was to assess the field of animal welfare in terms of DEI, and determine a strategic framework and plan for not only fostering DEI across the Association, but more broadly making DEI a priority for the field of animal welfare.

Through the spring and summer of 2021, MSM Global conducted a series of individual interviews with influencers and leaders across the animal welfare field. Additionally, MSM Global developed and the AAWA disseminated a DEI climate survey to individuals in organizations across the animal welfare field.

The themes from the individual interviews were presented at the Association's June conference. The findings are included in the appendices of this report. They closely align with the themes from the survey analysis. Further, the survey analysis provides more detailed insights related to the strengths and challenges people in animal welfare face in terms of fostering DEI for their workforce as well as meeting the needs of their surrounding communities.

Who Responded

A total of 2,630 individuals completed the survey. The demographic composite of respondents was overwhelmingly White, cisgender female, heterosexual, native English speakers without a disability.

- Race/Ethnicity: 82 percent of the respondents identified as White, followed by 6 percent Hispanic/Latinx, 5 percent Biracial/Multiracial, 3 percent Black, 2 percent Asian/Asian American, and 1 percent Other.
- Gender Identity: 81 percent of the respondents identified as cisgender women, 13 percent as cisgender men, and 6 percent as nonbinary, genderqueer, or transgender.
- Sexual Orientation: 72 percent identified as heterosexual.
- Disability: 88 percent said they do not have a disability.
- 95 percent of respondents identified English as their first language.
- 34 percent of respondents have been working in animal welfare for 1-5 years.
- 47 percent have been with their organization for 1-5 years.
- About half of respondents manage others.
- The vast majority of respondents work in nonprofit organizations (46 percent identified that they work for a nonprofit, and another 31 percent work for an animal service nonprofit.)
- Almost half of the respondents identified as manager level or higher (20 percent supervisor, 13 percent director level, 13 percent executive level). The next highest levels of roles identified were 11.5 percent animal care and 11 percent veterinary care.

- Religion: 32 percent of respondents identified as Christian, 29 percent are Agnostic or Atheist, and 25 percent are Unaffiliated.
- Almost 60 percent of respondents said their organization serves a population size of over 250,000.
- 40 percent of respondents have an annual salary between $25,000-49,000.
- 23 percent of respondents identified as living in the Pacific region.

Executive Summary of Findings

Although people in animal welfare have a deep commitment to their work and the mission of their organizations, there are clear and pressing challenges that the field faces in fostering diversity, equity, and inclusion in terms of the workforce as well as the communities animal welfare organizations serve.

1. Lack of cohesive vision and commitment to DEI in animal welfare. There are a range of attitudes about the value of DEI in animal welfare. This shows up most clearly in the internal debate about putting people first or putting animals first. This is a critical cultural issue for the field of animal welfare. This "either/or"narrative will continue to impede progress if it is not addressed.

2. Lack of adequate diversity at all levels. Organizations' workforces are not adequately diverse, especially in leadership, board and management levels. The workforce is homogeneous in terms of almost all demographic factors (gender identity, race, sexual orientation, disability, native language, etc).

3. Animal welfare organizations face barriers to increasing and sustaining diversity in the workforce. Poor recruitment, low compensation, and unclear opportunities for career development contribute to low levels of recruitment and retention of underrepresented identity groups in animal welfare.

4. Exclusionary and discriminatory behaviors are a problem. The overall level of respondents who have observed discrimination was significant, and even higher among underrepresented identity groups. Employees of color and LGBTQIA+ employees have observed or experienced harassment, bullying, and discrimination in their organiztions at concerning levels. They are also less likely to believe they are treated fairly, can voice contrary opinions, or have adequate input into decisions that impact them.

5. Lack of inclusive services and engagement with diverse communities. There are significant barriers and access to care for underrepresented communities, in part due to biases and stereotypes about communities of color and low income communities, as well as policies that often prohibit opportunities for adoption or unfairly punish certain communities.

6. <u>Need for education, resources, and leadership to support sustainable change for DEI</u>. In terms of needs, respondents want more training and education on DEI from outside experts. They want the AAWA to be a vocal leader in DEI, and to look internally at its own leadership, board, and communications to ensure it is modeling DEI. Respondents want more resources and guidance to expand their services to diverse communities, diversify their workforce, leadership, and boards, and create equitable and inclusive environments for employees and those they serve.

The survey also found clear variations in the experiences and perspectives of respondents based on different demographic categories. A few of the most noteworthy differences:

48%: Almost half of Black respondents had negative or neutral responses to the question of whether diverse employees are treated fairly, compared to 19 percent of overall respondents.

50%: Only half of Black respondents believe leadership in their organization would take appropriate action if someone experienced discrimination or harassment, compared to 75 percent of White respondents.

84%: Cisgender men agreed leadership would take appropriate action if someone experienced discrimination or harassment, compared to 73 percent of cisgender women and 67 percent of gender nonbinary/transgender.

90-95%: Respondents with annual salaries of $150,000+ had far more positive responses in almost every category. Respondents making less than $50,000 per year typically had responses of between 60-70 percent.

Discrepancies in who has observed discrimination or harassment in their organization:

30% of overall respondents
40% of Black respondents
44% who identified their race as "Other"
40% of gender nonbinary
41% with disabilities
40% in Canada

Discrepancies in who has experienced discrimination or harassment in their organization:

40% of Black respondents have been the victims of discrimination or harassment in their organization, compared to 15% of overall respondents.

Highs and Lows

Highest Scores

For the following statements, 70 percent or more of overall respondents agreed or strongly agreed. We have identified these statements as areas of strength from which to build.

Statement	% Agree or Strongly Agree
Employees from different backgrounds interact well together	77
Employees who are different from the majority of the workforce are treated fairly	77
I believe there is active support for sexual identity diversity in my organization	73
I believe leadership in my organization would take appropriate action if someone experienced discrimination or harassment	73
My unique knowledge and skills are appreciated	72
I feel comfortable being my authentic self at work	70

Lowest Scores

We identified the most prominent challenges from the survey analysis as the questions for which 20 percent or more of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed. These are areas of concern that need to be addressed.

Statement	% Disagree or Strongly Disagree
There is adequate representation of race/ethnicity in my organization	52
I feel the staff reflects the diversity of our community	45
There is adequate representation of gender identities in my organization	41
There is a clear career development path for employees from different backgrounds*	28
My organization's staff have the skills to address the needs of diverse communities*	26
I feel like I have adequate input into decisions that affect me	24
I can voice a contrary opinion without fear of negative consequences	23
People who engage in behaviors such as bullying or harassment are held accountable	23
Diverse communities get what they need from my organization*	23
I have observed discrimination or harassment in my organization**	30

*These statements also had neutral responses of over 20 percent.
This response is reversed to indicate that ***30 percent of respondents have observed discrimination or harassment in their organization.*

Detailed Findings by Theme

(Quotes taken verbatim from narrative comments in survey or individual interviews)

1. **Lack of cohesive vision and commitment to DEI in animal welfare.**

   There are a range of attitudes about the value of DEI in animal welfare. This shows up most clearly in the internal debate about putting people first or putting animals first. This is a critical cultural issue for the field of animal welfare. This "either/or" narrative will continue to impede progress if it is not addressed.

   Perspectives from the narrative comments ranged from:

   <u>People come first and there should be more empathy and compassion for individuals and communities.</u>

   - "I think there needs to be a major, deliberate switch in animal welfare to promote the importance of being a "people person" and being in it for the humans behind the animals etc. There needs to be a huge culture shift."

   - "We always consider the animal but never the person caring for it - things like transportation barriers, people who do shift work, etc. are rarely taken into account when services are set up but then communities are judged for not using those services and deemed 'bad pet owners'."

   <u>DEI and the focus on people/communities is a distraction from the "real work" of animal welfare organizations.</u>

   - "These issues often stem from systemic racism, improper owner education, or a lack of resources. Yet our first duty of care is not to [be] addressing these issues, it is to the animals we serve…Social justice and economic reform are issues that extend so far beyond the scope and resources of animal care, they cannot be our focus over the immediate needs and safety of the animals in our community."

   - "I think folks who do this work just need to really love animals. It shouldn't matter what your race, ethnicity, background, sexual orientation, or gender is. The animals are the most important part of this work."

   <u>Hiring more diverse candidates will lead to hiring less qualified candidates.</u>

   - "I completely agree with being diverse, equitable, and inclusive, but I disagree with hiring a person strictly to help the DEI numbers, or searching for a certain group, just to meet a DEI 'quota'."

- "It has become a trend to hire employees based on diversity instead of actual qualifications. It's hard to build a good team with non-qualified employees."

<u>DEI should not be a responsibility for animal welfare organizations.</u>

- "LGBT issues should member [not?] play a part in the workplace. Heterosexual employees don't flaunt their sexual desires, so why would any organization allow anyone else to do so? This effort will flip and create a toxic workplace with countless complaints and tension by both the staff and public. Keep it professional!"

- "The animal welfare field is the same as the community. Poor communities and poverty-stricken families do not receive proper education or training in any field so they live off the government. Animal Welfare organizations can't change this with training alone and they shouldn't be expected to."

2. **Lack of adequate diversity at all levels.**

Organizations' workforces are not adequately diverse, especially in leadership, board and management levels. The workforce is homogeneous in terms of almost all demographic factors (gender identity, race, sexual orientation, disability, native language, etc).

<u>There is a lack of racial diversity in animal welfare. While many attribute this to a lack of diversity in the surrounding community, others recognize that the issue persists even in diverse areas.</u>

- "My org's board is white, those in management positions are white, and the org as a whole is very white. Likewise, company culture and practice is very white."

- "The general population of this area isn't very racially diverse, so it's difficult to hire diverse races without resorting to quotas."

- "The majority of staff are white women. There are only a few men and a few people of color even though we are located in an area with a large population of non-white individuals."

<u>The lack of diversity is especially notable amongst leadership and boards, even when the organization is diverse.</u>

- "Leadership at our organization is almost entirely white…We lack diversity in every sense - both in our employee racial makeup, and in ideology and approach.

This is especially painful to see as the city we serve is predominantly Black/Latino."

- "Management and office roles are almost entirely white. POC are well represented in entry level roles but are not encouraged to grow and get promoted here."

Many view animal welfare organizations as White-centered.

- "Animal welfare is notoriously White. In my experience, animal welfare is marketed to be a privilege, not a basic right for animals and humans. Animal welfare is for those who have the money, time, and ability to take an extra step to provide better outcomes for pets instead of something that should be available to everyone."

- "The field is very white washed. There is an assumption across the board that if you come from a certain community or background, that you are not going to care for the animals in the same way. It seems that a majority of speakers at conferences in the animal welfare field are also white. People in charge of humane education at organizations are usually white."

3. **Animal welfare organizations face barriers to increasing and sustaining diversity in the workforce**

Poor recruitment, low compensation, and unclear opportunities for career development contribute to low levels of recruitment and retention of underrepresented identity groups in animal welfare.

Organizations are unable to recruit/attract and retain people of color. Some attribute this to a lack of targeted recruitment efforts. However, many view the issue as a lack of people of color applying for positions, a lack of interest, and a lack of "qualified" candidates of color.

- "There are not many minorities in my organization, however it's not from a lack of trying. My organization consciously makes an effort to hire minorities, but they can't hire groups of people that aren't interested in my field, or that don't apply for a position."

- "People of color are not applying to available jobs. This may be due to the way we advertise or the fact that people of color are not interested or don't have the skills for the jobs advertised."

- "Lack of outreach. If you keep looking in the same places you will keep getting the same kind of people."

Low pay jobs and unpaid internships hinder DEI efforts.

- "Animal welfare does not pay a lot especially the entry level jobs which can be discouraging to those who are minorities or come from that disadvantaged backgrounds."

- "The fact that this sector still puts so much emphasis on volunteers doing this work not paying people to work in this field. Not a lot of people can volunteer 8 hours a day or even an hour when most are struggling. Paying people to do this work will open up our field to a more diverse population."

- "I think a lot is financial. It isn't a field that makes you money, so most of the people who devote their time have other income sources, or supporting families. That means we end up with middle class, white, females as the majority of our volunteer and staff base."

People do not see a clear career development path.

- 44 percent of Black respondents disagreed that there is a clear career development path for employees of different backgrounds, compared to 28 percent of White respondents. LGBTQIA and respondents with disabilities also expressed higher levels of disagreement.

- There was a high neutral response across all demographic categories in relation to a clear career development path for employees of different backgrounds, which could indicate room for improvement.

Lack of adequate accommodations and accessibility.

- There were high levels of neutral responses (over 30 percent) to questions regarding adequate accommodations for people with disabilities or religious observations, or caregiving obligations. This may indicate people do not know what accommodations are available, which can be a challenge for creating an equitable and inclusive environment for all.

- "I would love to see more discussion about disability inclusion in animal welfare - as it is often presented as physical work, and as there are societal stigmas surrounding disability, many disabled folks in this field hide their needs."

- "I feel that we do not do enough to serve people with disabilities - we've had Deaf clients but no sign language interpreter, we can't ensure our facilities are wheelchair-accessible, etc."

4. **Concerns over equitable treatment and accountability.**

Employees of color and LGBTQIA+ employees have observed or experienced harassment, bullying, and discrimination in their organiztions at concerning levels. They are also less likely to believe they are treated fairly, can voice contrary opinions, or have adequate input into decisions that impact them.

There is little trust that people who engage in bullying or harassment will be held accountable.

- 52 percent of gender nonbinary/genderqueer/transgender and 59 percent of cisgender women believe that people who engage in bullying or harassment are held accountable, in comparison to 74 percent of cisgender men. The negative and neutral responses for these groups also indicate a similar discrepancy.

- Non-managers, and individuals with disabilities had higher levels of negative or neutral responses regarding whether people who engage in bullying or harassment are held accountable.

Observations of exclusionary behavior, discrimination, and harassment.

- Overall, 30 percent of respondents said they have observed discrimination or harassment in their organization. **40 percent of Black respondents have observed discrimination or harassment in their organization.**

- Overall, 15 percent have experienced discrimination and harassment, but **40 percent of Black respondents said they have experienced discrimination and harassment in their organization.**

- People of color, gender nonbinary/genderqueer/transgender, those ages 25-44, people with disabilities, and people from Canada and the Midwest were more likely to have observed discrimination or harassment.

- Over 40 percent of gender non-binary and transgender men have heard people make jokes about identity groups in their organization.

- Almost one in four respondents has heard people in their organization make jokes about identity groups.

<u>Underrepresented identity groups do not feel they have a voice.</u>

- Black people, gender nonbinary/genderqueer/transgender, cisgender women, younger people, people with disabilities, and people making between $10,000-$49,999 had more negative or neutral responses regarding voicing contrary opinions without fear of consequences.

- Gender nonbinary/genderqueer/transgender respondents, people with disabilities, non-managers, and those with salaries between $10,000-$49,999 disagreed more regarding having adequate input into decisions that affect them.

5. **Lack of inclusive services and engagement with diverse communities**

There are significant barriers and access to care for underrepresented communities, in part due to biases and stereotypes about communities of color and low income communities, as well as policies that often prohibit opportunities for adoption or unfairly punish certain communities.

<u>Judgmental attitudes towards communities of color and working-class communities.</u>

- "I think our field harbors a lot of judgement to the lower socioeconomic community and their ability to keep pets."

- "Obviously, many shelters are very judgmental about people living in certain areas or 'bad areas'."

- "The entire structure was built by dominate colonized culture which has led to exclusion, discrimination and an appalling lack of diversity. It has an elitist tone at times with the judgement that is cast upon members of the community."

<u>Animal welfare organizations harbor biases towards communities of color and working-class communities. These biases show up in pet surrenders and adoptions.</u>

- "Preconceived ideas on how specific ethic groups treat their animals, i.e. who is more likely to be abusive and/or neglect their pets."

- "I think the biggest concern in the animal welfare field is conscious or unconscious bias against specific groups on issues of adoption or use of animal welfare services."

- "Low-income people are treated poorly throughout most of the animal welfare community. They are seen as irresponsible, and some do not wish them to have

animals because of their income level. They are treated poorly when they need to surrender animals."

<u>There is a disconnect between individuals in animal welfare organizations and the communities being served.</u>

- "The organization operates in a very diverse community, but we have not brought that community into the discussion process when considering what they needs in terms of support for their pets. There are a lot of staff perspectives of what's needed for programming, but no outreach efforts have been made to our community/people who would be using the programs/services."

- "We are a predominantly white staff in a predominantly black neighborhood. There is a natural disconnect between ourselves and our community that we don't make effort to fix.

- "Still feels like an "us vs. them" mentality at times when engaging with members of our community and I don't feel that we've made an appropriate effort to engage the community and include people from all backgrounds, ethnicities, etc."

<u>Responses suggest that stereotypes and assumptions about communities of color and their experiences with, exposure to, and care for animals persist.</u>

- "POC do not see animal welfare as a viable career path, partially due to lack of exposure to the work."

- "The same problems exist regardless of DEI - poverty and the difficulty in caring for beloved pets, and ignorance about the nature of companion animals and their needs."

- "There are cultures where domestic animals are viewed differently and preventative health is not considered as important because the humans do not have access to preventative health care and proper nutrition."

- "Some people culturally may not value animals the same way as others, some races may not have experience with animals as much as others may or they may simply want to pursue other fields."

- "There is not much education in low-income areas and services like training and grooming are often out of the question for those in these areas, often leaving the animals to suffer mainly due to lack of education and income."

Pet adoption policies create a barrier for POC and low-income individuals.

- "There are many barriers for some communities when it comes to adopting from a shelter. Things like high adoption fees, housing needs for the pet (such as the adopter needs a fenced in yard for a dog no matter what), and transportation to and from the shelter can limit what communities can access our resources and pets available for adoption."

- "Services are reactive. We focus on providing services to low income BIPOC communities, but do not focus on how to adopt out animals to them."

- "A lot of marginalized groups get weeded out in the process of adopting because they get denied for not owning their own home, those that do not have a yard or fenced-in yard, or those that don't have an established vet."

Language barriers persist, particularly for organizations that serve Latinx populations

- "For serving the community it is language. We do not have enough multi-lingual staff to service our community appropriately."

- "We also have no Spanish-translated documents/contracts, yet we are positioned within a large Latinx community. So, that community is not being served."

Variances among identity groups include:

- Asian/Asian-Americans, LGBTQIA+ respondents, managers, and those making more than $50,000 per year disagreed more that diverse communities get what they need from their organizations or that their staff have the skills to address the needs of diverse communities.
- Individuals from Canada, Great Plains, South Central, and Pacific regions had over 30 percent disagreement that their organization's staff have the skills to address the needs of diverse communities.
- Rescue/foster groups and spay/neuter clinics were more likely to believe that diverse communities get what they need from their organizations.
- Respondents from all types of organizations had high levels of neutral responses regarding whether diverse communities get what they need from their organizations.

6. **Animal welfare organizations need support, leadership, and guidance to foster DEI in their workplaces and to serve their communities.**

    <u>More DEI training and education from outside experts.</u>

    ● "We need outside help (a facilitator for workshops for example) to confront our lack of understanding and attention to issues concerning DEI."

    ● "More education and training for AWO leaders, the creation of safe spaces for discussion (ideally facilitated by an expert in this field)"

    ● "We have not had much in the way of DEI training. With the few sessions we've had, I have not heard what the higher-ups are doing in order to apply DEI concepts."

    <u>Improve services to diverse communities.</u>

    ● *Adoptions* - "Remove barriers for adopters. Home checks and rigorous, unnecessary adoption screenings are taking too long, discriminating and causing death in shelters daily."
    ● *Expand services and reach* – "Offer remote locations within the diverse communities in order to provide accessibility to our services. More mobile clinics in underserved communities staffed by representatives of those communities and offering recruitment/education about careers in animal welfare."

    <u>Openly address biases and stereotypes that unfairly target underrepresented groups.</u>

    ● *Reassess the punitive nature* – "I would like us to critically consider how our work with police and prosecutors in Humane Investigations also relates to our statements and action on racial justice. I would like to see us pushing for reforms in laws and policing that are more humane to the animals and humans affected by them."

    ● *AWO's must be more vocal about allyship* – "With the community, I would like them to step up to the plate to celebrate and support BLM, Pride Month, Black Birder's Week, Juneteenth, etc. We can do better to celebrate instead of supporting oppressive systems with our silence. Any of that would be a positive step forward because our organization is standing still."

    ● *AWO's should recognize racism* – "Acknowledging there is an issue, and that racism exists at every level would be a start. Folks at my organization have access to language, but rely on saying "implicit bias" instead of white supremacy, racism, sexism, homophobia, etc. I would like our organization to include BIPOC

community members in our decision making process and partner instead of serve."

Diversify animal welfare organizations at every level.

- *Diversity Boards* – "Considering other ways folks can join our board without having to be independently wealthy/contribute a significant monetary donation to stay on the board."

- *Wages* – "Paying a real living wage and providing better benefits (affordable family health plans, etc.) to attract candidates who don't have wealthy spouses."

- *Pipeline development* - "Having paid opportunities for internships in order to build experience for people who don't have the socio-economic ability to pay for schooling and licensure will also produce a more diverse workforce in the field."

- *Supporting staff* - "More room for taking care of the mental health of staff and volunteers considering it's a very high stress and typically low paying career choice."

Leadership from the Association.

- *Educational resources* - "National leadership with DEI statements and shared resources (materials, webinars) would help the smaller orgs like ours who want to do something but have the constraints I listed, plus many others."

- *Diversify the Board* - "Look at the board of AAWA, too. Leadership is by and large older and whiter, and probably all friends - how does a candidate that doesn't fit that mold break through that?"

- *Professional development* - "Often conferences such as AWAA offer great professional development opportunities, but due to coverage and department needs many non-supervisory animal staff are unable to attend. It would be neat to offer PD opportunities for staff who may want to pursue leadership roles in the future. Additionally, training supervisors and managers on conflict resolution techniques to best approach, train, and deal with neurodivergent staff."

- *Affordability* - "I would like to join the AAWA as a member but cannot afford to on my significantly underpaid salary."

- *Reassess AAWA's communication* - "The Association's tagline seems a little judgmental with the mention of "good homes". (The Association for Animal Welfare Advancement members collaborate to rescue, shelter, rehabilitate and find good homes for animals.)"

MSM Global's Recommendations

Based on the findings from this audit, there is much work to be done for the animal welfare field to build diverse, equitable and inclusive workplaces and to ensure it serves all communities in which animals have a chance to thrive and be loved. It is clear that there is not a unified vision for fostering DEI in the field which leads to inadequate accountability for change. Animal welfare organizations need more serious commitment from their leaders, as well as resources, support, and education.

The following recommendations provide a strategic, high level framework for fostering sweeping change in animal welfare.

1. **DEI Strategic Vision, Leadership, Structure and Goals**

- Develop and communicate a vision statement for DEI that clearly indicates the connection between DEI and the future of animal welfare.

- Continue to leverage the DEI Committee and DEI Leadership Team to represent the needs of animal welfare, advocate for change, and lead efforts to develop and implement strategic goals for DEI for the field.

- Develop a strategic plan for DEI, with goals, objectives, timelines and deliverables, and metrics for progress. [The Global Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Benchmarks (GDEIB), created by the Centre for Workplace Inclusion, can be a powerful framework for embarking on sustainable culture change for DEI.]

- Go for unity, not uniformity. Animal welfare covers a broad spectrum of organizations and regions. Under the same umbrella of animal welfare lies everything from adoption services to veterinary care to shelters to law enforcement. Animal welfare covers a broad geographic space, representing rural and urban areas both home to incredibly diverse communities. There is no "one size fits all" approach considering the breadth of the field, so the approaches to foster DEI will inevitably need to be tailored to the unique needs of each organization. However, AAWA is well positioned to provide a set of universal guidelines, as well as general resources and training opportunities to support animal welfare organizations in their DEI journey.

- Decriminalization. Convene a task force to specifically focus on addressing policies that unjustly punish marginalized communities. The task force should include representatives and experts addressing systemic racism and criminal justice reform inside and outside of animal welfare.

2. **Communication Campaign**

- Communication plan for the field. Large scale industry-wide change requires a comprehensive communication strategy. The more the message is promoted and reinforced, the more it will be internalized as part of "who we are." Develop a communications plan for AAWA to provide shared and consistent messaging that includes:
  - Blog posts, newsletters, and other communications capturing highlights from the assessment and "so what, now what" tips for animal welfare organizations to adopt.
  - Podcasts and additional resources to continue the conversation and reinforce important DEI topics.
  - Events hosted by the AAWA spotlighting best practices, stories, case studies, and "voices for DEI."
  - Panel discussion or presentations at animal welfare events, professional or industry gatherings, and institutions of academic or technical education.
  - Social media campaigns to drive thoughtful engagement on DEI.

- Community outreach to underrepresented groups. Beyond communicating with people within animal welfare, the AAWA should help foster relationships between animal welfare organizations and diverse communities.
  - Seek out partnerships with national and international organizations that represent or work with marginalized groups.
  - Provide resources or sponsorship for animal welfare organizations to sponsor community outreach events or programs in their region.
  - Partner with community colleges and technical schools to inform students about career opportunities in animal welfare.

3. **Bold and Sustainable Recruitment and Retention Strategy for DEI**
   - Set bold yet achievable recruitment goals and then develop a plan to achieve them; to bring underrepresented populations into workforce…identify a 5 year goal for increasing representation in animal welfare overall;
   - Build the pipeline for long term growth
     - Regional resources for outreach (Pacific vs. Canada vs. Midwest, etc)
     - Outreach to local communities – high schools, community colleges
     - Diverse student orgs in higher ed
     - Mentoring/shadowing
   - Step up recruiting for more diverse leadership, management, board members

4. **Learning, Development, Resources**
   - Develop and deliver ongoing training to the AAWA DEI Committee, as well as to members.

- Conduct a train-the-trainer program for the AAWA DEI Committee and others who would be interested and able to provide ongoing DEI training to members (in progress).
- Sponsor the development of a survey, similar to the State of Animal Welfare, that could be used by member organizations. The survey design and development could be underwritten by AAWA, and animal welfare organizations could then work with an external consultant to analyze results and provide recommendations.
- Continue to make DEI a focal point at AAWA conferences, and encourage leaders, Board members, and DEI committee members to speak at other conferences and events about the need to foster DEI in animal welfare.
- Develop a comprehensive guide for animal welfare organizations to use in designing and implementing their own organizational DEI strategies.
- Explore scholarships, internships, or other developmental and learning opportunities focused on building a pipeline of talent among individuals from marginalized identity groups.
- Host resource groups (Safe Space Groups) for individuals in animal welfare who represent different groups, including LGBTQIA+ (already in progress), people of color/BIPOC, and White allies.

Appendices

Detailed Findings by Demographic Groups

Notable demographic differences in terms of responses related to representation and support:

- Respondents from funder/donor organizations, national organizations, and nonprofits were twice as likely to disagree that their staff reflects the diversity of their community in comparison with spay/neuter clinics.

- Over half of the people making more than $50,000 per year do **not** think their staff reflects the diversity of the community. This may indicate that employees in more senior level positions are aware of the challenges more than their employees.

- White (56 percent) and Asian American (59 percent) respondents had the highest levels of disagreement that there is adequate representation of racial/ethnic diversity in their organization. Biracial/Multiracial (51 percent), Black (48 percent), Hispanic/Latinx (38 percent), and Other races (36 percent) were also quite high in terms of disagreement.

- Gender non-binary/genderqueer/trans respondents (58 percent) and cisgender women (56 percent) disagree that there is adequate representation of race/ethnic diversity or

gender diversity in their organizations, in comparison with 44 percent of cisgender men.

- Respondents in Canada (71 percent) and the Great Plains (74 percent) disagreed more than other regions when asked if there is adequate representation of racial/ethnic diversity in their organizations, in comparison to 52 percent of overall respondents.

- Respondents of different ages had significantly different opinions about adequate representation of racial/ethnic diversity and gender diversity in their organizations, with over half of those ages 25-54 disagreeing, while only 27 percent of those 65 and older disagreed.

Race/Ethnicity

- Black, Asian/Asian American, and Hispanic/Latinx respondents had more negative or neutral responses when asked whether employees from different backgrounds interact well together.

- Black, Asian/American, Biracial/Multiracial, and Hispanic/Latinx had more negative responses when asked if they feel comfortable being their authentic self at work.

- Black, Asian/Asian American, and Hispanic/Latinx respondents had more negative responses when asked if employees who are different from the majority of the workforce are treated fairly. Almost one in three Black respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with this statement versus 6 percent of White respondents.

- Biracial/Multiracial and Asian/Asian Americans had more negative responses when asked if they believe there is active support for sexual identity diversity in their organization. In fact, only a little over half of Asian respondents agreed with this statement, in comparison to almost 70 percent of Whites.

- Black, Asian/American, and Biracial/Multiracial respondents had more negative responses when asked if they believe leadership in their organization would take appropriate action if someone experienced discrimination or harassment. In fact, 50 percent of Black respondents either disagreed, strongly disagreed, or were neutral in their response to this question in comparison to one quarter of Whites; negative or neutral responses.

Disability

People with disabilities had:
- more negative or neutral responses when asked whether employees from different backgrounds interact well together.

- more negative responses when asked if they feel comfortable being their authentic self at work.
- more negative responses when asked if employees who are different from the majority of the workforce are treated fairly
- More negative responses when asked if they believe leadership in their organization would take appropriate action if someone experienced discrimination or harassment
- More negative responses when asked if their unique knowledge and skills are appreciated.

Gender Identity

84 percent of cisgender men agreed or strongly agreed that their leadership would take appropriate action if someone experienced discrimination or harassment, in comparison with 73 percent of cisgender women and only 67 percent of gender nonbinary or transgender respondents. 1 in 3 gender nonbinary/transgender disagreed or were neutral.

Sexual Orientation

Non-heterosexual respondents had more negative responses than heterosexuals to the question of whether employees who are different from the majority of the workforce are treated fairly.

Salary

- 91 percent of respondents with salaries of $150,000+ had positive responses when asked if they feel comfortable being their authentic self at work, in comparison to 77 percent or lower for all other salary categories.
-
- 94 percent of respondents with salaries of $150,000+ had more positive responses when asked if employees who are different from the majority of the workforce are treated fairly. Respondents making less than $50,000 per year had significantly more negative or neutral responses.
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- 91 percent of respondents with salaries of $150,000+ agreed or strongly agreed that leadership would take appropriate action if someone experienced discrimination or harassment, which is significantly higher than any other salary range.
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- 93 percent of respondents with salaries of $150,000+ agreed or strongly agreed that their unique knowledge and skills are appreciated. Only 60 percent of those making $10,000-$24,999 agreed.

Age

There is a correlation between age and how much respondents think their unique knowledge and skills are appreciated. 86 percent of those age 65+ agreed versus 67 percent of those age 25 or younger.

Visuals and Infographics for Communication of Assessment Results
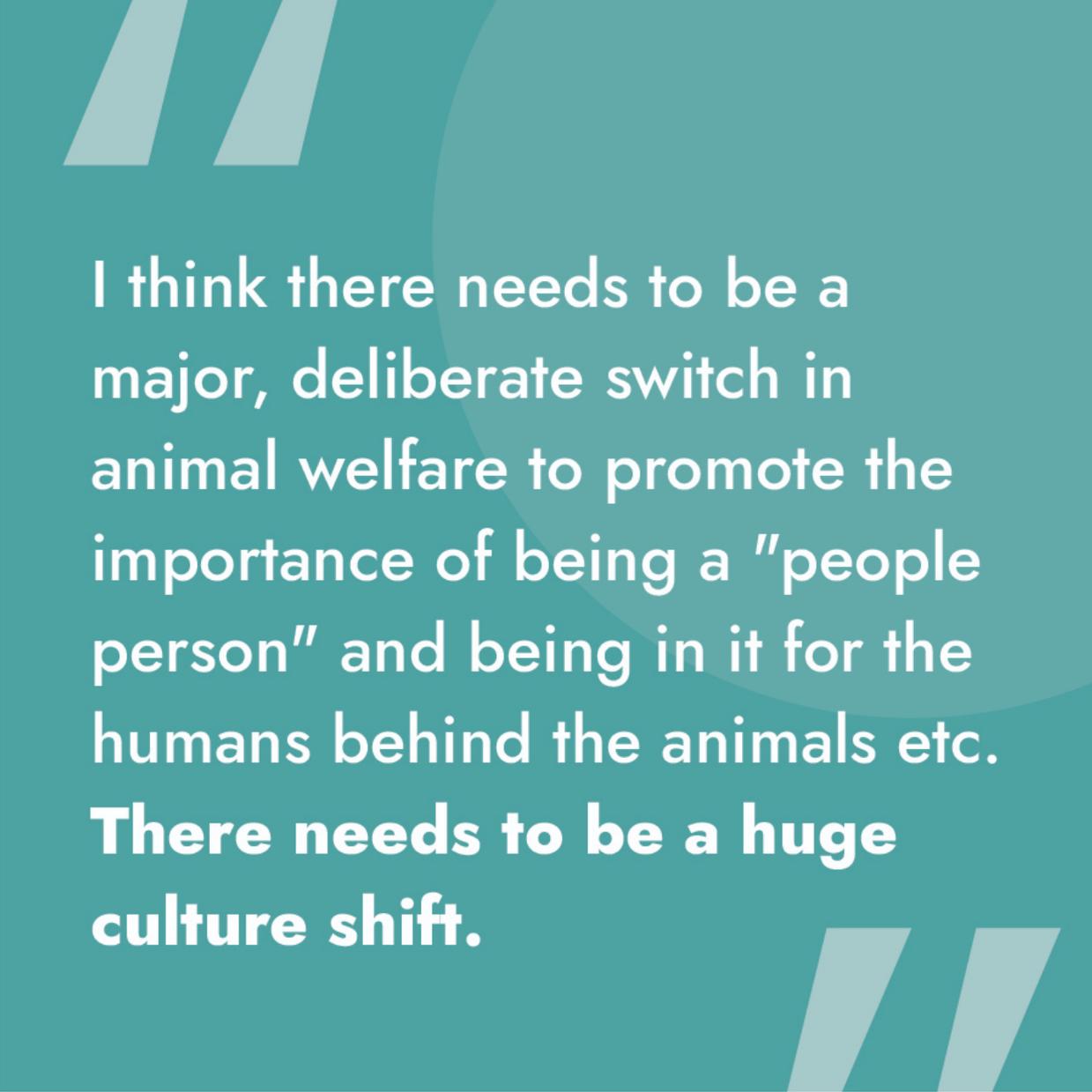
> I think there needs to be a major, deliberate switch in animal welfare to promote the importance of being a "people person" and being in it for the humans behind the animals etc. **There needs to be a huge culture shift.**

> I think the biggest concern in the animal welfare field is **conscious or unconscious bias against specific groups** on issues of adoption or use of animal welfare services.

> "The organization operates in a very diverse community, **but we have not brought that community into the discussion process** when considering what they needs in terms of support for their pets. There are a lot of staff perspectives of what's needed for programming, **but no outreach efforts have been made to our community/people** who would be using the programs/services."

> **POC do not see animal welfare as a viable career path**, partially due to lack of exposure to the work.

> **More education and training for AWO leaders,** the creation of **safe spaces for discussion** (ideally facilitated by an expert in this field).

> **Remove barriers for adopters.** Home checks and rigorous, unnecessary adoption screenings are taking too long, discriminating and **causing death in shelters daily.**

Having paid opportunities for internships in order to **build experience for people who don't have the socio-economic ability to pay for schooling and licensure** will also produce a more diverse workforce in the field.