



Equity Action Plan 2023 - 2024

Our Vision

Engage communities to create resilient landscapes.

Our Mission

Metro Blooms partners with communities to create resilient landscapes and foster clean watersheds, embracing the values of equity and inclusion to solve environmental challenges.

Core Values

- ❖ Ecological Health
- ❖ Environmental Justice
- ❖ Education
- ❖ Inspiration
- ❖ Community Relations and Partnerships

Equity Statement

“We work to create the conditions for all of a community’s members to be meaningfully involved in projects to protect clean water and create habitat. We perform our work using principles of equitable engagement and environmental justice so that those most impacted have the opportunity to lead decision-making. We intentionally reach out in communities impacted by environmental injustice that include — but are not limited to — people of color, lower-income neighborhoods, and affordable housing communities.”

Strategic Area of Focus

DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION - Integrate an equity framework grounded in transparency, responsiveness and accountability into organizational operations and program offerings to better reach and serve diverse communities.

Collective Action

(BOARD) Expand representation on the Board so that by year end 2022, there is a majority of individuals not previously represented, including but not limited to BIPOC and LGBTQ+ membership.

1. Expand the size of the Board to facilitate cohort recruitment and maintain current Board members.
 - a. Develop relationships with networks interested in environmental justice such as law, CPA, Accounting, community, etc. (Ongoing)
 - b. Identify leaders in the community that would also make great board members (avoid tokenization) and then actively recruit them to join the board. (ongoing)
 - c. Consider adding youth representation on the board or increasing engagement between the board and youth. (2024)
 - d. Add legal representation. (March 2023)
2. Reduce barriers to participation by historically excluded populations including BIPOC, LGBTQ+, and persons with disabilities.
 - a. Reevaluate and increase accessibility for communities we serve to participate and join the board. (i.e. incentives/payments, hybrid/virtual meetings, time and duration of meetings, childcare, etc.) (June 2023)
 - b. Establish equitable board engagement and expectations. (2024)
3. Create clearly defined development plan and accountability measures for expanded Board development.
 - a. Improve brand identity through trusting relationships with funders, partners, & community. (Ongoing)

(ALL) Offer accessible and relevant projects and services to diverse communities.

1. Ensure the inclusion of community input into developing and evaluating projects and services.
 - a. Co-create processes with community. (April 2023)
 - b. Evaluate how we prioritize projects and partners. (December 2023; ongoing)

2. Reduce barriers to participation by historically excluded populations including BIPOC, persons with disabilities, low-income, renters and non-gardeners.
 - a. Get to know community partners by giving more space and time to understand community needs. (Proactive relationship building) (April 2023)
 - b. Work with community partners to identify actual needs instead of assuming. (ongoing)
 - c. Hire more environmental and social justice advocates in the community. (April 2023)
 - d. Targeted outreach in communities we work with to expand who knows about opportunities. (January 2023)

3. Bridge language barriers. Develop accessible and culturally relevant educational and promotional materials in multiple languages to be shared through a range of communications channels, including those that support oral traditions.
 - a. Translate the resilient yards workbook. (2023)
 - b. Identify non-digital modes of communication. (January 2023)

4. Develop and implement a plan to identify and expand our social media platforms to reach diverse audiences.
 - a. Get the word out to community through KMOJ Radio, local new newspaper, & social media. (January 2024)

5. Commit adequate personnel and financial resources to equity framework development, implementation, and accountability practices.
 - a. Identify a tool to assess the alignment of projects with equity goals. (November 2023)
 - b. Follow up with and evaluate successful projects to learn from and model after them. (ongoing)
 - c. Evaluate annual progress. (December)

(All) Advance environmental justice through authentic partnerships and by leveraging organizational resources.

1. Amplify the important work of communities and organizations toward justice and equity through existing organizational resources.
 - a. Work with more BIPOC owned businesses and vendors in the communities we work in. (December 2023)
 - b. More unrestricted funding to allow for flexibility and responsiveness. (April 2023; ongoing)
2. Strengthen engagement with communities and organizations working toward environmental justice and equity in alignment with Metro Blooms' mission.
 - a. Higher % of funding re-distributed into the community. (April 2023)
 - b. Re-distribute resources into the communities we serve. (February 2023)
3. Diversify staff to accurately reflect the communities we serve.
 - a. Allow for more time in the hiring process. (March 2023)

Community Recommendations

A community survey was administered to more than twenty Metro Blooms community partners and Blue Thumb Steering Committee members. The survey was designed to gain feedback on how our organization can further advance racial equity and environmental justice.

What recommendations do you have for Metro Blooms to be a trusted partner in the advancement of environmental justice and racial equity?

- Further community engagement
- Place greater value on relationship building and not have partnerships be transactional (around an event or program).
- Intentionally setting aside staff time and organizational capacity for outreach to build and strengthen community relationships would really help Metro Blooms grow as a trusted partner.

- More racially diverse staff.
- Provide paid opportunities for youth, residents of public housing, and others who are underrepresented.
- Offer low-cost accessible content and hands on involvement.
- Continue workshops and re-engagement of the Environmental Justice Hub.
- Annual meeting on this topic [equity] for Blue Thumb partners so we are abreast to Metro Blooms goals and initiatives and process in communities especially in the metro area and across the state.
- Continue promoting different voices and perspectives.
- Connect with local social media creators and artists, and Center for Performing Arts (on 38th street).
- Develop small-scale, paid commission opportunity for creative media, either general or connected to a specific project.
 - Keep such a program open annually to nurture/encourage artists of color to continue to apply (grant cycles, etc.) to develop relationships and a sense of community.
 - Start a small/convenient project with \$200-\$500 stipends and grow from there.
- Serve as a hub for updates and info reference for equity resources: hiring policies, staff trainings, articles, model policies and language for local governments, local environmental justice efforts and success stories, etc.
- More engagement of immigrant communities and more training for Metro Blooms staff on how to work effectively with immigrant communities AND more training for community on environmental justice issues and creating more awareness and advocacy on both racial equity and environmental justice.