
Diversity Statement and Action Plan

Our commitment to fostering a culture that embodies
diversity, equity, and inclusivity.

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Diversity Statement and Action Plan

Diversity Statement

Cascade Energy is committed to a culture valuing diversity, equity, and inclusivity. Our people are our most important competitive advantage, and our practices and policies reflect this commitment.

We come to work every day striving for continuous improvement. We are dedicated to making industrial energy efficiency happen in smart, measurable, and sustained ways for our customers. We take our core values seriously, and support one another in our collective commitment to:



Cascade employees are a unique and varied group of talented, intelligent individuals. We respect our differences, and recognize that, in many ways, our differences make Cascade stronger. We have built a company where people take pride in their work and can take advantage of a rich work environment with many opportunities for both professional and personal growth.

At Cascade Energy, during the hiring process and in our day-to-day interactions, we do not tolerate any acts of discrimination by, or against, our team. Our Diversity Action Plan explains in detail about our commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusivity.

“Diversity is at the crossroads of Cascade’s purpose, values, and strategy. Therefore, we are taking bold steps to seek, attract, hire, retain and promote diverse talent from historically underrepresented groups. Our success will be buoyed by a strong emphasis on equity and inclusion in our processes, systems, and culture. We believe this approach is the right, and better, thing to do.”

—Marcus Wilcox, CEO

Our Diversity Action Plan

At Cascade, we want it all – the best people for the job AND a diverse team. We will always hire the most qualified individual for the job regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, age, disability, veteran status, sexual orientation, social or economic status, and religious or political beliefs. At the same time, we employ recruiting efforts that ensure a broad and highly diverse pool of qualified applicants. We are confident that diversity and the best person for the job go hand in hand.

In 2020, Cascade Energy re-committed to prioritizing diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) internally. We reorganized our internal DEI team to include employees who represent all levels of work experience and a variety of backgrounds. The newly reformed team’s charter establishes that “the DEI Team is responsible for identifying and implementing activities and initiatives that will help Cascade improve the state of diversity, equity, and inclusion across the company, while being mindful of the strategic business needs of the company.”

The first step taken by the team was to create an Opportunity Register in which all employees are invited to submit ideas and recommendations for actionable items which can contribute to improved DEI outcomes at Cascade. The DEI team carefully considers all submissions and undergoes deep discussion in consideration of these while keeping the strategic business needs of the company in mind. **This resulted in six new goals for DEI at Cascade.** These include two goals in each category of diversity, equity, and inclusion, with each goal carefully crafted to ensure long lasting and productive changes.

This Diversity Action Plan provides an annual snapshot of our employee demographics, shares ongoing and new initiatives, and outlines our goals and strategies to:

1. Improve diverse hiring practices
2. Support diverse business enterprise (DBE) vendors and subcontractors
3. Increase pay transparency within Cascade
4. Enhance job descriptions and improve development processes
5. Encourage employee awareness and conversations around DEI
6. Promote inclusive communication

Annual Snapshot

Cascade enlists the expertise of Human Resource Specialties, a woman-owned, Affirmative Action Plan specialty provider, to help guide and support our affirmative action efforts, and ensure compliance with the requirements and benchmarks established by the Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs (OFCCP). Annual tracking provides the data for analysis, guidance on benchmarks and goals, and helps ensure accurate focus of our efforts.

The following is a snapshot of our results for both the AAP reporting end date of March 31, 2020, and a current point-in-time snapshot (as of Dec. 1, 2020).

Work Force Utilization Area	As of March 31, 2020	As of December 1, 2020
Percentage of Women of Total Work Force	31.5%	39.2%
Percentage of self-identified Individuals with Disabilities	7.7%	8.2%
Percentage Minority of Total Work Force	6.5%	11.0%
Percentage of self-identified Protected Veterans	2.9%	2.7%

We added 30 new team members during this reporting period (4/1/2019 through 3/31/2020), 47% of which were women, and 17% of which were minority. In the coming year, we will continually work to identify resources for our outreach and recruiting efforts to expand our qualified applicant pool and identify qualified internal candidates. Hiring goals identified for the current reporting period include increasing minority hiring throughout our organization.

Ongoing & New Initiatives

- Cascade’s Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Team meets regularly, and their discussions include reviewing our diversity goals, monitoring progress towards the goals, and providing guidance to management on these efforts.
- We share the results of our diversity efforts with our team members annually and post this document on our company-wide intranet site. We share our philosophy with the public by publishing this document on our company website. We have published a DEI page and Anti-Racism Statement on our website.
- Our Human Resources and Recruiting team engages in continuous learning, attending conferences, participating in webinars, and staying informed on recruiting best practices for diversity, equity, and inclusion.
- In 2020, we continued to provide training to all our employees on diversity, equity, and inclusion. Our desire is to deepen our understanding of these complex topics. Through education and practice, we can collectively make improvements in the make-up of our team.
- We are retiring our current referral program on 12/31/2020 and in January 2021, are launching a new Community-Focused Candidate Referral Program that is open to our employees as well as those external to Cascade; this includes customers, vendors, and others we partner with in the community. Anyone who refers a successful hire to Cascade can direct the donation of a \$500 referral bonus to a professional organization with a focus on serving under-represented groups. We seek to support and maintain relationships with organizations working to improve career opportunities for minorities.

DIVERSITY GOALS

Goal 1: Improve diverse hiring practices

Increasing diversity brings multiple benefits to our organization, including different perspectives, increased creativity, higher innovation, and faster problem solving. Within three years, Cascade seeks to achieve a hiring goal of filling 60% of our open positions with people from underrepresented groups. Of this amount, we will strive to achieve a 35% hiring rate for Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) individuals.

Immediate steps we are taking to improve diversity at Cascade include:

- **Developing and tracking metrics for our hiring and recruiting process**
 - We track our outreach, recruiting, and hiring activity each year, and utilize an independent, third party to assist us in assessing our results and creating our Affirmative Action Plan. We consider this data when evaluating the success of these strategies.
- **Creating diverse interview slates for every open position**
 - We will develop a diverse applicant pool by reaching out to organizations that are inclusive of women, minorities, veterans, and individuals with disabilities.
 - We strive to recruit from a diverse, qualified group of potential applicants to secure a high-performing workforce which is reflective of all segments of society. By collaborating with both professional and academic organizations and, when appropriate, participating in government- and military-sponsored career fairs, we seek to expand our outreach efforts to hire women, minorities, veterans, and individuals with disabilities. As with all Cascade employees, we encourage women, minorities, veterans, and individuals with disabilities in their career aspirations and offer support, so they can achieve their full potential in their careers as professionals, managers, and leaders.
- **Posting job openings both internally and externally**
 - We will create customized recruiting outreach efforts for each open requisition, with the goal of broadening our reach to a more diverse candidate pool. This includes participation in various university- and veteran-focused career fairs, as well as utilizing job-posting resources such as job boards on a wide variety of diversity-focused websites. Part of these efforts include increased attention to our written job descriptions and job posts, to ensure language that can attract a broad, qualified candidate pool.

Goal 2: Support diverse business enterprise (DBE) vendors and subcontractors¹

Cascade's core values guide us to use our market power to boost traditionally marginalized groups in our business community. We have determined a targeted percentage of 20% or greater for our DBE spend, and our vision is that in three years, we will achieve this investment in our DBE vendors and subcontractors and support them as a part of our service delivery strategy.

Immediate steps we are taking to support DBE vendors and subcontractors include:

- **Increasing the visibility and understanding of our existing Diverse Business Enterprise (DBE) program, reporting, and metrics**
 - We track our internal and program spend; our stated goal is to achieve greater than 20% of our total company supplier, vendor, and subcontractor expenditure toward those qualifying as DBE. This includes identifying diverse suppliers to participate in our strategic sourcing and procurement process.
- **Supporting an accessible internal resource to help with new DBE vendor identification as a part of regular process when we have new scopes of work**
 - We will be shining the spotlight on our internal DBE database to ensure the team responsible for ongoing database maintenance and updates has access to all the resources needed.
 - Regardless of contract requirements, we will encourage all employees to reach out to the DBE database team as a part of regular delivery work, to determine if an identified DBE can meet their needs.
- **Continuing to provide support to our existing DBE subcontractors and identifying and supporting at least one new DBE subcontractor to develop and grow**
 - In 2019, Cascade's Recruiting team began collaborating with a DBE subcontracted partner for work with a utility in Illinois – we worked together in order to staff and deliver multiple new programs. This collaboration has included mentorship, sharing of best practices, guiding the search and recruitment process, and modeling candidate screening and interviewing protocols. Additionally, through job shadowing, training, and coaching, Cascade's program team provides ongoing coaching and mentorship to the subcontracted DBE team, helping develop skills while ensuring we are delivering strong services and delighting our customers.
 - We are now extending this successful model by encouraging the 2021 formation of one or more new DBE firms led and co-owned by women or racial minorities who are currently employed by Cascade. These industry professionals will leave Cascade to start their own entrepreneurship journeys, with Cascade providing start-up investment, mentorship, access to intellectual property, co-pursuit of opportunities, and subcontracting of a critical

¹ Cascade defines diverse business enterprise as a for-profit business that is at least 51% owned, operated, and controlled by individuals with disabilities, racial or ethnic minorities, women, veterans, or LGBTQ+ individuals.

baseload of work. We believe that this approach can broaden the diversity of the local and national industrial energy efficiency suppliers, and lead to a compelling mix of wealth creation, jobs, and professional growth for diverse individuals.

EQUITY GOALS

Goal 3: Increase pay transparency

Studies show that women earn less than their male counterparts. This is further compounded by racial disparities. Pay transparency will enable Cascade to do its part in closing these gender and racial pay gaps. It also leads to building trust within the organization, especially between leadership and employees, as well as improved employee performance, engagement, and retention.

Immediate steps we are taking to increase pay transparency at Cascade include:

- **Documenting Cascade’s processes for establishing salaries and making that information accessible to all employees**
 - Transparency develops trust between leadership and employees; being transparent about the manner in which salaries are determined ensures that all employees are subject to an equal and fair salary process.
 - This will also help control costs by setting expectations about the pay range of our positions. This aids in understanding the potential growth in compensation for each role.
- **Including salary ranges on all job openings posted both internally and externally, and on all internally posted job level rubrics**
 - Listing salary information makes it clear where the position falls in a pay range and helps separate personal identity from the specific position.
 - We want to ensure all employees are paid a salary that reflects the compensation they deserve for the work they will be doing at Cascade. Listing a salary range puts Cascade and the candidate on more equitable negotiating grounds, allows candidates to pre-determine if the job meets their earnings needs, and helps HR in making sure the pool is comprised of people who are likely to accept the position.

Goal 4: Enhance job descriptions and improve development processes

To enhance employee satisfaction and development, we will maintain comprehensive job descriptions, ensuring employee awareness of opportunities to grow in their current role, as well as opportunities to pursue lateral or vertical moves into new roles and departments. This goal is also closely tied to the pay transparency goal above – with comprehensive job descriptions, employees will understand what skills they need to develop to get to their desired role or salary range.

Immediate steps we are taking to enhance job descriptions and improve development processes at Cascade include:

- **Completing job descriptions and rubrics containing the skills, technical proficiencies, and competencies needed to be successful in each role**
 - Our current job descriptions include the competencies needed to fill the position; we want to go further and define what it looks like when one excels in the role. By outlining what skills, technical proficiencies, and competencies are needed to not only fill but also to excel in the role, employees will have a better understanding of the education and skills they need to gain to get to their desired compensation within the position’s listed salary range. We have completed a dozen job level rubrics thus far.
 - Listing the skills, technical proficiencies, and competencies on each job position also makes employees aware of the requirements needed to pursue different positions. Similarly, employees desiring to increase their earnings potential will be able to review higher paying roles.
- **Hiring an external consultant to help Cascade improve our existing development process**
 - As a professional consulting services company ourselves, we intimately understand the benefit of seeking outside expertise. We have engaged a professional learning and development consultancy to review our current systems and help us establish a framework for improvements.

INCLUSION GOALS

Goal 5: Encourage employee awareness and conversations around DEI

We want Cascade to be a safe and inclusive place for productive conversations around Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI). We want to build a foundation in which DEI permeates all our actions and decision making.

Activities and actions we have taken include:

- **Offering (optional) quarterly DEI trainings to all employees**
 - By offering trainings, we are acknowledging that the journey to understand diversity, equity, and inclusion is just as important and necessary as being diverse, equitable, and inclusive. We come to these trainings and discussions from different places with different experiences; we can all share with and learn from one another.
- **Establishing company-wide Ground Rules for Conversations to foster productive, thoughtful, and curious discussions**
 - Creating a safe place for conversation enables each of us to grow as individuals and coworkers. It provides each of us opportunities to build connection with each other and fosters a sense of belonging for everyone. Ground Rules for Conversations establish

boundaries to help individuals feel safe sharing their thoughts, as well as control expectations of the actions and outcomes of conversations.

- **Requiring all managers to attend an annual DEI awareness and training session and incorporate what they have learned into daily team interactions**
 - In order for Cascade to be a diverse, equitable, and inclusive place to work, DEI must be pervasive and persistent. Managers lead their team by example and have a responsibility to represent Cascade’s DEI ideals in the work they do, the actions they take, and the words they say.

Goal 6: Promote inclusive communication

For communication to be effective, it needs to appropriately address all audiences for which it is intended. Inclusive language acknowledges diversity, conveys respect to all people, is sensitive to differences, and promotes equitable opportunities. The use of inclusive language plays an important role in promoting higher employee engagement, superior customer service and increased productivity—all important aspects of a positive work culture.

To promote inclusive communication, we are:

- **Maintaining an internal resource that highlights inclusive language best practices**
 - To foster a safe and inclusive place for productive conversations, we want our team members to understand what inclusive language means in the context of Cascade as a workplace. Establishing best practices supports the crafting of communications with intentionality for inclusion and demonstration of a commitment to Cascade’s values of ‘Do the Right Thing,’ ‘Put Others First,’ ‘Seek Shared Success,’ ‘Learn Constantly,’ and ‘Be Industrious.’
- **Highlighting the inclusive language best practices resource in new employee onboarding**
 - By introducing Cascade’s inclusive language best practices to new employees as a part of their onboarding, we are ensuring that inclusive language is an integral part of Cascade’s identity.
- **Adding an inclusive language section to our Style Guide and report quality checks**
 - Cascade Energy’s customer engagement team maintains several guides that outline Cascade’s brand voice, branding style, writing style, social media voice, and editing process. By incorporating an inclusive language section to these guides, it is clear to our team members that inclusivity is a priority and integral part of Cascade’s identity, and a necessity in all crafted communication, both internal and external facing.
 - Performing quality checks (QC) to all our work is a Cascade standard, and this will be applied to inclusive language as well. This is a step that will have a significant impact of reminding authors of our inclusive language practices and will help support mindfulness in addressing and including broad audiences.

Moving Forward

In order to achieve our goals, we will:

- continually track our progress and adjust, as needed
- analyze results to assist in assessing best practices
- review our plan annually to gauge progress and incorporate revisions as necessary
- continue to engage our entire team to ensure diversity and inclusivity remain an important part of our business model and culture.

By taking a strategic approach to diversity and inclusion, which includes aligning two-way communication, outreach, hiring, retention, and creating a culture of inclusivity based on our strategic goals and priorities, we are confident we will have a positive impact on the success of our workforce over the long-term.