



Freedom's
Way NATIONAL
HERITAGE AREA

DIVERSITY, EQUITY & INCLUSION STATEMENT

Adopted September 14, 2021

The Freedom's Way Heritage Association is committed to establishing and maintaining a diverse and inclusive community that collectively works to promote and enhance the natural, cultural, and historical resources of the Freedom's Way National Heritage Area for all: regardless of gender identity, race, ethnicity, national origin, religion, age, sexual orientation, education, or disability.

We are committed to a nondiscriminatory approach in all our work. We respect and value diverse life experiences and heritages and will work to ensure that all voices are valued and heard. The Freedom's Way Heritage Association will foster diversity, equity, and inclusion throughout the organization's work in support of our mission and vision. We will build upon the historical and intellectual legacy of freedom, democracy, conservation, and social justice that is part of our regional identity.

To this end, we will interpret and present the stories of all with equal respect, including those stories that have been ignored, forgotten, or misrepresented throughout the region's collective history, regardless of the pain and discomfort that results from that process. We will further develop interpretive programs and partnerships to assure that these stories are amplified.

The Freedom's Way Heritage Association reaffirms its commitment to inclusivity of all persons who wish to preserve and celebrate our collective heritage with fairness and respect, and to diverse representation in its governance and decision-making processes.

As part of building a diverse and inclusive community in both our organization, programs and projects, the Freedom's Way Heritage Association commits to:

- Supporting diversity, inclusion, and equity as connected to our mission and to ensure the well-being of our staff and the communities we serve.
- Acknowledging and dismantling any inequities within our policies, systems, programs, and services.
- Stepping back to listen to all voices.

- Engaging and including as broad a constituency as possible.
- Collaborating with fairness and respect.
- Identifying potential underlying, unquestioned biases that interfere with inclusiveness.
- Assessing how past and present systemic inequities might affect our work and determining how best to address these inequities in a way that is consistent with our mission.
- Holding ourselves accountable for the ways that our actions both actively and passively reinforce inequities.

The Freedom's Way Heritage Association is moving forward with the following action plans to help promote diversity and inclusion in our workplace and in our program services:

- Attracting, hiring, and retaining a diverse and multi-culturally sensitive staff and board.
- Improving engagement by promoting a culture of trust, support, cultural sensitivity, respect, and inclusion.
- Applying an equity lens in the planning and implementation of programmatic initiatives.
- Connecting with and building a diverse base of supporters and funders who will help us to achieve our mission.
- Requesting that grantees include indigenous land acknowledgement language in their projects and programs
- Furthering the mission of the Freedom's Way National Heritage Area by reaching, educating, and engaging a broad range of communities where the outcome is mutually beneficial for promoting and protecting the natural, cultural and historical resources of the region.