



# Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee Structure for Components

A FRAMEWORK FOR APTA MEMBERS

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# Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee Structure for Components

## A Framework for Creating and Maintaining a Component-Level Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee

APTA's strategic plan includes an objective to foster the long-term sustainability of the physical therapy profession by making APTA an inclusive organization that reflects the diversity of the society the profession serves.

The creation of DEI committees on the component level strengthens the reach and attainment of the mission of APTA: Building a community that advances the profession of physical therapy to improve the health of society.

### **APTA House of Delegates Positions and Charges Related to DEI**

Position: AMERICAN PHYSICAL THERAPY ASSOCIATION'S COMMITMENT TO DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION (HOD P06-19-43-16)

The American Physical Therapy Association supports efforts to increase diversity, equity, and inclusion to better serve the association, the profession, and society.

CHARGE: Increasing Professional Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in Clinical, Educational, and Research Settings (RC 24-19)

CHARGE: Increasing Professional Diversity (RC 11-17)

APTA uses the following to define "diversity, equity, and inclusion":

- **Diversity:** The representation of all our varied identities and differences — collectively and as individuals.
- **Equity:** Seeks to ensure fair treatment, equality of opportunity, and parity in access to information and resources for all.
- **Inclusion:** Builds a culture of belonging by actively inviting the contribution and participation of all people. ([Ford Foundation](#), 2018)

Sample initiatives that APTA supports:

- HOSA partnership (get involved at the state level to support the PT competition of that state's HOSA programs; serve as mentors)
- Support holistic review in admissions at the chapter level. Example if Ohio has 10 PT programs and 12 PTA programs, getting chapter support to adopt a holistic review process could go a long way.
- #PT Moves Me Campaign (both ambassador and member levels)

## How To Create a Component DEI Committee

The following steps are recommended for establishing a diversity committee after being used successfully by existing committee members and leaders.

### Attend a Local Meeting

Attend a local district or chapter meeting and disclose your interest at spearheading the creation of a diversity committee.

### Contact Your Chapter Leadership

Volunteer to start a diversity committee by contacting your chapter's executive director or president.

### Form Your Team

Identify –two or three colleagues to be part of the committee.

### Make a Motion

Following the governance structure of your component, approach component leadership, for example a chair of a committee at your chapter, to introduce a motion to start a diversity committee.

### Develop Your Policy and Procedure Manual

When your committee is approved by the board, create a policy and procedure manual. New York State's manual has been used as an example for chapters.

### Adjust the Motion

Once the motion is brought before the board, be ready to rewrite according to feedback, based on your chapter's protocol. For example, some DEI committees have been adopted first as subcommittees under the Practice or Membership Committee or have been approved as task forces.

### Start Activities

Congratulations! Once the committee is approved you can start coming up with ideas for the committee to implement.

## What Diversity Committees Do

Below are suggestions taken from efforts and tasks that some APTA components already have undertaken for organizing, initiating, and developing DEI initiatives. Many can be undertaken at more than one level and are noted under multiple categories. These are examples only to serve as guidance for newly established committees. Each component may have different structures and goals, so their committee activities may differ as well. For activities that involve providing physical therapist services, be aware of state and local regulations.

## National and Component Levels

- Speak to the Council of Chapter Presidents about areas of DEI to address.
- Encourage creation of a Diversity Committee at chapter and section levels.
- Create consistent platforms for and wide communication of component leadership positions, including an explanation of time, commitment, and compensation.
- Identify mentorship opportunities with APTA leaders, including APTA leaders of color and underrepresented or marginalized groups.
- Encourage minority ownership of physical therapy businesses.
- Collaborate with APTA national to develop DEI-related resources for the APTA website. Identify opportunities to develop or use existing APTA national resources.
- Invite students to attend APTA Board of Directors meetings to expose them to the processes, demands, and requirements of Board participation.
- Create CEU courses about DEI topics.
- Hire outside experts, if feasible, to help determine if there are areas for improvement in DEI within your chapter.

## Member Level

- Establish mentorship programs, for example, with practice owners of underrepresented racial and ethnic groups.
- Appoint a component liaison to field questions between practice owners and clinicians or students.
- Highlight “trailblazers of color,” such as practices, practice owners, and innovators.
- Provide awards to new graduates to attend conferences or other meetings.
- Provide membership scholarships.
- Encourage those from minority backgrounds to present at meetings and conference; for example, create “100 Leaders” program or other goal.
- Develop PT Ted Talks about DEI issues.
- Create workshops or webinars that award CEUs.
- Partner with the [National Association of Black Physical Therapists](#) and [HOSA-Future Health Professionals](#).
- Start a blog or podcast.
- Start a book or journal club.
- Provide resources for internationally trained PTs.
- Host social gatherings, such as Zoom happy hours to discuss diversity topics.

## Academia Level

- Review and, as needed, change admissions policies.
- Review and incorporate culturally diverse themes and threads throughout the curriculum.
- Continually evaluate “equity scores” in the program with goals of meeting equitable representation comparable to the racial make-up at the state or federal level whichever is higher.
- Participate in university career days.
- Partner with and advocate for prospective and incoming PT students of color.
- Encourage institutions to apply for [HRSA \(Health Resources and Services Administration\) scholarships and loans for disadvantaged students](#).
- Include and promote members of underrepresented minority groups in positions of leadership, including faculty, adjuncts, and on the Admissions Committee.
- Engage with PT and PTA academic programs, residencies, the APTA Fellowship in Education Leadership, and clinical educators. (e.g., leadership, Nominating Committee, awards and recognitions,

CE presentations, conferences.) Offer assistance with DEI-related initiatives or suggest strategies or resources to increase equity, diversity, and inclusion.

- Raise funds and provide scholarships to students to attend conferences or other meetings.
- Collect and study the demographic data of a region to assess and address needs.
- Host town halls to discuss topics on diversity and leadership.
- Promote a diverse slate of candidates for state licensure board appointments.

### **Clinic Level**

- Start a cultural diversity special interest group.
- Create staff workshops or webinars on cultural competence.
- Start a book or journal club that focuses on cultural competence.
- Encourage ownership and/or leadership of members of underrepresented minority groups in PT businesses.
- Discuss hiring processes and statistics with human resources staff and director of rehab.
- Provide educational content on diversity and disparities to leadership and staff.
- Start a blog or podcast.
- Review or create a cultural competence plan.
- Publish a monthly staff newsletter.
- Participate in local health fairs, specifically in communities with health disparities.

### **Community Level**

- Volunteer to speak at preschool programs such as Headstart.
- Volunteer to speak to middle and high school students.
- Get involve with APTA's PT Ambassador or PT Moves Me.
- Mentor middle and high school students.
- Get involved with youth community groups such as Girl Scouts and Boy Scouts, YMCA, and Boys & Girls Clubs.
- Identify a local corporate sponsor.
- Make cultural health presentations to health care providers.
- Get involved in faith-based organizations.
- Get involved in pro bono clinics.
- Participate in interprofessional visits for home health; for example, with physicians, pharmacists, occupational therapists, and speech-language pathologists.
- Provide services in public gathering spaces such as mosques, temples, churches, and rec centers.
- Donate money or equipment to those in underserved communities.
- Partner with organizations and community-facing groups such as AARP and local departments of health.

## Contact Info

If you have any questions, need guidance, want support, or just need someone to talk to, feel free to contact any the following APTA members or staff: below or DEI APTA team leaders Carmen Elliott and Steven Chesbro (DEI@apta.org):

### Members

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