

# THE HUMANE LEAGUE ®

## DEI Report



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## A note from the president



**VICKY BOND**  
President,  
The Humane League



It's been three years since we conducted our culture and climate survey at The Humane League (THL), and in that time, we've worked hard on executing our Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) initiatives. This report highlights the work we have done since the survey, the progress we've made, what has gone well, and areas that are still in progress or have not gone quite as planned.

We've made progress on a large number of initiatives across the organization, and I'm proud of the work we've accomplished in a relatively short period. We confronted the work head-on and evolved our programs, practices, and ourselves to work towards our DEI vision. As an organization that prides itself on our culture and core values—including inclusivity and effectiveness—we evaluate our work regularly to ensure it's creating the impact we're aiming to deliver. Over time, we will

continue measuring outcomes to assess the effectiveness of the changes we've implemented in our practices and programs. That's not to say there haven't been challenges in this work. As the DEI landscape has rapidly evolved, we've needed to adjust our strategy to balance our legal responsibilities as a charity with the recommendations given to us. Alongside this, we have needed to update our DEI vision to clearly define the purpose of our DEI work at THL and ensure our organization is firmly staying within mission-related topics. Throughout it all we continue to strive to learn and adapt, to own our mistakes, and to be accountable for our actions.

This work is never done, and for it to be successful, ownership of DEI must be felt by everyone at THL. The next stage in our work is to integrate and develop our DEI strategy for 2025, embedding it throughout the organization and monitoring measurable metrics. I'm grateful for the incredible team of people I get to work alongside every day, making a difference for animals around the world. Ensuring that team members, volunteers, supporters, and member organizations feel they belong at THL and can contribute to our mission is crucial to the success in ending the abuse of animals raised for food.



# *defining* **TERMS**

**IN ADDITION TO CLARIFYING OUR DEI VISION**, we identified the need to have a shared definition for key terms we use in our DEI work. Going forward, we will be using these definitions adapted from the [Cornell University Glossary of DEI terminology](#) and [LifeLabs DEI Playbook](#):

## **ALLYSHIP**

An active and consistent practice of unlearning and re-evaluating, in which a person who does not identify as a member of a marginalized group seeks to operate in solidarity with a marginalized group.

## **ANTIRACISM**

Any idea that suggests that racial groups are equals in all their apparent differences—that there is nothing right or wrong with any racial group (adapted from Ibram X. Kendi.).

## **BELONGING**

The feeling of security and support when there is a sense of acceptance, inclusion, and identity for a member of a certain group. It is when an individual can bring their authentic self to work.

## **BIAS**

An opinion, feeling, or influence that strongly favors one side in an argument or one item in a group or series. A preconceived negative opinion or attitude about a group of people who possess common characteristics or cultural experiences.

## **DIVERSITY**

Presence of differences, including but not limited to race, ethnicity, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, age, socioeconomic class/status, (dis)ability, nationality, body size, spirituality or religion, etc.

## **EQUITY**

Individualized resources and support that ensure everyone has access to opportunities and is set up for success.

## **INCLUSION**

Creating systems and taking individual action so that people are invited to participate, have access to information and opportunities, and can actively engage as their authentic selves.



# *our diversity, equity, and inclusion*

# VISION

**WE ARE BUILDING AN ORGANIZATION, AND A MOVEMENT,** where individuals of diverse identities and lived experiences belong, are valued, and have what they need to thrive.

**THE NEED TO BUILD AN EQUITABLE AND INCLUSIVE ORGANIZATION,** and movement, stands on its own. It is the right thing to do. To be inclusive is one of The Humane League's core values because we, as an organization and as individuals, believe in welcoming, respecting, and empowering people—appreciating the value that every individual brings to our organization and our movement.

**WHILE THE HUMANE LEAGUE'S MISSION IS TO END THE ABUSE OF ANIMALS RAISED FOR FOOD,** our team recognizes that people, too, are the victims of industrial agriculture's greed and cruelty. Vulnerable workers are exploited by the profit-driven industry. Industrial agriculture is a primary cause of environmental destruction, climate change, and both chronic and pandemic diseases. We know the burden of these disasters is disproportionately felt by the most vulnerable and disadvantaged, including women, children, ethnic minorities, poor communities, migrants or displaced persons, older populations, and those with underlying health conditions. We understand that our mission will not be fully achieved if we leave behind a food system that includes cruelty or exploitation—of animals, people, or our planet.



# *The Humane League's* **COMMITMENT**

**BUILDING A STRONG, DIVERSE, AND EQUITABLE MOVEMENT** where all individuals are welcome and accepted, can contribute fully, feel valued and heard, and can thrive. As an organization, we commit to embracing and working across differences, recognizing that our effectiveness depends on it. We know that The Humane League will not end the abuse of animals raised for food without expanding our community. We hire people who share our goals and mission, not necessarily our viewpoints or backgrounds.

**EMBEDDING VALUES OF DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION AT** all levels, alongside our policies, processes, programs, and interactions, while also balancing and complying with legal requirements.

**LEARNING AND GROWING** beyond what we know now. We recognize that fostering equity and inclusion is an ongoing endeavor that requires continual examination, investment, and resources. We all commit to give and receive feedback and will listen and learn with humility.

**EXAMINING OUR PRACTICES AND BEHAVIORS**, to maintain an unbiased workplace. We engage in internal dialogue, challenge assumptions, update our views, and evolve our practices to ensure we are living up to our commitments.

**DELIVERING EQUITY AND INCLUSION IN RECRUITMENT, RETENTION, AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PRACTICES** to create lasting diversity within our organization at all levels.

**OUR COMMUNICATIONS WILL REFLECT OUR DEI VALUES**, amplifying the voices of a diverse group of individuals, using inclusive language, and ensuring our visuals authentically represent our diverse community. As individuals of THL, we are all fundamentally responsible and accountable for DEI at The Humane League.

# THL'S DEI *journey*

**IN 2021**, THL started a multi-year partnership with a consulting organization to further support our diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) work. This work began by surveying the current staff at the time on culture and climate, from which 65 recommendations were given. Staff then received training and support in the implementation of the recommendations. As of July 2024, we have been able to achieve the majority of the recommendations, with some continuing to be ongoing and a small proportion (around 15%) stalling due to unforeseen challenges or strategic decisions not to proceed.



# *Our recommendations*

**THIS REPORT HIGHLIGHTS THE WORK WE HAVE DONE AT THL** in maintaining an inclusive and equitable culture, the steps we've taken to live our value of diversity, and the challenges we've faced. The recommendations can be split into three distinct areas:

**THE FIRST** is relating to managers, so that we deliver a culture where everyone feels they can thrive and can do their best work. These included:

- Creating a feedback culture and training all managers and team members on giving and receiving feedback.
- Providing management with robust training and mentorship opportunities, especially around inclusive hiring, retention, and management strategies.
- Empowering managers in their roles, performing compensation analysis, and/or sharing salary information.
- Training senior leadership and providing accountability at the leadership level.

**SECONDLY**, the recommendations focused on increasing transparency and creating more equitable People and Operation practices across the organization, including:

- Creating and embedding a commitment to THL's DEI values into competencies for every role within the organization and into performance evaluations.
- Updating the annual performance review process, including a reintroduction of 360 (peer) reviews with training and a DEI lens, and training all employees on its implementation.

- Funding and supporting staff affinity groups that increase support and representation for team members 40+; parents/caregivers; persons with a disability; folks who identify as LGBTQIA+; Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC); and global employees.
- Creating and transparently socializing THL's job architecture. This includes clearly defining each role's scope, responsibilities, performance metrics, and pathways to promotion and advancement, ensuring this job architecture is included in all aspects of staff management and performance evaluation.



- Reviewing all internal and cross-team processes with a DEI lens, with special attention to standardization wherever possible across teams/the organization at large.
- Developing accountability mechanisms, such as reporting structures and processes for DEI-related complaints.
- Equipping staff and processes with ways to address microaggressions and tokenizing.
- Exploring additional mental health resources for staff.

**FINALLY**, there were recommendations to enhance clearer decision-making and promote further DEI work, including:

- Restructuring the current DEI committee in a way that aligns with THL’s goals and recruiting, training, and developing committee members to lead the work and hold the organization accountable.
- Establishing and modeling a DEI Community of Practice within teams across the organization.
- Considering the hiring of a VP of DEI.
- Including staff in decisions that will affect their daily work.

- Seeking opportunities for early, “bottom-up” (rather than top-down) feedback about decisions that will affect overall work or roles within the organization.
- Drafting a DEI plan that can be embedded in THL’s overall strategic plan.
- Periodically publish a diversity report to set goals, track progress, and encourage equitably applied measures of accountability at the leadership level and throughout the organization.
- Vocalizing individual and organizational commitments to racial justice and equity.



## What's gone well

The People team has continued to live our values while ensuring transparency, equity, and opportunity at THL. This includes revamping the hiring process by advertising roles more broadly to reach more diverse communities, overcoming any unconscious biases through training, and creating a transparent salary structure that is viewable to candidates who may apply for our roles. Our salary compensation philosophy is now based on a candidate's years of experience and is clearly defined for each role, including the scope and potential advancement. We are also now offering employer-paid online therapy through BetterHelp because we recognize not all staff can access affordable therapy through our medical insurance.

More recently, the People team moved our annual performance review process to a quarterly performance review and stepback conversation, which includes 360 reviews from two peers who they work closely with or manage. This change allows for more regular feedback throughout the year to address any areas for growth or improvement more intentionally, beyond 1-1 check-ins. The next stage is to include more training, from a DEI perspective, in undertaking the performance reviews.

To increase a sense of belonging we have set up and funded Affinity groups such as groups for parents/caregivers, staff who are 40+ years of age, The Ability League, LGBTQIA+, and the Multicultural Matrix. We've introduced **RAPID**®s for every team as a tool for transparent decision-making and to ensure appropriate input in key decisions.



**TEAMS THAT WORK WITH** our volunteers, supporters, and member groups have integrated DEI initiatives into their outreach such as:

- Using closed captions for all our virtual TownHalls for supporters, to make it more accessible.
- Creating a more inclusive environment at our events by adhering to our Safer Spaces policy, normalizing sharing pronouns, incorporating land acknowledgments, and enabling captions in virtual meetings.
- We've developed goals to be more intentional about recruiting BIPOC-led organizations into the Animal Policy Alliance (APA) so that their work could be supported and so our other APA member groups can learn from their expertise and strategies.
- We take into account DEI impacts in our policy assessment rubric to determine which policy ideas we will support.
- To make our campaigns more inclusive, we run our strategies, tactics, and messaging through a DEI lens when making decisions for our campaigns.
- We've worked on creating assets, materials, and resources for companies and for the public that are more accessible, like considering color combinations and text sizes on our materials.

## • *What's on-going*

Communication is key and impacts every aspect of our work. We've been actively working to create a feedback culture that encourages open, transparent, and continuous communication between team members by training all managers and team members on giving and receiving feedback. The new quarterly 360 performance reviews are a formal way to give feedback, and our 1:1 documents include weekly feedback for both the manager and their direct report. However, we'll continue to focus on developing feedback skills, as there is still a need for team members to get more comfortable with direct communication and providing easy-to-understand and actionable feedback promptly. This is coupled with increasing the comfort level of those receiving the feedback and getting to a place where feedback is expected. This work will require strong accountability across managers and all team members and as an organization, we will need to find a way to easily track progress on this.

All new managers are trained through the Management Training Center and also get training from the Senior Leadership Team as part of manager training conducted throughout the year. We also have monthly manager meetings for learning and development, and to empower managers in their roles. This is

now led by our People team and includes training on feedback skills, retention of staff, and effective management strategies. In the Senior Leadership Team, we have also had training related to DEI and have developed an equity filter that we use in our decision-making ([see Appendix I](#)).

Across the organization, departments have voluntary Communities of Practice where we learn and grow together in our teams on DEI-related issues. These are informing strategies, problem-solving, and innovation, and help the team develop professionally and personally. However, we're hearing feedback that some team members are less engaged than others, and while there's learning, there are not always tangible actions taken. As we look to 2025, once we have a fully staffed People team, we will evaluate the next iteration of the Communities of Practice.

## • *What's stalled*

The DEI committee was revamped and renamed as the JEDI (Justice, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion) committee. We started with 10 new members, including members of leadership and the Board of Directors. They were all trained and developed their charter and goals. They achieved a number of initiatives, including sharing input on the **RAPID**<sup>®</sup> decision-making training and the COVID policy for in-person events, alongside individual professional development. They also reviewed the all-staff survey. Due to bandwidth, staff turnover, and individual values alignment, several members resigned from the committee over time, which put extra pressure on those who continued. The JEDI Committee was set up with rotating leadership every three months, which led to challenges in leadership continuity. The few remaining members reported feeling frustration

about the committee's guidance not always being taken and expressed concern about how they would be able to hold leadership accountable (as was part of the committee's charter). At this moment in time, the committee is paused while we decide the next steps.

This highlights where we have encountered the greatest challenges with our DEI work, due to the ever-changing climate of DEI work in the US and globally, and the new risks associated with certain initiatives. As a 501(c)(3), we must minimize risks that may jeopardize the organization, while also ensuring we are a diverse, equitable, and inclusive workplace. For example, THL's policy is that all affinity groups are open to all employees, not just those who may specifically identify with a particular group. This is in line with legal requirements that all employees are afforded the same opportunities regardless of how they identify. To ensure we're in good legal standing as an organization, we made this policy even though the JEDI committee had expressed a contrary opinion when giving feedback.

**AS AN ORGANIZATION WE HAVE REALIGNED THE DEI WORK** to focus on where we can impact DEI at THL, with our interactions within the animal protection movement, and with our supporters. With our staff, our policies, processes, programs, and interactions, we must endeavor to ensure a diverse community that is equitable and inclusive. As a tax-exempt organization working on a critical justice issue—fighting to end the abuse of animals raised for food—we have a responsibility to use our funds and messaging to forward that mission. Where there has been ambiguity in advocating for causes beyond our mission that are not related to farmed animal suffering or the impacts of factory farming on the environment and communities, internal conflict has arisen. The ambiguity came, in part, from our DEI vision written in 2021, which included that we would be working to dismantle all forms of oppression. This lofty goal did not accurately represent what is possible in our field of expertise. However, our new vision ([see page 5](#)) clarifies the work we will be doing at THL.

As a group of advocates, we want to push for a better, more just world, and we are an organization with a clear mission. We are not the only organization to have felt the pull of things beyond the scope of our immediate mission but, with a clearer vision for our DEI work at THL, we are continuing on our DEI journey with more specificity and recognizing that progress can be slower than we would like it to be. We have also adopted a communications policy that limits advocacy in the workplace to mission and work-related topics, such as factory farming.

We had the intention of hiring a DEI professional for the People team, but due to staff departures, this was not possible. Now, as we seek to move forward in embedding DEI in the organization's DNA, we want everyone to feel a sense of ownership rather than believe a specific team or team member is solely responsible. For this reason, we are not going to hire a dedicated DEI role at this time. The next organization-wide step is integrating DEI into our goals and OKRs across teams. To ensure accountability, we will develop a DEI audit tool to assess how we're doing, such as the one used by [LifeLabs](#).

# SUMMARY

**WE'VE EXECUTED MANY DEI INITIATIVES** at THL over the past 2 years, delivering equitable and transparent practices and processes, and ultimately working to create a more diverse community.



# *Our next steps*

- Integrating DEI into our organizational strategy in 2025, by ensuring our goals and Objectives and Key Results (OKRs) encompass our DEI work across teams during strategic planning in Q3 and Q4.
- Developing consistent metrics to monitor the progress we're making in outcomes beyond our all-staff survey.
- We are deciding on the next steps for the JEDI committee, which is currently paused.
- Developing a re-fresh training program on behaviors of inclusion, feedback, and skillful conflict and collaboration.
- Developing a DEI audit tool to use for reporting and accountability.
- Evolving the Communities of Practice to re-engage staff and create alignment across teams.

**DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION WORK IS NEVER FULLY DONE.** We know that our mindset and work must be centered around continuous learning and development for our vision to be fully realized. As a team of compassionate activists, we will continue to create an equitable and effective animal protection movement, together.



## APPENDIX I - SLT EQUITY FILTER

### PRE-WORK: HOW MIGHT WE MAKE THIS A **FAIR PROCESS**?

- What is the main question, problem, or decision you're wrestling with?
- What parts of the decision do you need input on? How will the input be used to inform the decision?
- Who provides input? Why?
- What is up for debate, and what isn't?
- Have you sought out perspectives from people impacted and people who will disagree with the proposed decision?
- Who is the decision-maker(s)? If the decision-maker(s) is not the same person driving or owning the process, how will the decision-maker(s) and process owner coordinate?
- What is the timeline for the decision? At what points will input be gathered?
- What criteria (values, guiding principles) will be used to decide?

### EQUITY FILTER

- Can we clearly articulate the "why" behind this decision?
- Is this change reversible? If not, how might we approach it with caution?
- What groups will be impacted by this decision? (e.g., race/ethnicity, gender, sexuality, ability, caregiver status, geographic location, age, economic background, education, veg\* status, etc.)

- Have the groups who will be impacted had an opportunity to share input?
- Who will disagree with this decision and why? How are we mitigating those impacts?
- What outcomes are we expecting to see? How will we measure that / get feedback on our success?
- What are the possible unintended consequences of this decision? How will we know? How are we mitigating those?
- Does this decision create more power for SLT or more power for other people?
- How will this decision impact THL 10 years from now?
- What data or evidence do we have to support this decision? Is the data inclusive and representative of all groups impacted by the decision?
- Can we create a plan to obtain it?
- Do we consider the data we have and transparently share where we are making assumptions / where there are gaps in the data?
- Is the data so important that we can't move forward, or should we make a bet?