

# SCOPE OF WORK - INCLUSIVE LANGUAGE GUIDE

*Applications due: June 7, 2021*

The National Forest Foundation seeks to create inclusive language guidelines for internal and external use. As part of NFF's diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) work, the organization has identified the need for consistent language use for our communications, programs, and the communities and people that participate in them. The contractor will create a concise document detailing non-biased language standards including but not limited to words, phrasing, and proper usage of inclusive language relevant to NFF's work.

## **Project Objectives**

- Identify common phrases, words, and language used in NFF's external communications and conservation programs that could be more inclusive.
- Using recent and reputable research and widely accepted standards, create guidelines for common phrases, words, and language used in DEI work and NFF's communications.
- Incorporate guidelines into a concise document (2-6 pages) that can be updated as language evolves.
- Establish a review process and cadence to keep documentation updated.

## **Content and Examples**

1. Use sensitive language only when relevant: do not discuss or label someone's age, gender, sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, ability or other descriptors unless relevant.
  - Example: Use specific descriptors when discussing DEI goals, "We have increased partnerships with Hispanic-led organizations by 28% over the last year."
  - Example: Use gender neutral language, "folks", "people", "all". Avoid "guys", "girls", "ladies and gentlemen".
2. Respect language preferences: use the pronouns, descriptors, and terms preferred by the individual or group.
  - Example: Using they/them for gender non-binary individuals.
  - Example: Using Native American land names when working with Tribal partners.
3. Put people first: focus on the person not their characteristics (unless otherwise indicated by the individual).
  - Example: Saying person with a disability instead of disabled person.
  - Note that there are exceptions based on preferences (Asian Americans, European Americans, etc.)
4. Respect and reference race, culture, and ethnicity accurately:
  - Example: The letter B in Black should be capitalized.
  - Example: Do not use outdated, offensive terms like "Orientals".

The NFF has reviewed and been inspired by the APA Bias-free Language Guidelines: <https://apastyle.apa.org/style-grammar-guidelines/bias-free-language>

## **Budget**

Expense will be evaluated based on proposal, delivered product, and contractor rate. Budget will not exceed \$2,500. There may be additional funding available to work with the same contractor to update guidelines after 12-24 months as language evolves.

## **Proposed Timeline**

- Candidate applications due by June 7
- Candidate selected by June 18
- First draft of language guidelines due on July 16
- Review and revise draft guidelines with NFF input from July 16-August 13
- Final version of guidelines due on August 13

## **Examples of NFF-Specific Needs**

- Diverse youth: the NFF often references “diverse youth” or “diverse communities” to describe program participants. This guide will recommend how to describe the specific communities and individuals that our programs serve and work with.
- Tribal partners: the NFF often references “tribal partners” or “indigenous youth/individuals” to describe program, project, or collaborative participants. This document will recommend how best to identify stakeholders with indigenous backgrounds and/or identities.
- Accessibility: the NFF often uses the words, “accessibility,” and “accessible” to describe a number of distinct priorities: physical access to trails/public lands, accessibility to recreation opportunities for those with disabilities, discrimination and emotional safety in the outdoors for marginalized communities, etc. This guide will identify how to accurately use this word and phrase and if applicable, recommend alternatives for other contexts.

## **Other Notes**

To date, the NFF has internally published a communications style guide. The style guide includes recommendations for general grammar, language usage, and phrasing. These inclusive language guidelines would be used in conjunction to the current style guide to create consistency in the way NFF staff and Board members communicate both internally and externally.

While many inclusive language guidelines are widely used and accepted, the NFF will make intentional linguistic choices in an effort to create consistency across all programs and departments of the organization. The NFF would like to have intentional justification and reasoning for major shifts in language, wording, and phrasing.

While this document will be internal to the organization, it will inform external organizational vision and mission statements. In addition to this work, the NFF is currently working with an external firm to create and facilitate meaningful DEI awareness and long-term change within the organization.

The NFF is the registered 501(c)3 registered nonprofit partner of the U.S. Forest Service and does not advocate for specific policies, candidates, or political opinions. The NFF works with individuals, companies, and communities with a variety of interests and must remain non-biased.

## **About the National Forest Foundation**

The National Forest Foundation works on behalf of the American public to inspire personal and meaningful connections to our National Forests. By directly engaging Americans and leveraging private and public funding, the NFF leads forest conservation efforts and promotes responsible recreation. Each year the NFF restores fish and wildlife habitat, facilitates common ground, plants trees in areas affected by fires, insects and disease and improves recreational opportunities. The NFF believes our National Forests and all they offer are an American treasure and are vital to the health of our communities. Learn more at [nationalforests.org](http://nationalforests.org).

## **Application Instructions and NFF Contact**

Please send a website, resume, or CV and 2-3 examples of relevant work to the below contact by June 7, 2021 to be considered.

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