

Executive Summary

Maine Land Trust Network Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Survey

BACKGROUND

The purpose of this survey was to learn from the land trust community how MLTN might best support you and your organization as you engage in diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) initiatives. The survey, completed in March of 2021, asked fundamental questions to inform the processes and resources we will develop and share among land trusts. A total of 73 individuals responded to the survey; 41 separate entities were represented, and 20 respondents were anonymous. We recognize that different people and groups have different needs and are at different stages in their DEI work. Additionally, we recognize that there may be current barriers and challenges to participating in DEI work. Our goal is to meet groups wherever they are on the spectrum. Thank you for your participation and patience.

SURVEY SUMMARY

1. Does your organization have paid staff? (N=73)

Of seventy-three responses, 93% reported that they have paid staff. 7% reported they are volunteers. Consequently, the results of this survey may not fully reflect the needs of all-volunteer groups.

2. Is your organization doing any work focused on diversity, equity and inclusion? (N=73)

MLTN recognizes the diversity of needs to assist land trusts in their DEI journey. While the majority of land trusts and organizations are invested at some level in DEI work (85%), others are eager to start the conversation (15%).

3. If not, what suggestions, information and resources would be most helpful to your organization to do this work effectively? (N=22 responses)

There are twenty-two survey respondents who indicate that their organizations are not yet doing DEI work. Those respondents indicated that help in the following categories would be useful.

Resources (12 responses) <i>Articles, consultant lists, demographic data, etc</i>	54.5%
Case Studies (7 responses) <i>Examples of what's being done and what's working, especially in Maine</i>	31.8%
Big Picture/Navigating options (6 responses) <i>Learning where your organization is and where it might go with DEI work</i>	27.3%
Ongoing Services and Support (6 responses) <i>Programs or services available to Maine land trusts on an ongoing basis</i>	27.3%

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¹ From Question 1 and 2, there were 73 responses, but the survey did not limit responses to one particular organization. In some cases, there were multiple responses from the same organization.

4. If yes, how are you doing it? (N=59 responses)

There are fifty-nine survey respondents that are currently engaged in DEI work. The majority of these responses report being involved in multiple efforts named in the table below across four categories of DEI engagement.

Book/Discussion Group/Sharing Resources (37 responses)	62.7%
Started a Committee (25 responses)	42.4%
DEI Trainings (24 responses)	40.7%
Projects that Support DEI (10 responses)	16.9%

5. Is there anything else your organization would like to do (what suggestions, information and resources would be most helpful for your organization)? (N=50 responses)

There are fifty respondents at different stages in their DEI journey who would be interested in pursuing further learning with support in the following four categories (see table in Question 3 for category definitions).

Ongoing Services and Support (18 responses)	36%
Resources (16 responses)	32%
Big Picture/Navigating Options (10 responses)	20%
Case Studies (6 responses)	12%

6. Do you have questions about diversity, equity and inclusion work that have not been named in the previous questions? (N=66 responses)

Survey respondents were invited to freely share their ideas in this open-ended question. While fifty-two respondents reported they had no further inquiries related to the previous survey questions, fourteen respondents shared additional questions relating to communication, connections and desired information around DEI topics.

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7. (Optional Question) How can DEI work benefit land trusts and your current/future work? (N=47 responses)

Survey respondents were invited to freely share their ideas in this open-ended question. Most agree that DEI work has the potential to benefit land trusts in a variety of ways. Their insights can be classified in the following categories.

DEI work will broaden our relevance within our community (26 responses)	55.3%
DEI work will help us move toward more equitable access to the land (19 responses)	40.4%
DEI work will make us a stronger, more sustainable organization (15 responses)	32%
We will benefit from the wisdom of other cultures (6 responses)	12.8%
Not sure or don't see benefit (5 responses)	10.6%

Conclusions

1. Many land trusts and other environmental nonprofits in Maine are currently thinking about how they can engage in DEI work at their organizations; some are already well along into the work.
2. While some organizations are already deeply engaged, many still need help getting started. There is a strong desire among land trusts to work together and support each other in this journey.
3. There are many opportunities for MLTN to support Maine land trusts who want to authentically do DEI work. This could include:
 - Looking at the big picture and navigating through the options available.
 - Resources available on DEI terminology, Maine demographic information, reading lists.
 - Case Studies of what others have tried, lessons they've learned, and potential applications in Maine.
 - Ongoing services and support

These initiatives are about empowering others to do the work necessary to deeply and personally engage with the offerings.

We thank everyone who took the time to respond to our survey. Your honesty, candor, and insights, borne of experience, have set the groundwork to carry this important work forward. We look forward to sharing our ideas with you in the coming month