

**DIVERSITY,
EQUITY, AND
INCLUSION
ACTION PLAN
FORTHON™ 2027**





THON is committed to **improving the culture of our organization** and **removing inherently discriminatory practices** through education, outreach, and structural changes. We aim to create a **more diverse and inclusive environment** with equitable opportunities for every Penn State student and community member through providing a DEI portfolio with resources and the Establishing Equity Through Conversation (EETC) program.



This document serves to hold all THON 2027 Volunteers and its leadership to a higher standard in their commitment to enhancing diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI). Updates may be made throughout the year as more actions are taken or changes are needed to align with the direction of THON's DEI and to continue to make improvements. The most up-to-date version of this document can be found on thon.org/documents.

If edits are made, notifications will be sent via the THON Volunteer Update. To contribute to these continued efforts, please email dei.projects@thon.org.

DEI Definitions:

DIVERSITY- All the ways in which people differ, including, but not limited to race, gender, age, national origin, self-identification, religion, ability, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, education, and language.

EQUITY- The practice of acknowledging barriers and providing resources intended to overcome biases and imbalances, with specific recognition that not all people require the same accommodations.

INCLUSION- The active creation of environments in which all people can be involved, valued, and respected.

Accessibility:

Ensure that THON is accessible to all in the community.

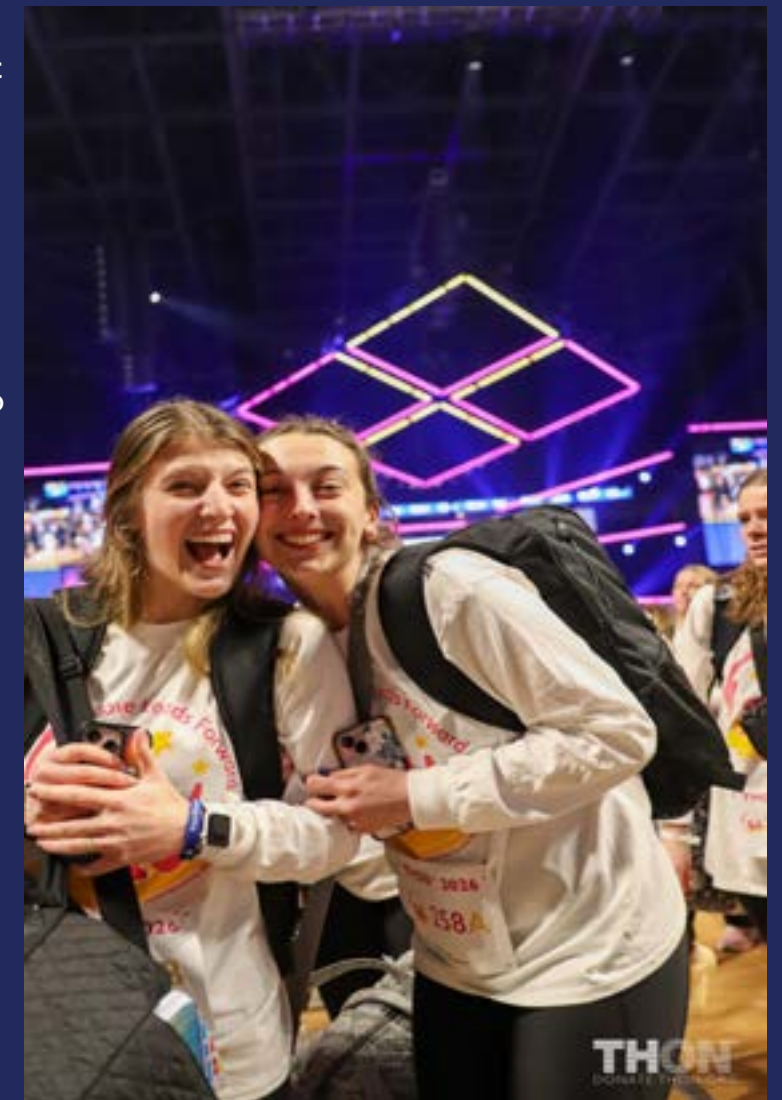
- The accessibility section of the **Spector Guide** will be updated detailing points of access and necessary information for Pre-THON Events and THON Weekend.
- THON's Leadership will leverage expertise from the **Penn State Student Disability Resources Office** to assess the level of accessibility for THON Volunteers and supporters related to facilities, language barriers, sensory experiences, and available accommodations.
- Special Events, Event Safety, and DEI Captains will meet to increase the accessibility of Pre-THON Events.
- Any meeting or event held virtually will be available with **closed captions**.
- **Dancer registration materials** will be reviewed by THON Leadership, ensuring all necessary information is gathered in an accurate and sensitive manner.

• **THON's Family Relations Committee** will spearhead efforts in linguistic accessibility for families, volunteers, and other stakeholders. These efforts will include a focus group aimed at providing translation and interactive services to ESL and multilingual community members.

• The Captain and Committee Member Applications will include a form for applicants to request any accommodation needed for a student to carry out the duties of a position on a given committee. The directors on the DEI Team will work to find reasonable accommodations. These responses are strictly viewed by the Communications Director, Volunteer Logistics Director, and Executive Director.

• **Physical stature** will not play a role in choosing committee members for any THON committee. Volunteers should apply based on interest and without inhibition

• A financial burden shall not be imposed to turn away anyone desiring to partake in the THON community.



Accountability:

Hold THON's Leadership accountable for DEI initiatives.

- The **DEI Focus Group** is made up of DEI Communications Captains, the Communications Director, and the Executive Director. This team utilizes both project and conversation-based approaches to increase awareness of inclusivity and equity efforts.
- The **DEI Projects Focus Group** is where captains from each committee who are working on DEI related tasks meet bi-weekly to discuss their various projects and actionable items to implement within their captain committees. These meetings will be open discussions to further DEI initiatives and create change in the THON Community. These meetings will be managed by the DEI Projects Coordinator.
- Establishing Equity Through Conversation Program (**EETC**)
- The **DEI Programs Focus Group** is open to Captains from all Committees. The DEI Programs Coordinator will prepare volunteers within this focus group to lead DEI discussions within their respective Captain Committees. Meetings will be held biweekly for 1 hour where Captains will learn about new topics and discuss relevant DEI topics in the THON setting.
- Committee Member (CM) **DEI Liaisons** will be chosen from each committee to lead DEI discussions within their CM meetings. These meetings will occur monthly and will cover essential DEI topics relating to volunteer interactions.
- All discussions within captain and committee meetings will be considered **Circle of Trust** and will not be shared with anyone outside those meetings.
- All THON Volunteers will be required to sign the **Code of Conduct** and will be held to outlined expectations.
- The **Code of Conduct** will be updated, working to effectively protect volunteers and reframe expectations.
- Feedback from the **Penn State and THON Communities** will be requested throughout the year in various forms of communication, such as community meetings or surveys. Individuals can also submit feedback at any time through the anonymous reporting form, which can be found at think.thon.org.
- The DEI Programs and Projects Captain emails will be made widely available early on and throughout the year for any and all questions related to THON's DEI programming or campus DEI resources related to the inquiry. They will be checked often to ensure no concern goes unheard.
- Committee Member meetings will be **capped at two hours** each week out of respect for the CMs' busy schedules. If a captain is violating this expectation, committee members can report using the anonymous reporting form (linked above).

Applications & Interviews:

Utilizing volunteer applications and interviews to continue THON's DEI initiatives.

- All THON Volunteers (Directors, Captains, and Committee Members) will be asked a **DEI-related question** during their interviews.
- For THON 2027, these questions were developed by the **Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Focus Group (DEIFG)**. DEI oriented questions are reviewed and changed yearly to reflect an ever-shifting understanding of equitable programming.
- **Specific attire** will not be an interview requirement for any position, and attire will not impact an applicant's chances of becoming a THON Volunteer. Clear and consistent messaging regarding attire for interviewees will be provided.
- A **pronoun field** is included in the personal information section on applications. All forms will explicitly state what gathered pronoun information will be used for.
- All interviews will take place in a **building and location** that is accessible to all.
- Committee Member applicants have the opportunity to disclose any accommodations they may need to participate in THON activities while completing their application.
- Position/committee descriptions written to aid applicants will be written with neither bias nor the intention of ableism.
- The financial responsibilities of the volunteer positions will be clearly outlined but emphasized to not be a burden. All volunteers can seek aid financially in any role through filling out a form requested from the Volunteer Logistics Director at volunteer.logistics@thon.org.



Community Relations:

Build and strengthen relationships between THON and the community, with the understanding that THON has a significant impact on the Penn State Community at large.

- THON Leadership will meet with interested **student leaders** from other Penn State organizations to discuss how to amplify their voices and foster relationships with mutual benefit.
- THON Leadership will continue to develop mutually beneficial relationships with resource **centers at University Park.**
- THON's DEI Captains will reach out to centers and organizations around campus to compile a list of resources for THON volunteers to be accessed at **think.thon.org.**
- During DEI Focus Group meetings, leaders from different campus DEI centers will be asked to speak on their mission and how their group might serve as a resource to volunteers.
- THON will advertise community events through the THON Chair Update, the THON Volunteer Update, DEI Newsletter, and will be discussed in CM meetings. Events that are educational in nature and focus on DEI at Penn State will be prioritized.
- THON's PR Team will create outreach materials for social media platforms that emphasize the organization's diversity and support for a diverse community. This will ensure that no volunteer feels left out or deterred based on their personal identity.
- Members of the Hospitality Committee maintain relationships with **community food pantries** and other organizations to support their missions.



Equity Programming:

Reduce implicit and explicit bias among THON Volunteers.

- **Committee-specific programming and training** will be implemented when possible.
- **Guest speakers** who are experts in their field will be consulted for input on relevant programming.
- **Educational programs and discussions** relating to DEI will be held biweekly for captains and in monthly committee meetings.
- The captains in charge of these conversations will be members of the **DEI Programs Focus Group** and will be picked by their Committee Director on the basis of interest and position aptitude.
- All captains with committees will have a **DEI liaison** who will help facilitate conversations in meetings.
- Captains with committee members will receive guidance in selecting a DEI liaison committee member.
- Topics covered will include mental health, gender and sexual diversity, disabilities, racial, religious, and ethnic backgrounds, intersectionality, biases, ageism, and more.

Organization Relations:

Provide additional support for cultural, new, and/or smaller organizations by promoting inter-organization collaboration and developing additional resources.

- Provide additional support for cultural, new, and/or smaller organizations by promoting inter-organization collaboration and developing additional resources.
- Increased support will be given to both cultural and new organizations interested in joining THON, with the goal of ensuring a sense of belonging and success.
- New and multicultural organizations are also given opportunities to showcase their THON efforts through social media initiatives and organization highlights.
- Support may come in various forms such as increased communication from a liaison, mentoring from established organizations, and sharing available and unique resources.
- Incentives unrelated to the total fundraised will be created for cultural, new, and small organizations.
- Specific liaisons will be assigned to new and multicultural organizations. They will work to ensure that new and multicultural organizations are prepared for success. These captains will also facilitate the **New Organization Mentorship Program (NOMP)**.
- The **NOMP** is a group dedicated to providing additional resources and advice from established organizations to new organizations. This program partners each new mentee chair with a mentor chair from an established organization. The mentor chair will act as a guide and additional resource to the mentee chair. The **New Organization Mentorship Program** will also meet as a large group periodically throughout the year. The goal of the **New Organization Mentorship Program** is to ensure that new organizations feel welcomed as they enter the THON community and find success in reaching their goals.
- **NOTE:** Many of the new organizations are also multicultural organizations. The New Organization Mentorship Program will therefore also serve as an additional resource for many multicultural organizations.

Financial Support:

Minimizing barriers to entry by providing financial support for THON Volunteers who need funding to participate.

- Access to financial support for mandatory materials will be easy to locate, and requests will only be viewed by the Finance Director, Volunteer Logistics and Executive Director.
- Requests for funding can be made using forms available in the Committee Member and Captain Teams channels, on **THON.org**, and **THINK**.
- The cost of being a THON Volunteer will be communicated in advance of when payments are required, ensuring enough time for volunteers to apply for funding.
- **Applying for reimbursement does NOT take any funds from THON's mission or from any charitable donations that the organization receives.**



- 2027 Approximate Captain Mandatory Costs:**
- On-Shift shirts ~ \$12
 - Committee Shirts ~ \$100
 - Retreat ~ \$50
 - Committee Member retreats will be in State College and will not be overnight to minimize cost.

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- On-Shift shirts ~ \$12
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 - Retreat ~ \$50
 - Reimbursement for gas mileage will be available for THON Captains for THON 2027 through the Gas Card Initiative provided by the Supply Logistics Committee.

- There will be additional optional costs for volunteers throughout the year.
- Minimizing the cost of being a THON Volunteer will be a priority in THON leadership's yearlong decision-making.



Recruitment:

Providing all community members with the opportunity to further their involvement in THON.

- A survey will be sent to captains about how much time per week is expected within their position. This information will be used to increase **time commitment transparency**.
- Additional time commitments will vary by committee, but specific dates and times will be communicated in advance.
- Develop a varied recruitment strategy that effectively reaches populations of students who may not have been previously recruited.
- Recruitment materials will be approved by a member of the DEI Team, ensuring there is an **appropriate exemplification of THON Volunteers** without tokenizing students of diverse backgrounds.
- The THON DEI Programs and Projects Coordinators will participate in the **Recruitment Focus Group**.

Reporting:

Ensuring that reporting processes are effective and accessible to those in the THON Community, with information and concerns reviewed by the appropriate people.

- THON Leadership will re-examine the **THON Weekend Bias Response Plan**.
- There will be a focus on the education of all volunteers and spectators regarding details of the plan to ensure that incidents of bias are properly reported.
- **Misconduct** reports can be made **HERE** or directly to any THON Captain or Director via email or face-to-face meeting. Reports will be reviewed within 48 hours.
- Reporters have the option to report **anonymously**.
- Reporters do not have to be involved in THON. The Reporting Form will remain linked at the bottom of **THON.org** for public use.
- Misconduct that may be reported through this form includes any inappropriate, discriminatory, harassing, or otherwise concerning interpersonal or organizational behavior that occurs in an official THON setting. If you are unsure whether a situation should be reported through this form, please review the Penn State **Student Code of Conduct: Student Code of Conduct | Penn State Student Affairs**. To submit a conduct report directly to Penn State University, please visit: **<https://studentaffairs.psu.edu/health-wellness/victim-survivor-support-advocacy/reporting-options>**.
- Information submitted through this form will be reviewed only by the THON Executive Director, Volunteer Logistics Director, and THON Advisor (university staff member). THON is not a confidential reporting resource. Based on the information reported, THON may be obligated to share this information with appropriate University offices and coordinate with units such as Student Accountability and Conflict Response to ensure the matter is reviewed and addressed in accordance with university policies and procedures.

Transparency:

Create and publish a transparency report that discloses informational statistics related to DEI.

- Volunteers will have the option to disclose their race/ethnicity/origin on **THINK**.
- This data will not be available to leaders reviewing applications at any time.
- This data will only be used by the DEI team to further THON's DEI efforts.
- An annual report will be generated based on the statistics found to evaluate THON's Volunteer demographics and track progress in DEI initiatives.
- This report will be made public by **April 2027**.

