DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION TRANSPARENCY REPORT

FOR THON™ 2026

THON™

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 enviroment with equitable** opportunities for every Penn State student and community member.





The following report outlines the steps that THON took in 2026 to improve upon our Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion efforts. Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion are essential to creating a welcoming community for all volunteers, supporters, and families. We recognize that our efforts are not perfect. We are not experts in DEI, but we are actively taking actionable steps to transform our organization. To see how our efforts continue to expand, please visit the THON 2027 Action Plan when published in 2026.

The **THON 2026 Action Plan** outlined goals and actionable items to improve DEI efforts within the THON Community. It was presented to all directors, captains, and committee members.

The THON 2026 Action Plan can be found HERE. A new version will be released before August with an updated outline of goals and visions.

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:

- THON Leadership worked to improve the level of accessibility and inclusivity for THON Volunteers and supporters related to facilities, language barriers, sensory experiences, and available accommodations. THON Leadership leveraged expertise from various offices at Penn State such as the Student Disability Resources Office.

- Accessibility at various events was increased, including expanding promotional materials and accommodation requests including increased captioning and ADA support.

ACCOUNTABILITY:

- **Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Focus Group**
- This focus group consisted of the four DEI Captains on Communications. The DEI Lead, DEI Projects Coordinator, DEI Programs Coordinator, and the New and Multicultural Org Liaison, as well as the Communications Director and the Executive Director.

- **DEI Projects**
- The Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Projects Focus Group was a focus group that was implemented in 2024. Captains from each committee who were working on DEI-related tasks met bi-weekly to discuss various projects and actionable items to implement within their captain committees. These meetings were open discussions to further DEI initiatives and create change in the THON Community.

- **DEI Programs**
- The **Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Programs Focus Group** was a focus group that was implemented in 2024. Its purpose was to implement programs across all THON committees that provided resources to Captains and Committee Members to improve awareness and knowledge about diversity, equity, and inclusion.

- **Code of Conduct**
- All Volunteers signed the THON 2026 Code of Conduct. This document outlined the expectations for all THON Volunteers.

- **DEI Feedback Form**
- The THON 2026 DEI Team created a feedback form to gather input and feedback from Captains regarding the DEI efforts within THON.

APPLICATIONS AND INTERVIEWS:

- All THON Volunteers were asked a **DEI-related question** during their interviews.
- Interviews were conducted in casual attire to reduce the burden related to clothing of an interview.
- An **Accommodation Form** was added to the Committee Member Application so that applicants could request necessary accommodations while they carried out their positions.
- These requests were viewed by only the Communications Director and Executive Director and did not impact the application.

COMMUNITY RELATIONS:

- DEI Leadership **met with faculty from centers within the University** throughout the year to receive input and feedback on THON's initiatives throughout the year. Some of these centers include Student Disability Resources Office, the Center for Sexual and Gender Diversity, and the Paul Robeson Cultural Center.(Add about join programming and efforts to find barriers)
- DEI Leadership **met with other student leaders** to discuss diversity, equity, and inclusion across the Penn State Community. These were organized by groups such as UPUA and SPA.

DEI FOCUSED POSITIONS:

- There were four DEI specific captain positions: **DEI Lead, DEI Programs Coordinator, DEI Projects Coordinator,** and **New & Multicultural Organizations Liaison.**
- Each Director and DEI representatives met with THON DEI Leadership to discuss the potential addition of DEI positions to each committee in THON 2026.
- Each CM committee had a designated **DEI CM** that attended trainings and led monthly conversations.

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EQUITY PROGRAMMING:

- The DEI Team created programming that was **reviewed regularly by all THON Committee Volunteers.**
- The purpose of all these DEI-focused discussions was to **further awareness and knowledge about various DEI topics**, in order to **grow as THON Committee Volunteers and people**, and **best interact with each other and the community. Each program covered a DEI topic** and included a resource(s) or activity followed by discussion questions.
- **Establishing Equity Through Conversation (EETC)** discussions were biweekly discussions had by Communications Captains.
- Captain Discussions were **biweekly discussions** had by all THON Captains within their respective committee meetings.
- Committee Member Discussions were **monthly discussions** had by all THON Committee Members within their respective committee meetings.

ORGANIZATION RELATIONS:

- A liaison was dedicated solely to THON's new and multicultural organizations.
- The **New Organization Mentorship Program** helped foster relationships between large and small/new organizations. This acted as an additional resource and guide for new THON organizations.
- Throughout the year, new and multicultural organizations were given unique opportunities to grow their THON efforts through incentives and programs. (Add a bit about mentor and mentee efforts)

FINANCIAL SUPPORT:

- THON set and actively worked to uphold the goal for finances to not be a barrier preventing dedicated individuals from volunteering.
- The costs associated with being a THON Volunteer were shared at initial meetings, and potentially incurred costs were presented to both captains and committee members.
- The application for financial assistance was shared frequently with volunteers and could be accessed online, through internal communication platforms, or by speaking with a captain/director.
- The Supply Logistics Committee provided volunteers with the ability to request supplies necessary to carry out the duties of their position. These supplies are provided at no additional cost to volunteers. If the requested supply is not readily available, volunteers were offered an alternative item.
- Necessary items not available to the committee were purchased using the **Gift Card Initiative** to lessen the financial burden on volunteers.
- This year, a new Gas Gift Card Initiative program was established to lessen the financial burden for volunteers who traveled to support THON's mission.

RECRUITMENT:

- The Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Lead was a member of the Recruitment Focus Group, which coordinates all recruitment planning for Committee Volunteers.

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REPORTING:

- The **process for submitting a report** was made clear to all volunteers. Reports could be submitted in an online anonymous reporting form or any form of contact with a THON Captain or Director.
- **All reports were viewed within 3 academic days** by the THON Communications Director, Volunteer Logistics Director and THON Executive Director. In cases where
- possible, follow-up conversations were had.
- THON Weekend Reporting was expanded to have **three different ways for spectators to report incidents of bias or hate.** These included:
- **Anonymous Reporting** via link.thon.org/report.
- **Text Reporting** by texting "Report" to 762-ASK-THON.
- **In-Person Reporting** which was facilitated by Communications Captains at the Gate A and C Info Booths.

TRANSPARENCY:

- This Transparency Report was published with information on what DEI Progress has occurred in our organization across the past year.
- Demographic statistics were collected from volunteers on a voluntary basis. Individual stats were not viewable by captains or directors. The stats of those who chose to disclose can be found on the following page.