

**DIVERSITY,
EQUITY, &
INCLUSION
ACTION PLAN
FOR THON™ 2025**

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.



THON Weekend 2024



This document serves to hold THON 2025 Volunteers to a higher standard in their commitment to enhancing diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI). Updates will be made throughout the year as more action and/or changes are needed to keep this initiative and conversation going indefinitely. 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 communications@thon.org

Please view the [THON 2024 Transparency Report](#) for previous actions taken related to diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts.

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 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 **Entertainment Committee** will update the accessibility section of the Spectator Guide detailing points of access and necessary information for THON Weekend attendees.
- ◆ THON 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 and DEI Captains will meet to increase the accessibility of **special events** held before THON Weekend, such as the THON 5K.
- ◆ Any meeting held virtually will be available with **closed captioning**.
- ◆ **Dancer registration materials** will be reviewed by THON Leadership, ensuring all necessary information is gathered in an accurate and sensitive matter.
- ◆ The **Committee Member Application** will include a question for applicants to request any accommodation needed for a student to carry out the duties of a position on a given committee. Leaders on the committee will work with DEI Captains to provide any reasonable accommodation.

ACCOUNTABILITY:

Hold THON's Leadership accountable for DEI initiatives.

- ◆ The **Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Focus Group** is made up of DEI Communications Captains, the Communications Director, and the Executive Director. This group has a project-based approach, with leadership creating change within, and will meet bi-weekly to discuss actionable items in the THON Community.
 - ◇ The **Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Projects Focus Group** is where captains from each committee who are working on DEI related tasks meet bi-weekly to discuss various projects and actionable items to implement within their captain committees. These meetings will be open discussion to further DEI initiatives and create change in the THON Community.
 - ◇ The **Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Programs Focus Group** includes captains from all 16 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 collaboratively develop meaningful discussion prompts.
- ◆ All THON Volunteers will be required to sign the **Code of Conduct** and will be held to outlined expectations.
 - ◇ For THON 2025, the Code of Conduct will be rewritten, 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 **HERE** or at think.thon.org.
- ◆ Committee member meetings will be **capped at two hours each week**. If a captain is violating this expectation, committee members can report using the anonymous reporting form (linked above).

APPLICATIONS & INTERVIEWS:

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

- ◆ All THON Volunteers will be asked a **DEI-related question** during their interviews.
 - ◇ For THON 2025, these questions will be developed by the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Lead and the Communications Director.
- ◆ **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.

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 voice and foster relationships with mutual benefit.
- ◆ THON Leadership will continue to develop mutually beneficial relationships with **resource centers at University Park**.
- ◆ THON will advertise **community events** through the THON Chair Update, the THON Volunteer Update, and committee member meetings, prioritizing events that are educational in nature and focus on DEI at Penn State.
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 bi-weekly for captains and monthly in committee meetings.
- ◆ All committees will have a **DEI liaison** who will help facilitate conversations in meetings.
- ◆ Captains and Committee Members will receive guidance in selecting a DEI liaison committee member.

ORGANIZATION RELATIONS:

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

- ◆ Relationships between established and new organizations will continue to be created to foster a greater sense of community through the **Organization Mentorship Program**.
- ◆ 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.
- ◆ Support may come in various forms such as increased communication from a liaison, mentoring from established organizations, and sharing available 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**.
 - ◇ The **New Organization Mentorship Program** 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:

Minimize barriers to entry by providing financial support for THON Volunteers who

- ◆ Access to financial support for mandatory materials will be easy to locate and requests will only be viewed by the Finance Director and Executive Director.
 - ◇ Requests for funding can be made **HERE**. This form is also 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.
 - ◇ **2025 Committee Member Mandatory costs:**
 - ◆ On-Shift shirts- \$15
 - ◆ Committee Bonding/Retreats- \$20 per semester
 - ◆ Committee Member retreats will no longer take place out of the State College area and will not be overnight to further minimize cost.
 - ◇ **2025 Captain Member Mandatory costs:**
 - ◆ On-Shift shirts- \$12
 - ◆ Committee Shirts- \$75
 - ◆ Retreat- \$50

- ◇ Reimbursements for gas mileage will be available for THON Captains for THON 2025 (more details will be published).
- ◇ 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:

Provide 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 the **time commitment transparency**.
- ◆ Additional time commitments will vary by committee, but specific dates and times will be communicated in advance.

Develop a recruitment strategy that effectively reaches populations of students who may not have been previously.

- ◆ 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 Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Lead will participate in **Recruitment Focus Group**.

REPORTING:

Ensure that reporting processes are effective and accessible to those in the THON Community, with information and concerns viewed 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**.
 - ◇ Those who report do not have to be involved in THON in order to report. There will be improved communication with the public about the location of the reporting form and other reporting options.
 - ◇ Reports will only be viewed by the Executive Director, Communications Director, and THON Advisor.
 - ◇ THON Captains will be required to report any information about a situation witnessed or reported to them by Committee Members to either the Communications Director or the Executive Director. This expectation will be made clear in the **Code of Conduct**.
 - ◇ Reports can be made at any **THON Event** via a texting service which will be clearly advertised to THON Volunteers and spectators attending.

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 point.
 - ◇ This data will only be used by the DEI leadership team or to further THON's DEI efforts.
- ◆ An annual report will be generated on the statistics found to evaluate THON's volunteer demographics and track progress in DEI initiatives.
- ◆ This report will be made public by April 2025.