

Hawaii Public Radio – Diversity Statement

Hawaii is often called the melting pot of the Pacific because of the diverse cultures of its residents. The population in Hawaii has no “majority”; everyone is a member of a minority group. Hawaii Public Radio knows that diversity among its staff, management, and board, is the key to understanding its community, connecting with it, and providing relative and engaging content. Since Hawaii Public Radio is a statewide network, diversity requires more than addressing the basic elements of gender, age, race, religion, culture, life experiences, and economic status. We also need to be sensitive to the differences that exist among the residents of the islands. As we go forward we will continue to seek and hire candidates for staff, management, and board positions that at a minimum maintain, but preferably broaden, the diversity that currently exists at Hawaii Public Radio.

Procedures followed by Hawaii Public Radio will meet the standards of federal and state law, Equal Employment Opportunity guidelines, and the Corporation for Public Broadcasting’s Diversity Eligibility Criteria.

Hawaii Public Radio Diversity Report for 2021:

The racial tensions/disparities among the people of the United States that began in 2020 continued in 2021. The diversity of our staff means that individual opinions on these issues differ, but Hawaii Public Radio covered and continues to cover these topics with an unbiased position in its reporting. Our focus is on the story of the people, their beliefs, their needs and sense of community, and disseminating updated information on changing guidelines and sources of assistance to various statewide communities on a timely basis. Our daily local news features and weekday talk show “The Conversation” provided a platform where opinions/concerns could be expressed, questions could be asked and answered, information could be shared, and our community needs could be addressed.

Between October 2020 and September 2021 Hawaii Public Radio hired six employees, promoted two employees to management positions, and transitioned two part-time employees to full-time positions. HPR incorporated its diversity goals in its selection of its Executive Producer, Fund Drive/Listener Experience Producer, Membership Coordinator, News Editors, News Producers, SPJ Intern, Studio Board Operator, and Talk Show Producer. These employees had diverse life experiences and were of varying ages. Three new hires and the two employees who moved to full-time positions were women. The two employees promoted to management positions and three others were of minority races. A photo of the station’s current staff would be a true testament to Hawaii Public Radio’s and its board’s commitment to its diversity goals and to meeting the Corporation for Public Broadcasting’s diversity eligibility criteria.

Diversity was also a priority in the selection of new Board of Directors and Community Advisory Board members. As in the selection of staff, the selection of new directors and CAB members reflect diversity in gender, race, age, location, culture, and life experiences. Having members on the Board of Directors and Community Advisory Board from the major Neighbor Islands, helps us establish and maintain a connection with the neighbor islands and their respective communities. The station’s first neighbor island elected board chair ended her term in July 2021. She was the fifth woman to serve as the Chair of Hawaii Public Radio’s Board of Directors. The station’s current Chair and Vice Chair, reflecting diversity in gender, race, age, and life experiences embody our diversity goals.

Connecting with our younger audience is another goal of HPR. Generation Listen continues to engage and connect with younger listeners. It is run by volunteers with support from HPR. Hosting events virtually enabled them to reach out to more individuals, including some outside of Hawaii.

Ongoing diversity training is provided through webinars presented by various organizations focusing on equal employment opportunity issues, diversity, and unconscious bias. Our annual harassment prevention training and a training series on diversity and inclusion, focused on preventing discrimination and creating a workplace where everyone feels safe and included. Many of the virtual conferences attended by staff in the past year included sessions on diversity, equality, and inclusion.

Bill Dorman, News Director of Hawaii Public Radio, highlights, in a memo, the impact diversity has on news coverage at HPR. Much of what he describes applies to the station as a whole. Two excerpts from his memo follow. He states "At Hawaii Public Radio, our news staff combines birthplaces from Honolulu to Hilo and from New York City to the California coast. Ethnic backgrounds include representations of Hawaiian, Japanese, Chinese, Irish, Jewish and other cultures, as well as a whole lot of mixing. And in that sense we truly represent the community we cover." When we look at the station as a whole, the cultures, ethnic backgrounds, and birthplaces are even more diverse. Bill ends his memo with "There is a Hawaiian word called "kuleana," which is sometimes defined as "personal responsibility" or "obligation." But it also includes an element of privilege within that responsibility – and for our newsroom, that includes the feeling that we are privileged to take responsibility for the coverage of everyone in our community – and to reflect the rich diversity not only in the specifics of our daily reporting, but also in the spirit that we bring to that coverage." This too, is an understanding that is embraced by the station's staff, management and board of directors.

HPR will continue to include qualified diverse individuals as candidates for job openings, internships, senior leadership positions, its community advisory board, and its board of directors. It will make diversity training programs offered by ProService Hawaii and webinars from other sources on diversity and unconscious bias available to interested or applicable staff, will pursue training which enhances its culture of inclusivity and respect, and will share this report annually with its board's governance and executive committees, allowing for a discussion of its progress toward meeting its diversity goals.