WETA DIVERSITY STATEMENT

WETA, Washington, D.C.’s community-based public media organization, is committed to employing and retaining a diverse workforce. As an employer and a not-for-profit business, we acknowledge that modern best business practice is to treat each employee as an individual, with a unique set of traits, knowledge base, background, skills, and culture. We are a stronger organization when we have people of diverse backgrounds, people who bring to bear different styles of thinking and have faced different challenges in life. We recognize that diversity comes in many forms, both apparent and sometimes invisible. We also recognize that, historically, there have been real or perceived barriers to entrance to some groups. WETA focuses extra recruiting attention on members of under-represented groups.

WETA Television proudly celebrates the diversity of our community with collections of special programming aired in celebration of pride months throughout the year. In Fiscal Year 2017, WETA aired programs, hosted community screening events, and created online resources and brochures to support Asian Pacific American Heritage Month, Black History Month, Hispanic Heritage Month, and LGBT Pride Month. WETA’s local productions continuously highlight the diversity of the DC metro area in local programming. In the last fiscal year, Neighborhood Eats explored popular dining in four local Washington, D.C. neighborhoods: Georgetown, Anacostia, Dupont Circle, and Capitol Hill. The program featured prominent members of various communities, from Chef Jamie Leeds of Hank’s Oyster Bar, a member of the local LGBTQ community, and restaurant owner Fatma Navir, the Turkish proprietor of Mama’s Pizza Kitchen; to a variety of customers representing the diversity of the city, including a hearing-impaired woman of color speaking in ASL.

The monthly arts program WETA Arts included short stories about our multifaceted community, including the revival of the GALA Hispanic Theatre, the “fist-bump” sculpture by Anacostia-based artist Jay Coleman, and a sneak peek at of the upcoming season with Hirshhorn director Melissa Chiu. Three local projects documentaries, Washington in the ’60s, ’70s, and ’80s, are now reaching low-income residents of the District through closed circuit television. The DC Department of Human Services requested these as entertainment in their waiting rooms, visited by 250,000 members of the local community annually. While producing the WETA Neighborhoods Anacostia segment, WETA forged new partnerships with community organizations, including the Anacostia Coordinating Council and the Smithsonian Anacostia Community Museum. Together we conducted screening events targeted to members of the Anacostia
community, including the WETA Neighborhoods short stories on Anacostia, Black America Since MLK: And Still I Rise, Maya Angelou: And Still I Rise and Washington in the ‘60s.

During Fiscal Year 2017, the WETA Kids Ready To Learn and Where Literacy Begins initiatives conducted 93 workshops, training more than 700 adults for more than 4,245 children in diverse low-income communities in DC, Maryland and Virginia. WETA Kids also participated in events to attract viewers to WETA Television. Many of these events targeted a highly diverse demographic from across the region. Three partnerships were specific to minority populations: sponsorship of Telemundo’s Annual La Feria de la Familia, media sponsorship of the AFI Latin Film Festival, and EdFest. WETA also conducted Odd Squad math camps for rising third graders at Seaton Elementary School in DC. Based on the WETA Kids children’s series Odd Squad, the camp helps strengthen math skills in low-resourced children.

Select examples of diverse national programming co-produced during the last fiscal year include Globe Trekker and Pati’s Mexican Table series, as well as Black America Since MLK: And Still I Rise and Africa’s Great Civilizations, both hosted by Henry Louis Gates, Jr, and The Library of Congress Gershwin Prize for Popular Song: Smokey Robinson. Programming still under development and production include: The Asian Americans, The Power to Heal, Samantha Brown’s Places to Love, The Korean War, and Ken Burns’s College Behind Bars: The Bard Prison Initiative and East Lake. These programs featured diverse subject matter, performers and talent, direction and production staff. WETA national productions are often accompanied by community outreach, are aired for WETA viewing audience in the greater Washington, D.C. area, and are distributed nationally by WETA to audiences of PBS stations across the county.

The WETA digital media team continues to administer the locally-focused Boundary Stones blog. This past fiscal year, the site topics included Exploring Local African American History Beyond the New Smithsonian Museum, The Edmonson Sisters of Alexandria: Legends in the Fight Against Slavery, Mary Church Terrell’s Activism, The Numbers Game at the National March for Lesbian and Gay Rights, The Women’s Peace Party and Pacifism During WWI, and The Silent Sentinels.

Through its websites and video production, WETA Learning Media produced extensive new diversity content which was distributed to a broad audience locally and nationally. Reading Rockets produced new author interviews with Tonya Bolden, researcher, writer, editor and publisher with a passion for history; and Rudine Sims Bishop, Professor Emerita of Education at The Ohio State University. Bishop has taught courses on children’s literature, with a focus on African American children’s books. Bolden has written more than 20 books for children and young adults, including biographies of Dr.
Martin Luther King, Jr. and George Washington Carver. Reading Rockets also features Reading Without Walls (RWW), a video blog hosted by Gene Luen Yang, a celebrated graphic novelist who serves as the Library of Congress’s National Ambassador for Children’s Literature. RWW encourages kids to “read books about characters who look or live differently than you, topics you haven’t discovered, or formats that you haven’t tried.”

The WETA Community Advisory Council (CAC) meets twice annually to assist WETA in outreach to and from its community of broadcast. Members of the WETA Community Advisory Council are representatives of local community organizations that comprise a broad range of interests and specialties, including education, arts, history, literacy, and underserved populations in the community. As the flagship broadcaster in the nation’s capital, WETA is committed to ensuring that the Community Advisory Council’s geographic distribution encompasses the station’s broadcast area, which includes Virginia, Maryland, and the District of Columbia. The Council advises the WETA Board of Trustees with respect to whether programming and other policies of the station are meeting the specialized educational and cultural needs of the community.

PBS NewsHour remains committed and strives to further diversity in story selection, guest booking, and staff hiring. Over the last fiscal year, NewsHour continued its commitment to reporting on race, gender, and LGBTQ issues across our broadcast, online and social platforms. NewsHour’s Race Matters Solutions series continued to focus on diversity, divisions, and various efforts and ideas to bridge and heal these issues, with reports by special correspondent Charlayne Hunter-Gault. Topics reported on include strategies to tackle America’s racial divide, how Newark mayor Ras Baraka is working to repair community-police relations, and the complexities and damages of use of the N-word today. Reporting extended online, including an August 2016 live stream of the Hutchins Forum on “Race and the Race to the White House.” Additionally, PBS NewsHour fostered audience engagement on social media particularly in Twitter chats that addressed how to get more Latino males pursuing higher education, and the role of women in newly integrated U.S. combat forces.

Similar to the organization, the WETA Board of Trustees looks for ways to diversify. The Nominating and Governance Committee meets twice a year and is responsible for seeking out candidates for service on the Board. This Committee reviews expiring terms, current vacancies and diversity data to determine a list of potential candidates.

The organization’s commitment to diversity is reflected in our employment policies and practices. The WETA Employee Handbook includes our Equal Employment
Opportunity Policy. We recognize that each employee makes an important contribution to the organization. At WETA, all employees and job applicants receive equal opportunity in employment consideration and treatment, and all of us are responsible for carrying out this policy and for treating every coworker with equal respect and dignity. WETA takes appropriate steps to ensure that all persons are treated in a nondiscriminatory manner.

Over the past several years, WETA has maintained stability in our diversity statistics and we continually endeavor to increase and improve the diversity of our workforce. This past fiscal year, WETA emphasized advertising job vacancies on numerous websites that reach a diverse audience and skill set. Selected sites include Women in Film and Video, National Association of Black Journalists, National Hispanic Media Coalition, 40 Plus of Greater Washington D.C., South Asian Journalists Association, and the USO Employment Pipeline. WETA participated in the annual Women in Film and Video career fair, and in career events at Howard University, a member of the Historically Black Colleges and Universities, and Hiring our Heroes, a networking and career fair for active duty military, veterans and their spouses. As part of the PBS NewsHour’s News Assistant program, we made recruiting visits to the University of Southern California, University of California, Berkeley, and California State University, Northridge’s prominent Spanish language journalism program.

WETA will continue its efforts to sustain and promote diversity among our workforce, management team, governing body, Community Advisory Council, local television broadcasts, national productions, and community outreach. WETA will always meet the standards of federal and state law, and the WETA Equal Employment Opportunity Policy.

THIS REPORT IS AVAILABLE FOR PUBLIC INSPECTION UPON REQUEST.