

Frequently Asked Questions about the Compliance Review Process

Why do we have to do AA/EEO and Civil Rights reviews?

- The review process allows each of our counties to demonstrate and document that we fully support and comply with state and federal civil rights laws and affirmative action and equal employment opportunity laws.
- Conducting these reviews is a good way to document our outstanding programming, and to share and celebrate our successes in working toward a diverse and inclusive organization.

How are “nontraditional” and “underserved/underrepresented defined?

There is no concrete definition for the terms “nontraditional” and underrepresented/underserved” however, looking at the groups who are protected under [Title VI of the Civil Rights Act](#) and [Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964](#) is a great start.

The protected classes include:

- Women
- People with disabilities
- Veterans
- African Americans, Native American Indians, Hispanics/Latinos of any race, Asian American/Pacific Islanders
- Age (over 40)
- Religion
- National Origin
- Sexual orientation and gender identity or expression is not included in the federal mandates but it is included in The Ohio State University’s policies and guidelines; therefore, as part of the university, we also include sexual orientation and gender identity or expression.

In addition to identifying protected classes, each county may have other groups who can be considered “non-traditional” audiences – meaning people who have not had a significant history of participating in Extension programming. Some of these groups might include the Amish, Anabaptists, Somali, youth, and adults from urban areas, the elderly, and/or non-native English speakers.

How do I know if I have nontraditional, underserved, or underrepresented groups in my county?

The U.S. Census Bureau has an excellent [website](#) where you can go to find very specific information about your county.

Are we supposed to ignore our familiar and steady client base to look for minorities in our counties?

Absolutely not; by being more inclusive, we are not ignoring or discontinuing programming for our traditional clientele. We are trying to be more inclusive and inviting to all individuals. Most of us have heard the statement that “Extension is the best kept secret.” By reaching out to people who are not familiar with Extension, we are carrying out our mission to provide all Ohioans with research-based information.



If diversity includes race, class, religion, sexual orientation, ability, sex, education level, socioeconomic status, size, age, and “other human differences,” why does the AA/EEO and civil rights review ask about affirmative action and equal employment opportunities?

The AA/EEO and civil rights review process provides documentation for [NIFA](#) that we as an organization comply with federal and state laws related to civil rights and affirmative action and equal employment opportunity.

If my county is 1 percent minority, how am I supposed to recruit minority employees or volunteers?

Each county will vary demographically, and therefore, there may be very small numbers of people who fall under protected class status. However, as an organization, we want to recognize that regardless of the numbers in the population we need to make every effort to reach out to all citizens, not simply ignore them because they are a small percentage.

The second part of this is to identify the diversity that you do have and tap into that: age, religion, economic status, education level, etc. We want to make sure we make every effort to be inclusive. It is also important to get new volunteers, so new ideas can be generated.

Often when the same group has been together for many years, people become comfortable and complacent. It is easier to do things the way they have always been done, and this sometimes leads to lost opportunities for improvement or other exciting programs.

What if a person does not have a background in or knowledge of agriculture and natural resources or youth development?

In seeking to build relationships with any individual, it is important to connect as people. Identifying what skills or experiences an individual brings to the table is important, as well as subject knowledge. It is about transferable skill sets that can enhance the organization, while at the same time providing the volunteer with a rewarding experience with The Ohio State University.

How am I supposed to keep track of race/ethnicity of participants when it is illegal to ask people to identify themselves?

This is an excellent question, because it is illegal to ask someone to identify themselves as conditions of participation in programs. However, it is not illegal to make the questions voluntary while explaining that the information is for AA/EEO purposes only. The [Demographic Data Collection Form](#) can be used to gather this data can be found under the Compliance tab of the Equity and Inclusion webpage.

Why are mailing lists supposed to be coded by race and gender?

This is something that [NIFA](#) requires and is connected to ensuring non-discrimination. The AA/EEO form mentioned in the previous question can be adapted to be included when current mailing lists are updated.