



Disability Equality Index® (DEI®) FAQs

What is the DEI?

The Disability Equality Index (DEI) is a unique, joint initiative of [Disability:IN](#) and the [American Association of People with Disabilities](#) (AAPD). It serves as the nation's most trusted annual benchmarking tool allowing America's leading corporations to self-report their disability policies and practices. This evolving index objectively scores each corporation on a scale from 0 to 100—100 representing the most inclusive. The DEI was developed by the two national leaders in consultation with the appointed DEI Advisory Committee, a diverse and voluntary group of experts in business, policy, and disability advocacy.

The DEI was first introduced in 2012. A pilot index was conducted with 48 participating companies in 2014. Following the pilot index, the annual DEI has continued – with now over 100+ companies.

Why is the DEI important to business?

Fortune 1000 companies realize environmental, social and governance factors impact their management, culture, brand and financial well-being. While many companies have identified methods to advance their disability inclusion, companies had recognized current benchmarking tools were inadequate in evaluating disability inclusion as part of their company's diversity and inclusion, or broader, sustainability efforts.

The DEI is an objective, reflective and forward-thinking disability inclusion rating tool to assist business. To date, the DEI has grown nearly 200% with companies voluntarily using the DEI each year.

What are the benefits of participating in the DEI?

- **Recognition:** For top-scoring companies, the DEI score builds brand recognition among potential and current employees, investors, and customers – including those with disabilities and their friends and families. Top-scoring companies are named a DEI “Best Places to Work for Disability Inclusion™” logo, amongst many other benefits including, but not limited to:
 - Featured as a DEI Best Places to Work on the DEI website
 - Recognition in joint Disability:IN/AAPD national press release with other top-scoring companies
 - Individual company recognition via social media
 - Recognition at the Annual Disability:IN Conference
 - Invite-only “DEI Top-Scoring Companies” reception at the Annual Disability:IN Conference
 - May have a best practice(s) published in the DEI Annual Report
- **Industry Data and Analysis:** The DEI report and index informs companies of best and emerging practices and points them toward peers in the business community that are already high performers. All company participants, regardless of score, receive a complimentary copy of the annual DEI Report, which consists of detailed aggregate results and benchmarking information from the annual DEI.
- **Benchmarking Insight:** Companies receive a scorecard outlining areas in which the company excels, as well as areas of improvement. 75% of companies take the DEI more than once for long-term benchmarking to ensure sustainable results.
- **Network Connections:** Participating companies receive an invitation to the exclusive "DEI Top-Scoring Companies" reception at the Disability:IN Annual Conference. In addition, at the Disability:IN Annual Conference there are breakout sessions where companies, in similar and varied industries, share best practices for leveraging the DEI for company success.
- **Customized DEI Consulting Services:** Participating companies are offered customized DEI consulting services

specifically geared towards increasing your DEI score. This is especially useful for companies that score below 80 and want to become a top-scoring company, a company that is striving for 100 score, as well as companies that want to maintain their score as the index continually evolves.

Does any other index exist for the disability community?

While other tools exist, the DEI is unique in its comprehensive nature, focusing on all aspects of disability inclusion, such as Culture & Leadership, Accessibility across the enterprise, a wide range of Employment Practices, and Community Engagement.

The DEI takes an average of 30-40 hours to complete and often requires coordination with other departments within the company. Other tools may take just a few hours and may not provide the in-depth analysis and insight the DEI provides. Repeat participants are also given the option to import previous year's responses.

Although there may be other tools to measure disability inclusion, the DEI is also a network of companies striving to advance their disability inclusion efforts. The trusted network operates in confidentiality and transparency, and best practices and failures are shared. The Disability:IN brings a sense of community to participating companies of the DEI and provides exclusive networking opportunities at the Disability:IN Annual Conference.

As such, the DEI is more than just an index, and focuses on building relationships and consensus with executives in Fortune 1000 companies to advance overall inclusion practices and employment opportunities for people with disabilities.

What makes the partnership between AAPD and the Disability:IN unique?

The DEI brings together the nation's largest disability rights organization and the leading national business-to-business network to collectively advance the inclusion of people with disabilities. The organizations are complimentary and bring unique strengths that make the project relevant and credible to both corporate America and the disability community.

Who did AAPD and the Disability:IN work with to develop the DEI?

AAPD and the Disability:IN are honored to be working with the DEI Advisory Committee -- a diverse group of business leaders, policy experts, and disability advocates, who have assembled to share with AAPD and the Disability:IN their knowledge, expertise, and vision to enhance disability inclusion policies and practices in the US business community. A full listing of the DEI Advisory Committee members can be found here:

https://www.disabilityequalityindex.org/DEI_advisory.

What areas does the DEI measure?

To view the DEI questions, please visit: https://www.disabilityequalityindex.org/DEI_benchmark_intro.

The DEI measures a wide range of criteria within six (6) categories. The breakdown of categories, subcategories, and point values is as follows:

- **Culture & Leadership = 30 points**
 - Culture = 20 points
 - Leadership = 10 points
- **Enterprise-Wide Access = 10 points**
 - Enterprise-Wide Access = 10 points
- **Employment Practices = 40 points**
 - Benefits = 10 points
 - Recruitment = 10 points
 - Employment, Education, Retention, & Advancement = 10 points
 - Accommodations = 10 points

- **Community Engagement = 10 points**
 - Community Engagement = 10 points
- **Supplier Diversity = 10 points**
 - Supplier Diversity = 10 points
- **Non-U.S. Operations = Non-Weighted**

Is the DEI similar to the HRC Corporate Equality Index?

The DEI is similar in nature to the HRC model because it is a national, transparent benchmarking tool that offers major employers an opportunity to receive an objective score on their self-reported policies and practices. The DEI is designed to highlight best practices and help employers identify resources to improve their disability inclusion efforts.

Is the DEI a federal contractor tool?

Federal contractors will find great value in participating in the DEI. However, the DEI is not a 503 federal contractor compliance assessment. The DEI utilizes a holistic approach that evaluates inclusion practices across the business, which is important in creating a culture that supports compliance with the new 503 regulations.

How do you plan to help companies improve their scores over time?

We will work in partnership with employers to provide technical assistance and to help identify ways to improve their inclusion practices, and in doing so improve their DEI scores. Our approach is centered on collaboration and positive recognition. Companies interested in improving their DEI scores should email info@disabilityequalityindex.org.

Will the DEI criteria change over time?

The DEI is intended to serve as a benchmark for all organizations no matter where they are in their disability inclusion journey. It is expected that the DEI will evolve over time as disability inclusion practices that are innovative today become more universally accepted across corporate America.

Of course, any changes to DEI criteria will be made public well in advance of going into effect.

ABOUT THE 2019 DEI

Who is invited to participate in the DEI Benchmark?

AAPD and the Disability:IN invite the participation of Fortune 1000 companies and Am Law 200 law firms.

Other organizations welcome to participate include the following, providing they have 500 or more full-time employees in the U.S. as of January 1, 2018:

- Private sector (non-government) employers that are not owned by a larger U.S. incorporated entity
 - Businesses owned by a larger U.S.-incorporated entity must be rated and represented on the DEI and its related publications as part of the larger entity. Exceptions to this policy are made on a case-by-case basis at the discretion of AAPD and Disability:IN, typically only for those businesses in a temporary restructuring process (e.g., temporarily owned or taken private by a private equity firm before being spun off as an independent entity or sold), or for situations where a subsidiary entity wishes to participate under the condition that the larger entity will participate in a subsequent year.
- Businesses that serve as a U.S. subsidiary of a foreign-based multinational business
- Foreign-owned private companies on behalf of their U.S. operations

What is the timeline for the DEI?

The following dates are provided for planning purposes only and are subject to slight modification:

- May 20, 2019: Registration opens
- January 31, 2020: Registration closes
- February 3, 2020: Registered companies received access to the benchmark
- April 10, 2020: Final company benchmark responses due
- Late May 2020: DEI benchmark scores finalized and 2020 Registration opens
- July 2020: Top-scoring companies (score of 80 or above) announced and DEI Annual Report available.

Is there a cost to companies to participate in the DEI?

The cost to participate in the DEI is a \$600.00 administrative/processing fee. This is a flat fee to help cover the administrative costs of AAPD and the Disability:IN providing the benchmark. The flat fee enables AAPD and the Disability:IN to collaborate on this benchmarking initiative and advance disability inclusiveness in corporate America on your behalf.

By paying the \$600.00 administrative fee, participating companies receive access to the benchmark and receive a basic score report. The basic score report consists of their company's score results. Companies also receive a copy of the DEI Report, which contains aggregate score results and best practice information for benchmarking purposes.

Note: For companies that are annual dues-paying Corporate members of the Disability:IN and meet the eligibility criteria for participation in the DEI, the \$600.00 fee to participate is waived.

How do companies register to participate in the DEI?

To participate, you must register by no later than 5:00pm Eastern Time on January 31, 2019. Register now at <https://www.disabilityequalityindex.org/register>. Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact info@disabilityequalityindex.org.

Were there any changes made to the content of the benchmark?

We are pleased to announce some key changes to the 2019 DEI. All of the changes are driven by the primary guiding principle which is that disability discrimination has no place in a top scoring DEI companies and have been carefully decided upon by our DEI Advisory Committee. The 2019 DEI will have the following 5 weighted categories totaling 100 points:

- Culture & Leadership – 30 points
- Enterprise-Wide Access – 10 points
- Employment Practices – 40 points
- Community Engagement – 10 points
- Supplier Diversity – 10 points

There is also 1 non-weighted category - Non-U.S. Operations.

The point system for the 2019 criteria was determined after the collection of data in 2018. The terms and conditions are the same.

What benchmark scores will be published?

The score range for the DEI is zero (0) to 100, with 100 being the highest score possible. Scores are in increments of 10. We publicly recognize top-scoring companies that have a score of 80 or above by publishing their company name and DEI benchmark score on the DEI website. We may recognize top-scoring companies on AAPD website, Disability:IN website, at AAPD, Disability:IN, or DEI event(s), in DEI related reports, in news releases, and in other similar places.

The breakdown of a company's score is not published. For example, if a company scores 90, we only state that the company scored 90. We do not state in which category the 10 points were missed.

Companies that score below 80 are kept confidential. We do not release the company's name, score information, or benchmark responses, and only release information directly back to representatives of the company.

In general, DEI benchmark results are reported in aggregate, and all company benchmark responses are used to report aggregate results, regardless of the benchmark score.

For more information about use of company information, please download the terms: [\[DOC\]](#) [\[PDF\]](#)

What other benchmark information may be shared publicly?

In general, any information submitted in the DEI benchmark may be utilized for reporting purposes. However, only scores of 80 and above are published and the breakdown of scores are not, in any case, published regardless of company score. Additionally, it's important to note that our overall approach with the DEI is centered on positive recognition of inclusive practices.

How do you intend to recognize top-scoring companies?

The goal is to ensure that the recognition meaningfully builds a company's reputation for diversity and inclusion with potential employees, investors, and customers, including customers with disabilities.

Top-scoring companies are recognized as the "Best Places to Work for Disability Inclusion".

As such, AAPD and the Disability:IN will recognize top-scoring companies in the following ways:

- Use of 100%/90%/80% DEI Best Places to Work logo
- Best Places to Work listing on the DEI website
- Best Places to Work listing in the DEI Annual Report
- Press Releases
- Digital marketing, including social media
- Invite-only "DEI Top-Scoring Companies" reception
- May have a best practice(s) published in the DEI Annual Report
- Media inquiries on a case-by-case basis

Please Note: A score of 100 does not mean to convey "perfection." AAPD and Disability:IN recognize there is no one "right" way to practice inclusion, and that some practices may be more practical for some companies or industries than others. A score of 100 on the DEI simply means that a company adheres to many of the numerous leading disability inclusion practices featured in the DEI.

What is the DEI Report?

The DEI Report is an in-depth report that consists of aggregate results from the DEI benchmark, as well as "Best Practices" from top-scoring companies. The DEI Report shows trends of disability inclusion, across the enterprise, as well as opportunities for improvement. The DEI Report is public and is available to any entity/individual. Companies participating in the DEI are encouraged to use it for their own strategic efforts and to share with other diversity and inclusion colleagues.

Please read the latest DEI Report here: <https://www.disabilityequalityindex.org/Results>.

What were the results from the last DEI benchmark?

Read the latest DEI Report here for insights: <https://www.disabilityequalityindex.org/Results>.

How long does it take to complete the DEI benchmark?

Most first-time participants report that it takes between 30-40 hours in total staff hours. After the first year, most participants report that it takes less time to complete. Repeat participants are also given the option to import previous year's responses.

STAY INFORMED

Where can I learn more about the DEI?

Please visit the DEI website at <https://www.disabilityequalityindex.org>.

How can I be kept informed of public announcements regarding the DEI?

Please join the DEI mailing list by visiting <https://www.disabilityequalityindex.org> and clicking on "Join Our Mailing List". To be kept informed of public announcements on behalf of AAPD and the Disability:IN, please join AAPD's mailing list by visiting <http://www.aapd.com> and going to "Sign up for our newsletter" and the Disability:IN's mailing list by visiting <http://www.DisabilityIN.org> and going to "Join Our Mailing List."

Who can I contact if I have questions about DEI?

For general questions about DEI, please contact DEI staff at info@disabilityequalityindex.org.

ABOUT OUR ORGANIZATIONS

About the American Association of People with Disabilities (AAPD)

AAPD is a convener, connector, and catalyst for change, increasing the political and economic power for people with disabilities. As a national cross-disability rights organization AAPD advocates for full civil rights for the 50+ million Americans with disabilities. Learn more at: www.aapd.com.

About Disability:IN[®]

Disability:IN, formerly known as the US Business Leadership Network, is the leading nonprofit resource for business disability inclusion worldwide. Partnering with more than 185 corporations, Disability:IN expands opportunities for people with disabilities across enterprises. The organization and 31 affiliates raise a collective voice of positive change for people with disabilities in business. Through its programs and services, Disability:IN empowers businesses to achieve disability inclusion and equality, with the goal of advancing inclusion to the point when the organization is no longer necessary. Learn more at: www.disabilityin.org.

OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION

IT Security:

The DEI Benchmark Tool is hosted by New Editions Consulting, Inc. New Editions' most important concern is the protection and reliability of customer data and uses industry standard techniques to secure data. New Editions' servers are protected by high-end firewall systems, and vulnerability scans are performed regularly. All services have quick failover points and redundant hardware, and complete backups are performed nightly. New Editions uses Transport Layer Security (TLS) and Secure Sockets Layer (SSL) encryption (also known as HTTPS) for all transmitted data. Each company's DEI benchmark tool responses are password protected to protect confidentiality. Participating companies determine who within their company has access to the DEI benchmark tool. All PII and financial records are encrypted using a 256-bit AES algorithm prior to storage. Data is hosted by a third-party data center that leverages an ITIL-based control environment

validated for compliance against HIPAA, PCI DSS and SOC (formerly SAS 70) frameworks. The data centers are also 100% compliant against OCR and PCI Audit Protocols.