



Disability Equality Index® (DEI®) FAQs

GENERAL QUESTIONS

What is the DEI?

The Disability Equality Index (DEI) is a comprehensive benchmarking tool that helps companies build a roadmap of measurable, tangible actions that they can take to achieve disability inclusion and equality. Each company receives a score, on a scale of zero (0) to 100, with those earning 80 and above recognized as “Best Places to Work for Disability Inclusion.”

The DEI is a joint initiative of the [American Association of People with Disabilities](#) (AAPD), the nation’s largest disability rights organization, and [Disability:IN](#), the global business disability inclusion 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 corporations and the disability community. The tool was developed by the DEI Advisory Committee, a diverse group of business leaders, policy experts, and disability advocates.

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 319 participating companies.

Please Note: A score of 100 does not mean to convey “perfection.” AAPD and Disability:IN recognize there is no single best way to practice inclusion, and that some practices may be more effective 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, but there’s still room for improvement.

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. View the brochure [“Measuring Your Disability Inclusion”](#) for more information.

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 given the 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

- May have a best practice(s) published in the DEI Annual Report or public facing collection of DEI Best Practices

- **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 their 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, Community Engagement Supplier Diversity and Non-U.S. Operations.

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. 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.

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

AAPD and 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.](#)

What areas does the DEI measure?

To view the DEI questions, you can download them here: [PDF](#), [Word](#), or [Excel](#).

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 and around the world.

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

[ABOUT THE 2022 DEI](#)

What is the timeline for the DEI?

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

- July 13, 2021: 2022 DEI Registration opens
- January 28, 2022: DEI Registration closes
- January 31, 2022: Registered companies start receiving access to the benchmark
- April 8, 2022: Final company benchmark responses due
- June 2022: DEI benchmark scores finalized
- July 20, 2022: Top-scoring companies (score of 80 or above) announced and DEI 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 Disability:IN providing the DEI. The flat fee enables AAPD and Disability:IN to collaborate on this benchmarking initiative and advance disability inclusiveness in business 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 partners of Disability:IN and meet the eligibility criteria for participation in the DEI, the \$600.00 fee to participate is waived.

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

No significant changes were made to the benchmark for 2022.

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 score on the DEI website. We may recognize top-scoring companies on the 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 results are reported in aggregate, and all company benchmark responses are used to report aggregate results, regardless of the benchmark score.

Companies are required to accept these terms in order to participate in the DEI. For more information about use of company information, please download the terms: [\[DOC\]](#) [\[PDF\]](#)

Please Note: A score of 100 does not mean to convey “perfection.” AAPD and Disability:IN recognize there is no single best way to practice inclusion, and that some practices may be more effective 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, but there’s still room for improvement.

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 a “Best Places to Work for Disability Inclusion™”.

As such, AAPD and 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
- 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 or public facing collection of DEI Best Practices
- Media inquiries on a case-by-case basis

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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.](#)

What were the results from the last DEI benchmark?

[Please read the latest DEI Report.](#)

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

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

To be kept informed of public announcements on behalf of AAPD and the Disability:IN, please email info@disabilityequalityindex.org.

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.

For more information on AAPD, visit www.aapd.com.

About Disability:IN®

Disability:IN is a catalyst for businesses globally to take positive action that expands disability inclusion and equity. More than 270 corporations trust Disability:IN to influence disability inclusion across their enterprises and in the broader corporate mainstream. Disability:IN works with leading businesses to create long-term business and societal impact through the world's most comprehensive disability inclusion benchmarking tool, the Disability Equality Index (DEI); best-in-class conferences and programs; and expert counsel and engagement. Join us at disabilityin.org/AreYouIN #AreYouIN.

For more information on Disability:IN, visit [Disability:IN > About](#).

OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION

IT Security:

The Disability Equality Index 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 survey tool responses are password protected to protect confidentiality. Participating companies determine who within their company has access to the DEI survey 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.