



Inclusion in Action: Moving from Intention to Implementation



Hello Kitty (L) and Roni (R)

Roni Weiss

Executive Director
Travel Unity

- **New Yorker:** Based in Westchester County, NY (north of NYC)
- **Father:** Four children, ages 13 and under
- **Neurodiverse/neurodivergent:** Diagnosed with attention deficit disorder (ADD) as a child
 - Received Associate's w/ Honors at 12, graduated from HS at 15, University of Washington - Seattle at 18 (double degrees in English Lit and Drama)
- **Traveler:** Have visited 70+ countries, including 6 of 7 continents and every country in Europe, 48 of 50 states



- Founded in 2016
- 501(c)(3) non-profit
- Mission: Make travel welcoming to everyone
- Travel Unity Alliance - global network of organizations and individuals committed to inclusion
- Individual and organizational certifications



WHY INCLUSION MATTERS

Leadership & Workforce

- Recruitment
- Productivity
- Retention
- Word of Mouth

Travelers

- Word of Mouth
 - Private
 - Social media
 - Press
- Return Visitors

Community

- Support for tourism industry
- Authentic storytelling
- Hiring pipeline
- Word of mouth

LGBT Travel Market: Annual Spend Now Exceeds USD\$218 billion



ADVENTURE TRAVEL
TRADE ASSOCIATION

The data showed that **36 percent of U.S. outbound adventure travelers identify as a non-white race or ethnicity**. That is 22 million travelers of color over the age of 18. The ATTA research found that it represents an estimated \$51 billion annual market opportunity.



According to the findings, **Black Americans spent an estimated \$145 billion on leisure travel in 2023**, representing roughly 11 percent of the U.S. leisure travel market.



TRAVEL SPENDING



NORTH AMERICAN ADULTS WITH
DISABILITIES ARE SPENDING AN ESTIMATED
\$19 BILLION
IN TRAVEL PER YEAR¹

THEY USUALLY TRAVEL WITH OTHERS,
RAISING THEIR ECONOMIC IMPACT TO
\$40 BILLION¹



TRAVEL SPENDING IN THE
DISABILITY SECTOR HAS RISEN BY
27% OVER 13 YEARS
AND CONTINUES TO RISE¹



Hispanic leisure travelers, which encompass 444.6 million U.S. leisure travelers (both day trips and overnight trips), represent 13% of all U.S. leisure spend at \$114 billion (vs. \$874B for the general population).



APPLIED DEI IN ORGANIZATIONS

Forming a DEI Mindset

- Coming from a place of empathy
- Knowing yourself/your brand
- Learning about others
- Gaining a natural filter to look through the prism of DEI

Following Processes

Examples:

- Avoiding bias in hiring
- Acknowledging and addressing mistakes in marketing/communications
- Maintaining partnerships



Does our work match our intentions?



MASLOW'S HIERARCHY OF NEEDS

Inclusion leads to belonging, which allows for optimal experiences.

By helping people feel like they belong, we help them have their best possible experience.





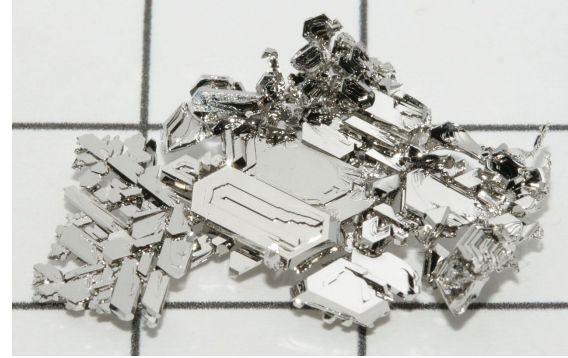
GOLDEN RULE VS. PLATINUM RULE



- Golden Rule

Treat others how you want to be treated

(e.g. with respect)



- Platinum Rule

Treat others how they want to be treated

(What does respect mean to the other person?)



IDENTITIES

Travel Unity

considers the following identities as part of an evolving list

- racial/ethnic background
- ability/disability, neurodiversity, body size
- language
- socioeconomic status
- citizenship, land of origin
- faith, religious, and/or spiritual affiliation
- involvement with the justice system
- gender identity, gender expression
- sexual orientation
- age
- marital status



CHALLENGES EXPERIENCED BY MARGINALIZED GROUPS WHILE TRAVELING

- Being closely watched (or, even worse, followed) due to one's skin color
- Having one's marriage/relationship minimized by an accommodation assuming you want two beds instead of one
- Not being able to participate in experiences or access places due to a disability
- Finding appropriate meals that meet one's religious and/or health needs

THE ACRONYM IN THE ROOM

Say “DEI”...

Don’t say “DEI”...

Say “social inclusion”, “DEIB”, “DEAI”, “inclusion”, “social sustainability”, or “glibbity-glob”.

Just do right by human beings.



TU STANDARDS FOR ORGANIZATIONS

Pillar A: Leadership & Workforce

A.1.
Organizational
Commitment

A.2.
Hiring &
Pipeline

A.3.
Onboarding,
Development &
Evaluation

A.4.
Belonging

A.4.
Offboarding

Pillar B: Community

B.1.
Civic
Engagement

B.2.
Stakeholders &
Supply Chain

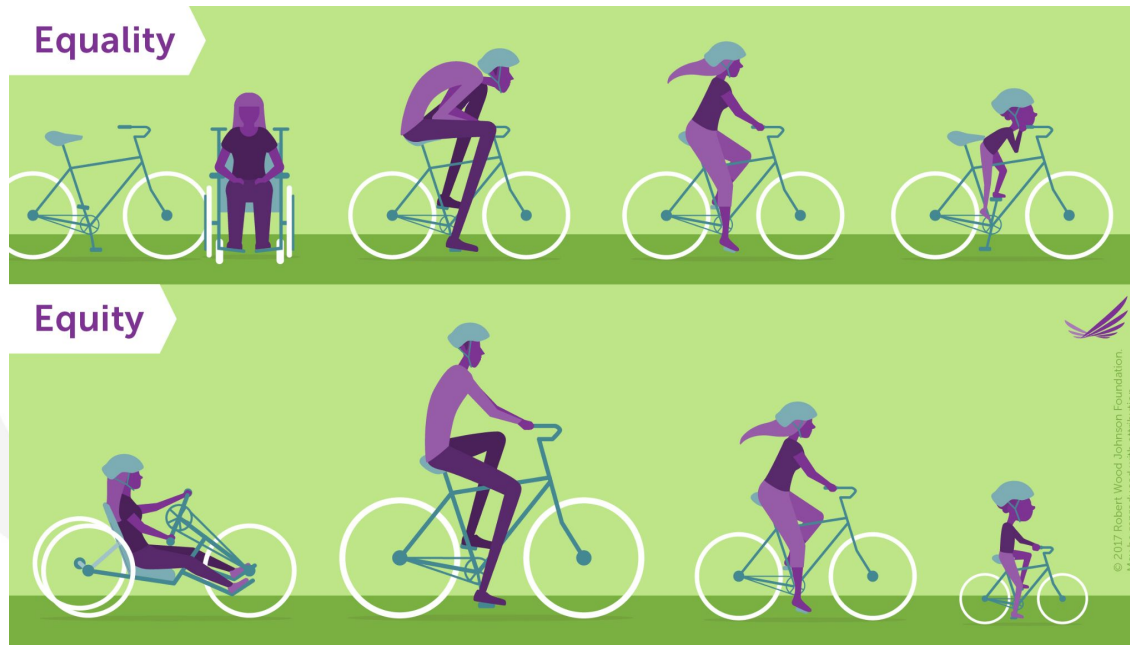
B.3.
Workforce
Development

Pillar C: Travelers

C.1.
Welcoming
Experiences

C.2.
Communications

C.3.
Advocacy



Different people have different needs.

“Equality means *everything* is the same.

Equity means *everyone* gets the same want.” - *Beatrice & Miles Weiss*

image via
Robert Wood Johnson Foundation



STANDARDS FOR SPECIAL EVENTS & SPORTS

Pillar A Purpose & Logistics

A.1.
Purpose/
Mission/Goal of
Event

A.2.
Stakeholders

A.3.
RFPs & Vendors

A.4.
Employees &
Volunteers

A.5.
Logistics &
Compliance

A.6.
Program
Planning

Pillar B Attendeeship

B.1.
Attracting Attendees

B.2.
Welcoming & Fulfilling
Experiences

B.3.
Connection-Building
and Post-Event
Engagement

Pillar C Community Impact

C.1.
Local
Environment

C.2.
Local Vendors
& Businesses

C.3.
Local
Residents

C.4.
Local Culture



THE SECRET SAUCE

- As an individual
 - Accept that there are people with very different backgrounds and experiences than you
 - Find ways to learn about collective experiences, including history and how it impacts the present
 - Listen to people
- As an organization
 - Be realistic - you can't do everything at once, you can't change everything overnight
 - Aspiration → Action → Accountability
 - Do not silo inclusion
 - Institutionalize change



INCLUSIVE CAMPAIGNS

- Have alignment on “product readiness”
- Tell full stories
 - “Nothing about us without us”
- Representation matters
- Be thoughtful with language
- Work with diverse creators
- Have reliable folks to check in with
 - Remember: Identities aren’t a monolith



**NEW
YORK
CITY**

MAPS & GUIDES →

The Five Boroughs

The Bronx

Brooklyn

Manhattan

Queens

Staten Island

[View All](#)

Guides & Experiences

The Asian Experience

The Black Experience

The Latino Experience

Accessible NYC

Family Friendly

NYC Luxury

Green NYC

LGBTQ+

[View All](#)

Celebrate LA Heritage

AAPI Heritage

Black LA

Latino Heritage

LGBTQ+



Article

Black-Owned Crown Heights Itinerary

Explore Black-owned restaurants, shops and cultural spots in this lively neighborhood.



Article

Black-Owned Harlem Itinerary

Make an itinerary out of visiting Black-owned restaurants, shops and cultural spots in this vibrant and historic Manhattan neighborhood.



Article

Black-Owned Flatbush Itinerary

Make an itinerary out of visiting Black-owned venues and attractions in this culturally rich Brooklyn neighborhood.

LOVE LETTERS

Read these heartfelt dedications to the city from New Yorkers across the five boroughs.





WELCOME TO RICHMOND

Discover Black history and culture in Richmond, Virginia and all of its surrounding localities. This free travel guide is a one-stop shop to the region's past, present and future exploring the different cultures and communities that make up the destination's unique soul.

GO OUT.
STAY OUT.
LIVE OUT.

WELCOME TO LGBTQIA+ RICHMOND

See the region through the eyes of locals as you explore the region's best in LGBTQIA+ events, nightlife, dining, arts, culture and more. We are a vibrant community full of makers, movers and shakers, drag queens and art scenes. Find your mix and share your RVA story using hashtag #OUTRVA. Go Out. Stay Out. Live Out.

Accessible Travel in Richmond, VA

Explore Virginia's Richmond Region with independence and ease. Our community strives to be an inclusive destination for visitors of all abilities, and it is a priority to give you an enjoyable and fulfilling experience while you're here. We hope you find the tools on this website helpful as you plan your vacation in the beautiful Richmond Region.



Look for the VisitAble Advocate Certification badge (shown at right) to find **attractions** and businesses that are making strides to become more inclusive to visitors of all abilities. Their employees have received additional training on how to best serve visitors with disabilities. Click the VisitAble badge on individual attraction/business pages to learn more about their accessibility or specific certification details. Learn more about VisitAble certification [here](#).



PLAN YOUR TRIP

WHERE TO STAY

VISIT  MESA

WELCOME TO MESA, ARIZONA

A DESTINATION FOR EVERY SEASON

Experience a destination where adventure, culture, and culinary experiences are limitless. As the gateway to the stunning Sonoran Desert and **Tonto National Forest**, Mesa invites you to explore its scenic waterways, kayak through winding canyons, or paddleboard along the Salt River. For a one-of-a-kind desert adventure, ride the waves at **Revel Surf at Cannon Beach**, the country's first surf park of its kind. **Downtown Mesa** is a vibrant hub, home to the **Mesa Arts Center**, public art, **award-winning breweries**, and local shops. Food lovers can explore the **Fresh Foodle Trail®** and the diverse flavors of **Mesa's Asian District**. Sports fans can experience **MLB Spring Training** with the Chicago Cubs and Athletics, or visit one of North America's **largest youth sports complexes**. As the **world's first Autism Certified City**, Mesa is dedicated to **accessibility and inclusivity** for all visitors.





DIVERSITY & INCLUSION

The team at Visit Phoenix believes that all human beings — regardless of race, ethnicity, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, abilities, religious beliefs and individuals of many more identities and experiences — should have equal opportunities and access to services.

We believe that respecting all people — and celebrating our differences — makes us better friends and neighbors within the community and the visitor industry. And, through actions of advocacy and allyship, we desire to be leaders in diversity, equity and inclusion.

In addition to standing for equality and social justice, Visit Phoenix acknowledges historical and systemic injustices of marginalized communities, and we are committed to listening, learning and growing to ensure that we're contributing to a community that's safe, welcoming and representative of all locals and visitors.



Land Acknowledgment And Commitment To Inclusivity

Visit Bellevue acknowledges that our destination is located on the Indigenous Land of the Coast Salish peoples, including the Duwamish, Suquamish Tribe, Muckleshoot Indian Tribe, and Snoqualmie Indian Tribe. We thank and honor the caretakers of this land, which has been their home since time immemorial. We thank and honor their connection to the land and region, and pay respect to Coast Salish Elders past and present. We commit to care for the land and water, and equity.

In line with our mission to welcome the world to Bellevue, we are committed to creating an environment where everyone feels safe, respected, and at home. We embrace the diversity of our visitors, employees, and community members, and strive to foster a space free of discrimination and prejudice. We want to ensure that every person who visits Bellevue experiences warmth, inclusion, and genuine hospitality.

We recognize that our commitment to inclusivity is an ongoing journey. We are dedicated to listening, learning, and working collaboratively with our community to uphold these values and support a culture of equity and belonging. If you'd like to contribute to our mission of inclusion, please consider joining our multicultural tourism council, where we work together to promote inclusivity and celebrate diversity within our tourism sector. Your involvement and contributions can help shape our efforts and drive meaningful change in our community. To join or contribute to our council, please **apply here**.



How to Align with Travel Unity's Standards for Organizations



Prepare.

Listen.

Acknowledge.



Publicly and
internally commit
to inclusion



photo by Patrick Fore



Consider
inclusion in all
aspects of the
employee lifecycle



photo by Christina @wocintechchat.com



Establish and
maintain
consistent
engagement with
stakeholders and
partners



photo by Tim Mossholder



Look at your
marketing
initiatives
through the prism
of inclusion



photo by Charisse Kenion



Ensure that experiences are consistent in quality while still being able to adjust to individual needs



photo by 张 学欢



Train frontline
staff on the
common needs
and concerns of
people from
various different
communities/
identities



photo by Suad Kamardeen



Diversify your
vendor
relationships and
consider
inclusion in your
supply chain



photo by Prince Akachi



INCLUSIVE FAM TRIPS

- Tell full stories
- Emergency & contingency planning
- Double-check accessibility features
- Over-communicate
- Know your participants (but don't make assumptions!)
- Prepare your hand-offs
- Set the tone
- Debrief and train



WAYS TO WORK WITH TRAVEL UNITY

travelunity.org/alliance

- Multiple levels for organizations of all sizes + individual levels

Events

- On-Demand Events
- Virtual Spring Summit

Services

- Inclusion assessments and consulting
- Trainings & Workshops
- Speaking

Certification

- Individual
- Organizational

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMING

Travel Unity advances workforce development through funded partnerships.

- One-day and multi-day events for students and job seekers
- Vetting and chaperoning student cohorts to industry events
- Work experience programs
- Regional travel grants
- Landscape analysis and travel industry workforce pipeline development





WORKSHOPS AND CERTIFICATIONS

Travel Unity offers workshops from 60 minutes to multiple days.

We have three levels of individual certification:

- **Travel Unity Individual Certificate (TUIC)** – Baseline introduction to inclusion in travel; licensed by multiple university programs.
- **Travel DEI Practitioner (TDP)** – Manager-level certification focused on how to practice inclusion within one's sphere of professional influence - requires an applied project and a three month check-in.
- **Certified DEI Travel Professional (CDTP)** – Leadership-level certification focused on creating a strategic DEI action plan based on Travel Unity's Standards.



TRAVEL UNITY PLEDGE

Travel has the power to unite and connect people, provided we are open to listening and growing.

This pledge is for all who believe that the world of travel should be welcoming to people of all backgrounds and abilities.

Seeking Understanding

I know that my life and views are shaped by my experiences and the body that I inhabit. Others experience very different lives, with different advantages and challenges.

I will listen to and learn about others' experiences, especially where they differ from my own.

Self-Improvement

I know that people can stumble when talking to others who live in different circumstances.

I accept that I will make mistakes and so will others. I will do the work to learn from my mistakes and those of others.

Speaking Up

I will be constructively vocal when I see inequities, especially when I am coming from a place of privilege that will amplify my voice.

Sign the pledge:
travelunity.org/pledge



Roni Weiss

He/Him

[Add verification badge](#)

Helping facilitate connections in a diverse world

New York City Metropolitan Area · [Contact info](#)

4,793 followers · 500+ connections

Open to

Add section

Enhance profile

Resources



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