

## Q1 DEI Committee Meeting – Meeting Minutes

### In Attendance:

Ray Martinez (he/him): Guest Supply

Gray Warrior (he/him): Aho Media

Rame Hanna (they/them): UCCS

Jenny Sherman (she/her) - VCOS Board of Directors: Odyssey Gastropub

Kimberly Gold (she/they): Colorado Springs Black Chamber of Commerce

Kate Hertz (they/them): Cultural Office of the Pikes Peak Region

Jessica Laney (she/her): Pikes Peak Pride

Kerrie Lovins (she/her): Inside Out Youth Services

Michelle Talarico (she/her) - VCOS Board of Directors: Colorado Springs City Council

Chris Wade (they/them): Inside Out Youth Services

Sheridan Powell (she/her): Visit Colorado Springs

Alexea Veneracion (she/her): Visit Colorado Springs

Melissa Williams (she/her): Visit Colorado Springs

Bailey Ashida (she/her): Visit Colorado Springs

Doug Price (he/him): Visit Colorado Springs

### VCOS Updates

- Committee Intros & Updates
  - Name, Organization, Pronouns
  - *Where is somewhere you feel 100% welcomed? What was it about that space or destination that created that feeling?*
- Visit COS Updates
  - “Colorado Springs is for Everyone” stickers: Created for Pride but have continued to print and give out for free in our Visitor’s Center with option to donate to Inside Out Youth Services.
  - Wheel the World Project Update: Listings are live on wheeltheworld.com for travelers with disabilities, pursuing additional partnership with Wheel the World
  - Land Acknowledgement Work: Currently borrow COPPRs statement for use at events, want to create our own that is in alignment with our brand/tourism.
    - Land Acknowledgement + then what? What comes after?
  - Intentional budget use in 2024
    - Accessibility ambassador

- Inclusive influencer partnerships
    - Advertising in publications
  - Exploring Autism Certification for Visitor Center
  - Recap 2023 Staff Training
- DEI Mission Statement Review – **edits not yet incorporated**
  - *As an organization, it is our job to welcome ALL people to Colorado Springs and the Pikes Peak Region. The beauty of travel is that it connects people of all backgrounds and origins and inspires diverse interactions.*
  - *Our goal is to create a culture and community dedicated to ensuring each and every visitor feels at home. We acknowledge the work that remains within our organization to live out these goals. Our role in the community makes it important we act as leaders, and that means placing higher priority on DEI initiatives. We are committed to working inside out on improvements, including employee and volunteer training and integrating DEI priorities into our processes, policies, vendors, community support, marketing and advertising. This work will be spearheaded by both our DEI Committee and the Accessibility Task Force.*
- Discuss helpful promotion vs. Creating a “target”
  - How do we move forward with safely promoting spaces that exist within the community for various groups without putting a target on their backs?
    - Current practices are to ask businesses each individually if they are comfortable being promoted as “LGBTQIA+ owned,” for example. Will continue to approach as a case-by-case basis and create a “check list” for what is okay and what isn’t to promote.
    - Suggested using icons to denote next to a business name – less searchable
    - Will lean heavily on the type of language being used.
- Committee Member Updates
  - **Michelle** - There was a vote at City Council on immigration that was very difficult regarding “Sanctuary City” and immigration.
  - **Kerrie** - ISOYS April 15th grand opening at new location.
  - **Jessica** - Pride had their masquerade gala and it was a great event. Looking for more visibility in the community. Vendor and sponsor applications are open for 2024 Pride.
  - **Kate** - Hired new program manager - first event: Emerging Artists of Color. Pursuing a grant program for artists.
  - **Kimberlie** - Building partnerships. One starting with Roadhouse Cinemas. Celebration for Black History Month. Recruiting for BOD and Committee Members.
  - **Jenny** - Pal-entines event tonight. Legislation has been proposed trying to get rid of "tip credit" - would be devastating to the industry. Restaurant Association working on being more active in the community. Working on Taste of Pikes Peak (cap at 2,500) Thursday, July 18
  - **Rame** - UCCS partnering a lot with the local community. Asian Heritage Center Celebration. Inclusive Belonging Spotlight series - bringing people together to learn. Hosted a teaching on Palestine/Israel - very high attended. Disability Artist in Resident program.
  - **Gray** - Cold months are slow months - prepping for wedding season.

- **Ray** - doing a lot for Black History month at Cycology.
- **Chris** – Suggested leaning on Ashley Cornelius (Poet Laureate) as a resource in her last year.