



Diversity, equity, inclusion, and racial justice

Annual report 2022



rdw group

IFACTORY

Inspired to create positive change

We believe diversity, equity, inclusion, and racial justice are fundamental human rights. Creating positive change is at the heart of RDW. With this belief at the forefront, we collaborate with community leaders, organizations, nonprofits, and government agencies that serve marginalized populations of all backgrounds. We also believe that we need to come forward and engage in a more demonstrative way. We must confront these issues directly. We are committed to continuing, enhancing, and investing in this work to realize further change.

This is RDW Group's second annual report. Through it and the actions described within, we hope to create a space for learning and change making. We seek to establish a shared language and understanding of these issues within our own organization, and in turn within the organizations and institutions with which we engage.

We invite you to share with us your thoughts and feelings about this statement, and to help us build upon our actions for the future.



Our beliefs

As an organization, we oppose all forms of discrimination, inequality, inequity, and oppression based on race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, age, socioeconomic status, and physical or mental ability. We support the aims of achieving racial justice.

We acknowledge that implicit bias and institutional racism is all around us. It is not enough to be neutral. We must work against it. We must support the individuals harmed by these biases and systems. We must also help to change these systems so they are truly equitable and support all people.

In our professional roles as communicators and cultural influencers, we have the opportunity to combat ignorance and bias. We are committed to doing so by choosing to invest in work which prevents and undoes the harm of inequality and injustice; supports diverse representation, inclusion, and acceptance of our communities and cultures; and increases and champions equitable policies and access to resources for every person.

Internally, we are also committed to growing diversity within our own organization and industry. We pledge to continue to invest in our intern and employee recruitment efforts to attract, teach, and learn from

a more diverse pool of talent. We pledge to make ourselves teachable in matters of diversity, equality, inclusion, and anti-racism. We pledge to hold ourselves as an organization, and each other as colleagues, accountable in our efforts to better our understanding, to take action, to speak out, and to effect change.



Our current and past actions

Our work has helped improve the lives of others who are at-risk and vulnerable to oppression, discrimination, and all forms of inequality. Early in RDW's establishment, we chose to consciously prioritize partnerships with organizations and initiatives committed to improving the world around us. This remains a core value and focus of our organization. The following describes some of what we have accomplished through our work.

- Conducted a comprehensive, statewide needs assessment to better understand and make recommendations on how to support the health and safety of our state's diverse populations during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Developed and executed COVID-19 communications efforts that are highly targeted to our most vulnerable populations and disproportionately affected audiences. This includes communities of color, traditionally underserved communities, older adults, and individuals with developmental or physical disabilities.
- Enrolled uninsured individuals, families, and small businesses in Affordable Care Act health coverage in both Connecticut and Rhode Island.
- Increased awareness of type 2 diabetes prevention programs, mostly among African American and Latinx populations.
- Conducted strategic planning efforts for diabetes, heart disease, stroke, and community health programs, with a focus on communities of color and communities experiencing health disparities.
- Increased HIV testing among vulnerable, hard-to-reach populations.
- Created Zika virus surveillance tools for pediatricians and other clinicians; conducted Zika community outreach and education among Latinas of child-bearing age.
- Addressed misinformation around influenza and HPV vaccination, increased vaccination rates, and developed programs to increase awareness of and participation in school-based clinics in the urban core of Rhode Island.
- Drove support for the University of New Mexico Health System's efforts directly aimed at better serving at-risk populations, especially within the Native American community.

- Helped adults seek treatment for substance use disorder, particularly alcohol, opioids, and other drugs.
- Designed outreach communications to help mothers seek support and treatment for prenatal opioid use and care for substance-exposed newborns.
- Rebranded and marketed the Family Visiting program to raise awareness and increase use of services by at-risk mothers and families with infants and toddlers.
- Increased local awareness and use of Supplemental Nutrition Programs for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC).
- Increased awareness of services to women and families who have suffered sexual assault.
- Created a campaign to reduce lead poisoning among at-risk children who live in rental properties in urban areas.
- Provided resources to families in need of housing, childcare, and other supportive services.
- Supported the Epilepsy Foundation New England to provide a greater expansion of service to children, adults, and families living with epilepsy.
- Developed programs to increase awareness of and enrollment in long term services and supports (LTSS) for older adults and adults with disabilities.

- Increased awareness of programs that support healthy living among adults 50+.
- Increased awareness of robotic companion cat and pup pets to address loneliness, isolation, and cognitive decline in older adults, especially those with Alzheimer's and dementia.
- Created and implemented campaigns to raise awareness of and prevent drunk and impaired driving.
- Increased opportunities at and enrollment in community colleges, particularly for first-generation college students.
- Increased the enrollment of women and students of color in STEM higher education programs at Cornell University's College of Engineering.
- Supported fundraising efforts for more than 360 Rhode Island nonprofits (more than \$1.3 million raised in 2020).
- Helped two clients raise funds for ALS through the CEO Soak challenge.

These are just some of the initiatives we've had the privilege of working on. Many of these efforts have earned local, regional, and national awards. That's rewarding. But it's not nearly as rewarding — or as critically important — as the connections made, support given, and lives changed through this work.

Our internal efforts

As an organization, our internal diversity, equity, inclusion, and social justice efforts have included:

- Sponsoring and coordinating an annual scholarship program for people of color through the Rhode Island Foundation. Award includes the opportunity for recipients to intern with RDW for hands-on, real-world experience. Three scholarship recipients joined RDW as interns in 2021. Sponsorship funds were tripled in 2022.
- Supporting an annual scholarship program at the University of Rhode Island.
- Hosting interns at the college and high school levels.
- Establishing an RDW DEI speaking series, welcoming individuals and organizations from diverse backgrounds to speak on their experiences and foster growth, understanding, and support. Hosted three guest speakers in 2021 sharing Black, Asian American, and LGBTQ experiences.
- Sharing diversity information, news, videos, and learning opportunities agency-wide as they arise.
- Formalizing and expanding our company-wide volunteer program, including food drives for the Rhode Island Community Food Bank, camping gear and other donations for Circle Camps, pumpkin carving contest and donations to a local community living facility, and food donations for Project Turkey Basket.
- Changing two RDW Providence office restrooms to include all genders.
- Embracing employee choice in adding their pronouns to their email signature.
- Formalizing a “floating holiday” policy to support, encourage, and better enable our employees of different religious backgrounds to participate in holiday observances.
- Adding Martin Luther King Jr. Day and Juneteenth as official RDW holidays in recognition of their significance and honoring the rights of all people.
- Conducted Gallup CliftonStrengths training with internal teams to better understand our own strengths as well as those around us, embracing the diversity and strengths within each of us.

Beyond our work for RDW Group

The need for equity doesn't stop when our office doors close for the day. Neither do we. Many of our team members also advance the cause of equity in their personal time as well. Our people serve on boards and committees, volunteer for campaigns and events, fundraise and host donation drives, and even lead their own volunteer projects. Our company also lends its resources to these personal efforts. Organizations and causes we work with include:



Our future commitments

We're proud of the work we've done to foster equity and opportunity within our communities, but we also know there's much more to do. We are committed to further investing our time, resources, and financial contributions in the actions and activities that will continue to drive change.

We are actively seeking opportunities to collaborate with individuals and communities of diverse backgrounds; to have frank, sometimes uncomfortable, discussions; and, most importantly, to listen to and learn from one another with open minds and open hearts.

We believe that actions speak louder than words. Since our mission as an organization is to be a force of positive change, we commit to continuing the following:

- Promise to speak out on social injustice.
- Continually assess our business relationships through an equity lens.
- Increase our partnering with local nonprofit agencies that are facilitating work in diversity, social justice, and equity.
- Partner with women- and minority-owned vendors and businesses as possible.
- Expand upon our newly established Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion committee and develop a formal management role within our organization.
- Develop an Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Advisory Committee of internal and external stakeholders. Adopt an Internal Review Board, formalizing processes to ensure our work is culturally attuned to our audience.
- Encourage our team to participate in or lead volunteer opportunities through flextime and paid volunteer hours. Award "Change Agent" grants to employees working to advance equity, diversity, and inclusion efforts. Expand our company-wide volunteer day program.
- Continue to provide and enhance internal education efforts, and make ourselves teachable in matters of diversity, equity, inclusion, and anti-racism. Invite speakers and groups to our workplace to help us learn and gain perspectives.

- Identify other opportunities to support the diversity, equity, inclusion, and racial justice initiatives within our community – through formal agency work, employee volunteer activities, learning opportunities, etc.
- Nurture education and career pipelines. Collaborate with education institutions (K-12 and post-secondary) on industry-related curriculum and student learning opportunities. Expand our existing scholarship program. Increase internship and job shadow opportunities with students, graduates, and adult learners. Enhance existing for-credit internship program with paid internship opportunities.

- Continue to enhance our intern and employee recruitment efforts to attract, teach, and learn from a more diverse pool of talent, including race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, and all facets of diversity. Continue to foster diversity also at partnership and leadership levels.



