



Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Policy

Our Commitment

Canopy prioritizes tree planting, stewardship, education and advocacy in communities where people do not have a thriving urban forest due to limited resources, competing priorities, and historical development and urbanization patterns. Viewed from space, the difference in tree cover from one neighborhood to the next is striking. Affluent neighborhoods have more trees than less affluent neighborhoods. This “green gap” is not just a matter of aesthetics; trees are a matter of public health, ecosystem health, and community well-being.

Research shows that a healthy tree canopy is associated with cleaner air, resilience to climate change, lower crime rates, reduced anxiety and depression, and improved educational outcomes for students. Conversely a lack of trees in urban areas leads to higher asthma rates and cardiovascular disease due to air pollution and extreme temperatures in cities. Researchers have discovered that the difference in canopy tree cover is an indicator of, and even perpetuates the widening of social inequalities. This is why Canopy directs resources, such as funding, expertise, advocacy, and mobilizes volunteers, to closing the green gap.

Canopy brings people together, regardless of age, ability, and background to participate in environmental stewardship. We strive to provide meaningful access to urban nature to each community we serve. We do so by including the voices of the community in Canopy’s programmatic choices and leveraging the community’s own resources, which include strong environmental ethos, cultural landscaping practices, and a historical relationship to the land.

Our Action Plan

We aim to integrate our work of equity and inclusion into all levels of our organizational structure, practice and culture. We understand that practicing equity and inclusion is an ongoing process and have identified these indicators of our progress:

- Devote no less than 65% of Canopy’s resources, including staff and volunteer time and funding, to our work in communities with fewer resources
- Include communities as partners in all levels of our work and provide programs that are culturally relevant to the communities we serve
- Continue to diversify our staff, board, and volunteer corps to be representative of the communities we serve, and to bring in new perspectives and innovative approaches
- Ensure that equity and inclusion is an integral part of trainings for our staff, board, and volunteer leaders

Fiscal Year 2018-19 Priorities:

- Provide translated materials and interpretation to encourage participation of diverse communities
- Engage with community stakeholders and other resources already in the community to make sure our collective work reflects their needs and desires
- Engage more volunteers directly from the areas we serve
- Empower Canopy’s high school interns to take on leadership roles
- Include the daily practice of equity and inclusion as one of the performance behaviors discussed during our quarterly staff performance reviews
- Create a DEI Committee to reflect on our DEI commitment and action plan and to track our progress