

Transforming Our Workplace

New York Public Radio is a passionate community of employees, board members, and listeners dedicated to our mission “to make the mind more curious, the heart more open and the spirit more joyful through excellent audio that is deeply grounded in New York.” Because we are *public* radio, we have a special responsibility to be proactive, to learn from our mistakes, to address those mistakes immediately and wholeheartedly, and to be transparent about how we are doing so. In short, we will do whatever we need to do to become the best mission-based non-profit we can be—a safe, equitable, and inspiring workplace for everyone who walks through our doors or appears on our shows.

Over the last few months, in light of allegations of sexual harassment and bullying, we have been laser-focused on improving our policies, systems, and culture. It is imperative that we take this moment to build on our strengths, address our weaknesses, and make every reform necessary to become an inclusive and respectful work environment, and a model for organizations everywhere.

We have already begun a multi-pronged project focused on improving our workplace culture and addressing underlying issues that could compromise it. We have reviewed our HR policies, had extensive conversations with staff, managers, and board members, and worked with experts in organizational change to guide us through this process and help us improve the way we work

Our work so far has focused on three themes:

1. How we define and deal with unacceptable behavior—from harassment to discrimination to bullying—so we can prevent it from happening, address complaints quickly, fairly, and effectively when they arise, and learn from every success and failure in order to continually improve our culture.
2. How we hire, train, recognize, and promote our employees, and how we support them in their day-to-day work. This includes making sure our compensation practices are fair and equitable, and our paths for advancement are clear.
3. How we incorporate inclusivity, equity, and diversity into everything we do, so we can ensure a fair and supportive environment for all, attract and retain the best talent, and do our best work.

The work we’ve begun over the past few months builds on several ongoing initiatives that we launched two years ago—including anti-harassment training, establishing a new role for a VP of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI), and launching a DEI Council, a paid internship program, and Werk It! an annual event designed to celebrate and support women in podcasting and bring diverse voices to the space.

We also made deliberate efforts to improve communication and transparency across our organization—from the top down, bottom up, and across departments. We’ve held quarterly

all-staff meetings, issued regular memos, created a monthly “Coffee and Conversation” series with staff and the CEO. Last October we rolled out a Culture Survey to understand how employees felt about working at NYPR, what issues were top of mind, and what changes they hoped to see in the future.

Beginning late last year, after allegations of sexual harassment came to light I put together an accelerated plan for change, and in doing so, I have met with every employee in the organization in small group meetings, and also with many individuals. I have asked Boston Consulting Group to galvanize the planning of these efforts, which they have done on a pro-bono basis. And I have commissioned an experienced news executive, to talk with over 40 people from our content division to make recommendations for how we can best move our transformation forward. We are also working in coaching organizations through change.

This work is inclusive and collaborative, and our employees and board members have thrown themselves headfirst into the process of making NYPR a place we can all be proud of.

I have been astounded at the energy, creativity, and leadership I’ve seen. So far, more than 55 staff members—representing all different levels and departments—have joined eight working groups, each leading a key area of work. More than 200 staff members and board members have participated in group meetings to discuss our culture, values, and processes. In addition, the Board of Trustees has formed a Governance Task Force to offer support and to hold us accountable.

I am immensely grateful to everyone who is working so hard to make NYPR the best it can be, and I am hopeful and excited for our path forward.

What Follows is a description of the key projects and teams with work underway.

1. Out-of-Bounds Behavior

Who: A group of employees from across the organization, including the General Counsel

Goals:

To ensure that NYPR is a safe, courteous, and respectful workplace for everyone by creating a clearer and more transparent reporting system for out-of-bounds behavior, including harassment, discrimination, and bullying that includes investigating, adjudicating and defining consequences for such behavior

To create a more systematic process to inform members of the Board of Trustees of any sexual harassment incidents that do occur, and to keep them abreast of how we are addressing them.

Work so far:

- Identified key challenges to date, including confusion around employer/employee communications and feedback, and need for stronger processes for capturing all complaints and identifying patterns
- Led mandatory, in-person anti-harassment trainings for all full-time NYPR staff members, including follow-up to understand staff experience with the training and identify HR processes that require further improvement or clarification
- Wrote a “plain English” guide to the harassment policy
- Reviewed best practices for handling out-of-bounds behavior
- Considered an ombudsman to act as an employee resource
- Drafted a detailed process for how complaints will be handled, from start to finish, to ensure employees are updated and informed about what is happening, and are in process of refining the process based on input from The Audit Committee and Executive Committee of the Board and employee groups. The draft features :
 - Complaint policy to expand to guests
 - Co-production partners, including PRI, will be required to complete anti-harassment training
 - Process for raising concerns will include at least five separate channels to do so
 - HR department will collect complaints in systematic way to ensure that patterns of behavior are identified
 - Process will include avenues for registering complaints against the CEO, General Counsel, and HR department
 - Process will establish new avenues for informing the Chair of the Audit Committee of out-of-bounds behavior, including quarterly reports for all out-of-bounds behavior and immediate reports for behavior categorized as harassment.

2. Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

Who: A group of employees, convened by the CEO and the VP of DEI in April 2017, following an earlier group which convened in December 2015

Goals:

- To create and sustain a more equitable and inclusive workplace by integrating diversity, fairness, and care into our policies, procedures, and everyday practices
- To lead among our peers, as a content provider and workplace, to champion a culture that accepts and values everyone, appreciates our commonality, and understands that difference is the cornerstone of our experience
- To engage in a deepened conversation about systemic racism and sexism and its impact on opportunity and achievement for all people

- To serve as a resource to the organization on an ongoing basis on matters related to structural equity changes and to advocate for and spearhead programs to support DEI goals, including training, mentoring, and policy reform
- To support specific ways that ensure more diverse voices are included in our programming

Work so far:

- Discussing unconscious bias, how it can influence decisions and outcomes, and exploring how to increase awareness of and eliminate that bias
- Exploring how the diversity, openness, and inclusion we aspire to in our reporting is related to the diversity and inclusion in our workplace and, in particular, how we can attract and highlight more diverse voices on the radio and in our podcasts
- Working with our recruiting and HR teams to identify and recruit diverse talent so that each final slate of candidates has at least one qualified diverse candidate
- Creating Employee Resource Groups (ERGs) organized around a demographic commonality like ethnicity or cultural heritage, to address feedback from Culture Survey indicating that some staff may feel isolated or don't know many others within the organization, and considering ways that ERGs might inform content and recruiting
- Planning training for this summer in "Courageous Conversations about Race," led by Glenn Singleton, designed to help people across the organization recognize unconscious bias
- Introducing the following new programs and resources aimed at better integrating and welcoming new hires into the organization and equipping them for success, including:
 - New Hire Survey – all new hires will receive a survey 30 days after their start date that touches on their experience being recruited, hired, and on-boarded, to help the DEI team collect data and hone the process moving forward
 - Revamped Orientation Session for New Hires and Managers Playbook – a guide for all managers on what to do and expect when a new hire joins their team
 - Managers Toolkit – a framework for all managers to get information on some of the most frequently asked managerial questions, and generally serve as a resource for best practices in handling different situations
 - Buddy Program – all new hires will be matched with a buddy (a friendly face) for their first two months
 - Interns/Fellows – a plan to increase our commitment to developing partnerships with HBCUs to bring interns to NYPR

3. Values & Culture

Who: A group of employees in collaboration with the Culture Advisory Group (CAG)

Goals:

- To build on the strengths identified in the Culture Survey and to address issues raised
- To articulate a values statement that accompanies our mission, and defines what we value most as an organization and what we expect of each other as members of this community
- To use values as guides for everything we do, including goal-setting and performance management, how we hire and promote, and how we work as teams

Work so far:

- Conducted 9 values workshops, attended by 185 people in the organization and board members
- Conducted a workshop for 21 board members with the CAG and DEI Council
- Created plan to finalize value statement in the coming weeks

4. Improving Team Life

Who: members of senior staff and the project managers of the overall transformation project

Goals:

- To give teams the tools they need to set norms for behavior that are consistent with our values, and to provide ways for teams to discuss conflicts and monitor progress
- To provide ways for our teams to become more agile, including frameworks for decision-making and for leading effective meetings
- To act as a resource for employees to reach out with questions or suggestions for making day-to-day working life more positive

Work so far:

- Trained senior team and project teams in creating agreements about how teams want to work and behave individually and collectively
- Chose four pilot teams to undergo training and implementation
- Trained more than 20 managers and producers in principles and practices of organizational transformation
- Conducted offsite retreat for all VPs and senior staff to discuss areas for development surfaced in Culture Survey and workshops, and to talk about how we want to work together
- Advised CEO and senior staff, about goal-setting, implementing a more collaborative decision-making approach, and clarifying team roles, responsibilities and structure

- Worked with leaders in Studios, News, Music, and the enabling functions to help teams reconnect with their purpose and create a more responsive and inclusive working environment

5. People Development & Performance Management

Who: a group of employees from across the organization, including members of HR

Goals:

- To create best-in-class people development and performance management policies and programs
- To give people managers the training and tools they need to solicit and give feedback regularly; and to give employees the opportunity to give upward feedback and get the support they need to do their work
- To clarify the ways individual performance are related to compensation, promotion, and career advancement
- To address concerns that have been raised around management of our “per diem” workforce, and to ensure that per diems are treated fairly and equitably
- To develop a new organization-wide learning & development framework that allows teams and individuals to access training and acquire new skills

Work so far:

- Completing benchmarking study with BCG looking at the People Development and Learning Development programs in the best places to work
- Collecting feedback from the CAG and DEI Council, and employees from across the organization, about the strengths and weaknesses of the current performance management system
- Reviewing ways to improve the performance review process for employees and managers, and incorporate measures like personal growth, team growth, overall company growth, and how individuals have contributed
- Assessing how and whether our performance management process relates to compensation (related to the Compensation Benchmarking work)
- Established a working group focused on Per Diems, made up of current and former per diems as well as managers of per diems

6. Compensation Benchmarking

Who: A group of employees from across the organization, including senior leadership from HR

Goals:

- To benchmark every individual staff member's position and salary against similar internal positions as well as similar positions in the market, to provide a market salary range
- To create bands within each range that are internally consistent and to understand how bands compare to external competition
- To provide insight into our gender and diversity pay equity and to ensure that we are paying all employees fairly and consistently regardless of gender or ethnicity

Work so far:

- Identified the scope of the compensation benchmarking study and reviewed it with the Compensation Committee of the Board of Trustees
- Interviewed potential firms and selected Gray Scalable to conduct the study, and Quatt Associates to provide relevant data from the nonprofit world
- Expecting to complete the compensation benchmarking in early fall, to present results to the Compensation Committee, and to provide recommendations to management for rollout of new compensation philosophy

7. Organizational Structure

Who: Members of the senior team and other staff

Goals:

- To refine our organizational structure to ensure that we can meet our ambitious goals
- To provide the management and oversight needed for the more complex organization we have become

Work so far:

- Added two additional positions to Human Resources—one is hired, one is posted
- Hired an interim Head of WNYC Studios reporting directly to CEO
- Begun nationwide search for new Head of WNYC Studios
- VP of News reports directly to CEO
- Changed the scope of the EVP / Chief Content Officer position to advisory; removed day-to-day operational and people management responsibilities
- Set up a Project Management Office for the transformation project, and created two new rotational positions to lead this work (Director and Project Manager)
- Working with senior team to assess departmental organizational structure

8. Board Governance of Trustees Governance Task Force

Who: Members of the Board of Trustees and key staff, including The General Counsel

Goals:

- To review what modifications the Board needs to make to provide even stronger oversight and strategic decisions for an increasingly complex independent nonprofit
- To determine how best the board can participate and assess the transformation project
- To review board structure, committee structure, board meetings and communications

Commitment to Measuring Success

These transformation efforts stretch into every corner of our organization. Change is hard, but important, and real change will take time and is only possible if we remain truly committed and hold ourselves accountable to seeing results, now and in the future.

To ensure we are making progress, we have identified three approaches to measuring our success:

- First, we will incorporate transformation-related metrics into the existing organizational dashboard produced for the Board, which now include more detailed retention and diversity metrics and employee satisfaction metrics
- Second, we will put out an employee pulse-check every quarter. This will be just a handful of questions that will help us understand how employees are feeling.
- Third, we'll keep a close eye on the implementation progress of our different work streams to ensure that the work we're doing is actually having the desired impact for individuals and teams.

It will take hard work to accomplish our ambitious goals: to define our values, change our culture, and ensure we live up to our mission by creating a 21st-century workplace that is free from harassment and sets the standard for diversity, equity, and inclusion.

This is an extraordinary moment—for our nation and for NYPR—and we are dedicated to meeting it with courage, conviction, and concerted action.