

Topics to be Addressed in Agency Equity Action Plans

<i>Due Date:</i>	<i>Thursday, January 20th, 2022 (Upload by 5:00 PM)</i>
<i>Method of Submission:</i>	<i>MAX: https://collect.max.gov/x/Ms6gnO</i>
<i>Maximum Length of Report:</i>	<i>See guidance below.</i>
<i>Format:</i>	<i>Microsoft Word Document, 12 pt. font, normal margins</i>
<i>Release:</i>	<i>This document, per Executive Order (EO) 13985, contains an Equity Action Plan (“Plan”) to meaningfully address the barriers and opportunities identified through the agency’s equity assessment. The Plan will be used to help set public expectations and promote accountability, and inform the agency’s longer-term equity planning and implementation strategy. The Plan should be reviewed by the agency’s Office of General Counsel (OGC) prior to submission, and may be used to inform public documents released by the Domestic Policy Council (DPC).</i>

(1) Executive summary (Max length: One page)

- Agency name and mission

The National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) is a small, independent federal agency responsible for investigating transportation accidents and issuing safety recommendations to prevent their recurrence. The agency has five Board Members, each nominated by the President and confirmed by the Senate to serve 5-year terms. The President designates, confirmed by the Senate, a Board Member as Chair and designates another as Vice Chair for 3-year terms.

The NTSB investigates every civil aviation accident in the United States, and significant events in other modes of transportation – railroad, highways and transit, marine, pipeline and commercial space. In addition, the NTSB conducts special studies about transportation safety and coordinates the resources of the federal government and other organizations to assist survivors and family members impacted by the tragedies we investigate. The Board also provides appellate review for administrative enforcement actions brought by the Federal Aviation Administration and the U.S. Coast Guard.

- Summary of Action Plan

Given the significant public safety advocacy efforts taken to encourage the implementation of our safety recommendations, since the agency does not possess regulatory authority to mandate their adoption, expanding our outreach opportunities and the way we engage with communities is key. The greatest potential for reaching historically underserved communities lies within our advocacy work. Our selection of transportation safety advocacy issues, the identification of public stakeholder organizations with which to collaborate, and the format of advocacy materials all present opportunities to improve the agency’s reach among underserved communities.

As our investigators and advocacy staff conduct their work in various communities across the country, it is important that they have access to interpretive services to support their investigative work in communities that primarily speak languages other than English. Additionally, to improve our interactions and activities with historically underserved communities, NTSB staff will participate in cultural awareness and sensitivity training to gain additional understanding of the communities that they work with.

Also, the NTSB strives to provide all individuals the opportunity to interact with staff and leadership at public Board meetings or NTSB hosted events. But there are certain aspects of the NTSB headquarters building that provide challenges of accessibility for some individuals. Addressing these accessibility issues will allow for easier access to events and meetings for all individuals interested in transportation safety.

(2) Summary of early accomplishments (Max length: One page)

- Please highlight any equity-related achievements or successes (e.g., innovative stakeholder engagement, notable changes in policies or operations, new partnerships, etc.) since EO 13985 was released on January 20, 2021.

Since EO 13985 was released on January 20, 2021, a new Chair was confirmed for the NTSB, and she has made Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Accessibility (DEIA) a priority for the agency.

The office of Equal Employment Opportunity, Diversity, & Inclusion has been conducting New IQ Training with staff. It has a focus on increasing DEIA in the workplace and encourages agency divisions to engage with new stakeholders.

The NTSB has conducted six virtual roundtables that focus on the Safe System Approach to improving road safety. Nearly all of these sessions included discussions on the need for greater equity in highway safety programs and policies. The sessions also discussed the role that safety organizations have in engaging with underserved communities and organizations, not typically involved in highway safety, to help influence safety outcomes.

The agency has begun to implement increased procurement and contracting with underserved communities:

- The agency will contribute to the federal government's goal of awarding 11 percent of the total eligible contract spending to small, disadvantaged businesses (SDB). To reach this goal, the agency will analyze its procurement data to determine the percentage of its past spending on SDBs and track progress over time.
- The agency will engage with its assigned Small Business Administration's procurement representative to identify barriers to access by SDBs and develop acquisition strategies to maximize their participation.
- The agency will continue to develop acquisition strategies that will be executed through Best-in-Class category management solutions such as GSA Multiple Award Schedules and

NASA SEWP and strive to utilize the principles of category management for awards made to SDBs.

- The agency will include the implementation of the above goals in the performance plans for the SES managers overseeing the agency's procurement and contracting work.

(3) Equity action plan (Max length **PER ACTION: Two pages)**

Please clearly identify **three to five** actions that your agency plans to undertake and list them **in order of priority**; provide evidence-based reasoning for selection; and outline high-level elements of implementation. (Actions should address the institutional resources available to offices responsible for advancing **civil rights** pursuant to Section 5(d) and **procurement and contracting** pursuant to Section 7(a) of EO 13985, but may also focus on other significant priorities identified by the agency regardless of whether they were included in the agency's equity assessment.)

For **each action**, please include:

A. Barrier to Equitable Outcome(s)

- Describe the barrier you are trying to address.
- Specify the program, policy, or regulation that contributes to this barrier.
- Indicate which populations are most impacted by this barrier.
- List the evidence indicating that this barrier meaningfully impacts full and equal participation.

B. Action and Intended Impact on Barrier

- Describe the actions the agency will take to eliminate/reduce the barrier.
- Why did you prioritize these actions?
- Indicate how the actions are expected to result in reducing or eliminating the barrier to equitable outcomes. If not identified above, please indicate what evidence supports this connection.

C. Tracking Progress

- Describe what factors you will use to determine whether the agency action(s) has eliminated or substantially reduced the barrier to equitable access identified above in the near- to mid-term (2-4 years out).
- Indicate what success might ultimately look like in the long-term (5-8 years out).

D. Accountability

- Describe how the agency will hold itself accountable to implementing this action. Consider potential internal and external mechanisms (e.g., aligning with the Agency Strategic Plan and/or other public-facing documents, embedding equity-related goals in performance plans, holding virtual town halls, etc.) and how and when the agency will communicate progress to stakeholders.

Action Area: Expand Reach of NTSB Safety Advocacy Programs

Barrier to Equitable Outcome(s)

Advocacy efforts to reach underserved communities have primarily focused on highway safety improvements, or in communities where an NTSB investigation has occurred. Advocacy efforts for a particular safety issue or investigation often include working with the same organizations and partnerships. This can limit the exposure to safety messaging regarding NTSB safety recommendations and important information may not be shared with all underserved communities. Feedback from a broad array of communities, stakeholders, and partners would help improve the effectiveness of NTSB safety advocacy programs and identify transportation safety concerns across all transportation modes.

Additionally, the reach of our safety advocacy messaging, materials and investigative reports is limited by the agency's decision to produce them solely in English. While technical NTSB aviation safety alerts may reasonably be limited to English publication, given the requirement for aviator English proficiency in the Federal Aviation Regulations, this is not the case for advocacy efforts and investigative reports with more general applicability.

Action and Intended Impact on Barrier

The NTSB will continue to identify and reach out to organizations that have connections to underserved communities and can help expand the reach of our safety messages. We will examine ways to translate relevant content on our website and outreach materials into languages other than English.

We are prioritizing our efforts to increase outreach to underserved communities and produce targeted materials in languages other than English to better serve this important target audience. These actions will enhance opportunities for the NTSB to increase our diverse partnerships and advocacy efforts that can improve transportation safety.

Tracking Progress

In 5-8 years, pending available resources, NTSB will increase targeted outreach and safety messaging in languages other than English. We will gather feedback from stakeholders to gauge success in reaching bilingual, underserved communities.

Accountability

As programs are modified and expanded, the agency will review our Management Advisories, Operations Bulletins, and Board Orders to ensure they are amended appropriately to reflect any necessary process changes. The agency will also look to meet with stakeholders to commit to programs and changes. These stakeholder meetings will take place throughout the year to ensure that momentum is not lost on advocacy opportunities.

Action Area: Expand Ability for Interpretive Services and Cultural Sensitivity Awareness

Barrier to Equitable Outcome(s)

NTSB investigators and staff interact with communities domestically and internationally that reflect our rich racial, ethnic, and cultural diversity across all modes of transportation. Our investigations bring agency personnel into contact with individuals and families whose backgrounds are as diverse as their languages.

Members of underserved communities often have a history of negative interaction with government agencies or organizations of authority; such histories may affect their interactions with NTSB investigations, despite the NTSB's status as an independent safety investigative agency – and not law enforcement or regulatory – agency. Further, the cultural norms and economic realities of some communities may call for changes to the structure or substance of NTSB interviews and interactions, wholly separate from concerns of language interpretation.

Action and Intended Impact on Barrier

The NTSB conducts recurrent training for its investigators in such areas as evidence collection, witness interviews, and records management. To improve its activities and interactions with historically underserved communities, the agency will add a module to this training program that will enhance the cultural awareness and sensitivity of its investigative personnel.

The agency is evaluating programs and contractual opportunities that will allow for on-demand interpretive services for other languages to support our investigative, advocacy, and family assistance work.

This action is expected to improve our investigative operations and allow for greater outreach and a better relationship with communities we are engaging. Many of these communities may not understand the role of the NTSB and if we are able to improve our interactions, it will only enhance safety for all. By removing language and cultural barriers, meaningful and more detailed conversations can be had.

Tracking Progress

Progress will be shown by tracking the number of individuals who participate in the training, the feedback received regarding the training, and the real-world impacts as observed by investigators in the course of investigations.

Accountability

As training is modified and processes changed, the agency will review our Management Advisories, Operations Bulletins, and Board Orders to ensure they are amended appropriately to reflect any necessary changes. The agency will also meet with stakeholders to gather feedback on the training and to encourage dialogue on how the NTSB is interacting and should be interacting with communities across the

country. These stakeholder meetings will take place throughout the year to identify areas of concern so they can be addressed as soon as possible.

Action Area: Enhance Accessibility of NTSB Facilities

Barrier to Equitable Outcome(s)

Prior to restrictions on public meetings based on COVID, the NTSB would hold public Board Meetings to discuss investigative reports, host events with transportation safety stakeholders, and meet with parties interested in transportation safety.

While our facilities are compliant with accessibility requirements, persons with disabilities face challenges when seeking to participate in events at NTSB. These accessibility issues may impact the full participation of staff, members of the public, and transportation safety partners that would look to support NTSB safety meetings and events.

Action and Intended Impact on Barrier

The lease for the current NTSB headquarters space is nearing the end of its term. Conversations with the General Services Administration (GSA) regarding a new lease have already begun and improving the accessibility to NTSB facilities has been a key qualification of a new lease. This includes access to NTSB office space for staff and visitors and the NTSB Boardroom where all public meetings take place.

Prior to the end of the lease at NTSB headquarters, accessibility issues within the building are being identified and addressed as resources allow. The NTSB will also reach out to GSA to seek an accessibility audit to assist in identifying areas that can be improved in the headquarters building.

Tracking Progress

In the near term, progress will be identified by addressing issues highlighted by the accessibility audit. In the long term, progress will be shown by improved building accessibility requirements in the next lease undertaken by the NTSB.

Accountability

The Office of Administration will work with the GSA to develop requirements for the new lease and ensure accessibility concerns are addressed and will report to the Managing Director and the Chair on the status of the lease discussions. Additionally, the Office of Administration will work with building management to address current accessibility issues.