



## Third Annual Equity & Inclusion Congress - *Committed to Action*

The third annual Equity & Inclusion Congress: Committed to Action, convened on November 1<sup>st</sup> to bring together DEIB leaders across the agency community focused on three areas: **Protecting the Work, Accountability, and Our Commitment**. Special thanks to the [4A's Diversity Steering Committee](#) for identifying the focus and supporting the content and actions.

The consolidated findings reflect the three discussion areas and serve as a reminder that while some progress has been made, consistent themes like the need for metrics, data transparency, and communication underscore the fact that we still have considerable work to do to achieve true equity and belonging across organizations.



### PROTECTING THE WORK

The work of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging needs to be protected. Not only in the face of economic uncertainty and other competing business needs, but every single day. This work should be embedded into our agencies and organizations and prioritized as a business imperative. We must enlist and empower stakeholders to do the work as well. We also know that this is deep, personal, and heavy work, so as we look to protect the movement as a whole, it is critically important that we protect ourselves and our fellow practitioners who are on the front lines.

#### Actions:

- Change should be driven by everyone, through a business and social lens.
- Build a way to understand the DEIB competency level of leaders and mid-managers to assess the path to alignment through training for all.
- Meet leaders where they are within their DEIB journey and get a clear understanding of their business priorities in order to provide them with resources and knowledge needed to advance DEIB work from their vantage point.



### ACCOUNTABILITY

As a reminder, those who hold the power must continue to show through actions and words that they are committed to delivering on the promises made regarding DEIB efforts. We also know the adage that 'what gets measured gets done'. Moving forward, we'll sit down with some C-Suite leaders to discuss accountability and will also highlight those who are proactively collaborating with their DEIB teams to hold themselves as well as their organizations accountable for impacting and advancing this work.

#### Actions:

- DEIB leads should have the autonomy to create actionable steps (including timelines and assigning individual responsibilities) that progress their organization's DEIB goals and ensure specific and measurable policies and procedures. Accountability requires monitoring and consistent standards of practice.
- Make sure the groundwork for a DEI strategy incorporates quantitative and qualitative metrics that span across departments/areas of practice and all levels of the organization; create meaningful interdisciplinary partnerships and communication that translates into accountability throughout the organization.
- Empower leaders within the organization to support messaging and consistent communication addressing the business imperative of DEIB. As an example, holding quarterly meetings where leadership updates include progress on goals, metrics, and organic wins, with relevant calls to action and ways to get involved. Communication should be personalized and tailored to specific stakeholder audiences across roles, departments, levels, internal or client facing, etc.



## OUR COMMITMENT

Leaders are Committed to Action, internally for their organizations as well as externally. The way this commitment is reflected through the culture of Teams, Clients, Vendors, and other external partners is key to sustaining progress made towards DEIB efforts.

### Top Priorities and Actions:

- The top priority involves three areas of commitment:
  1. *Internal and external transparency (i.e., DEIB data and DEIB goal updates).*
  2. *Providing tangible support to further DEIB goals. Employees should have access to understanding their organization's pay equity structure, DEIB resources, and DEIB learning and development tools.*
  3. *Commitment to the practice of ensuring that DEIB is everyone's responsibility.*
- Consistent and ongoing communication of DEIB priorities over the long-term journey. Embedding priorities and accountability into the business structure, employee goals, and internal and external messaging.
- No more excuses! Do the work and commit to programs, remove DEIB silos, externally and internally (supplier diversity, workforce development, etc.).
- Encourage more people to place themselves in contexts/groups where they are the minority to inspire empathy and understanding. This action encourages awareness of the different lived experiences of people. Specifically, leadership should lean into these types of opportunities.



Through the learnings of this year's Congress, the 4A's identified three key actions to further advance the investment of the DEIB work that was committed to through the *Manifesto* when the Congress began in 2020. These actions include:

1. *Provide agency leaders and managers with resources to help them articulate, establish and embed DEIB as a core business offering.*
2. *Offer a high-level DEIB strategy template that incorporates a quantitative and qualitative organizational view that represents the meaningful interdisciplinary partnerships and communication needed to translate accountability throughout the organization.*
3. *Deliver recommendations on how to consistently communicate DEIB priorities, reporting of data and progress as part of the ongoing commitment to the journey.*

Here's more of what you can expect in 2023 as we dive deeper into the "how" of the above stated priorities and actions:

To address issues pertaining to Protecting the Work and Committed to Action, we will deliver programming across the year via quarterly stakeholder convenings and workshops to assess what's working across agencies, and to strengthen dialogue between DEIB leads and their organizational stakeholders and partners. These workshops will foster opportunities to share best practices for real-time, actionable feedback.

We will continue to challenge organizations to think bigger and bolder about how to continue advancing the talent roadmap within the industry and are committed to supporting our agency members in successfully achieving their DEIB goals. We look forward to inspiring conscious agency communities, from the inside out, while providing assurance and equitable outcomes reflective of our commitment to actionable and sustainable change.