

# **Pennsylvania Association of Genetic Counselors (PAGC)** **Action Plan from 2021 Working Group for Justice, Equity,** **Diversity, and Inclusion (JEDI)**

*Constitutional Addendum submitted: January 2022*

*Final draft of Action Plan submitted: June 2022*

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Chairs: Amanda Back MS, LCGC and Anna Raper MS, LCGC

## **Introduction**

In the fall of 2020 a call was made by the Pennsylvania Association of Genetic Counselors (PAGC) president, Margaret Harr MS, CGC for the assembly of a working group devoted to initiatives related to justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion (JEDI) in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. In response to this call, a Working Group was formed in January of 2021 to develop a strategic plan related to such initiatives for one year. Amanda Back MS, LCGC and Anna Raper MS, LCGC served as appointed Co-Chairs of this Working Group throughout 2021.

Recruitment for Working Group members took place during the winter and early spring of 2021. After a brief evaluation of need was conducted by the Chairs, working group members were divided into three sub-committees as follows; Resources, Outreach/Mentorship, and Education/Research. Complete evaluations and recommendations made by each of these sub-committees will be described here. General recommendations from the chairs and each committee will precede these sub-committee recommendations.

## **Outline**

1. [Organizational Recommendation](#)
2. [Resource Committee Recommendations](#)
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4. [Research and Education Committee Recommendations](#)

# 1. Organizational Recommendations

After review of the recommendations made by each Working Group sub-committee, the Chairs call for the establishment of a permanent committee for Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (JEDI) in PAGC. The JEDI Committee will maintain a structure that parallels the other committees in PAGC; structural changes that are carried out by other committees will be mirrored by JEDI. Given this, the JEDI Committee will consist of 1-2 committee Chairs who will serve an annual term beginning in January. Chairs will be determined in the same fashion as other committees in PAGC. We also recommend that the committee identifies an individual who will liaise between the JEDI committee and each of the additional PAGC committees. This may consist of routine check-ins with standing committee leaders, or board liaisons, to review initiatives and ensure JEDI is a consideration in strategic planning across the Association. Annual selection of the JEDI committee liaison will be determined by the incoming chair(s).

We recommend that the JEDI committee maintain specific objectives based on the current need and climate; it is encouraged that these objectives be made public. In order to account for the fluidity of needs, we recommend these objectives be re-evaluated by the committee every 5 years, at minimum, to ensure they remain current with the field and community. Consider objectives as they apply specifically in PA. Compare to recommendations from national societies including NSGC, NIH, ABGC, ACMG, etc. The objectives we recommend the JEDI committee address at its establishment are as follows:

- Work towards a more diverse field of genetic counselors. At this time diversity shall be defined as racial and ethnic minorities, LGBTQ+ population, rural and underserved populations, gender minorities, disability population
- Increase awareness and access of genetic counseling to diverse populations in the state of PA
- Diversify "best-practices" for genetic counselors as they relate to minority patient populations

Additionally, we recommend that the committee undergo an annual evaluation of PAGC's JEDI status as an organization to ensure the structure, policies, and practices of PAGC maintain these values. This evaluation should include (though not limited to) review of PAGC bylaws, with special attention paid to amendments suggestions as recommended, landscape of genetic counseling in PA using the PAGC PSS, update of the committee's process and projects and should be presented to the PAGC board and shared with the membership at the annual conference after feedback from the board.

We also recommend the creation of a mode for the private reporting and recommendations for professional encounters and experiences related to PAGC that do not align with PAGC's JEDI values. Submissions could include requests for PAGC to make statements about current events and legislation, concerns about PAGC programming, requests for additional resources or PAGC-sponsored learning opportunities, or specific interactions between members that warrant addressing. The board will then be required to further investigate submissions and follow up based on the reporter's indicated preference, which should include anonymous submission.

General Recommendations for PAGC

<b>Domain/ Recommendation</b>	<b>Action Steps</b>	<b>Proposed Timeline/Metric</b>	<b>Notes</b>
Clarify JEDI	-Define what JEDI means for PAGC -Post definition to PAGC website	June 2022	-To come from the Executive committee -Follow recommendation of NSGC JEDI Task Force and tailor, if needed, to PA
Clarify JEDI	-Multi-site survey across state to determine demographics/current patient populations	2023	-To be coordinated by the Services committee.
Clarify JEDI	-Update the PA PSS to reflect the NSGC PSS demographics changes	For 2023 survey	-To be coordinated by the Membership committee
Incorporate JEDI across Association	-JEDI committee Chair(s) to identify 1-2 individuals who will liaise with standing committees to provide support and recommendations on JEDI initiatives that may be executed outside of the JEDI committee	Upon establishment of standing PAGC JEDI committee	Completed
Ensure JEDI efforts are cohesive	-JEDI committee chair(s) to serve as liaison between PAGC and NSGC JEDI leadership to ensure efforts are complementary, up to date, and not redundant. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Introduction email</li> <li>● Stay up to date on latest NSGC recommendations/publications</li> </ul>	Upon establishment of standing PAGC JEDI committee	

## 2. Resource Committee Recommendations

Isha Gupta, Emily Palen, Amanda Back (Co-Director) and Anna Raper (Co-Director)

<b>Domain/Recommendation</b>	<b>Action Steps</b>	<b>Proposed timeline/Metric</b>	<b>Notes</b>
Collection and designation of funds for JEDI initiatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Set up a method to earmark funds for JEDI efforts.</li> <li>-Identify potential funding sources</li> <li>-Create packet of information to share with potential donors</li> <li>-Create permanent donation fund via PAGC</li> </ul>	Implement by 2022	-Consider funding/utilization maximums associated with nonprofit status
Recruitment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Generate incentives for high school teachers to discuss genetic counseling with students</li> <li>-Provide funding for GC students and/or GCs to travel to high schools/colleges</li> <li>-Fund community engagement events; provide support for community engagement events put on by clinics/schools/hospitals/etc</li> </ul>	2023	
Application support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Designate funds for GC application fee support (Goal is to provide funding to students in need 'up-front' rather than retroactively)</li> <li>-Create method to apply for application fee support</li> </ul>	For 2023	
Research incentives	-See Education/Research section		
Scholarship for GC students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Create dedicated PAGC GC student scholarship</li> <li>-Generate criteria for scholarship</li> </ul>	Long-term - dependent on funding support obtained	

**Purpose:**

The resource committee within the PAGC JEDI Working Group was created to form a strategic plan to identify, obtain, and allocate funding for JEDI initiatives in PA. Monetary resources are essential in supporting JEDI efforts ranging from recruitment into the GC field to improving access to genetic counseling and testing for patients in the state.

**Committee Workflow:**

The Resource Committee met individually and with the broader Working Group to gather information, develop goals, discuss benefits and limitations of various strategies, and plan for implementation.

**Information Gathering:**

PAGC and NSGC leadership were approached to obtain information about the details of their fundraising policies and processes. See discussions below:

*PAGC:*

- PAGC currently has a general fund. Obtaining funds from this would need to be approved by the Board.
- If we raise funds, we may put them in the PAGC general fund and earmark them for JEDI initiatives.
- Board did not feel ethically opposed to fundraising from testing labs. It was recommended to check-in with NSGC JEDI leadership if concerned about optics.
- Historically, PAGC Education Committee is able to reach their donor maximum with ease.
- Treasurer should be able to deposit checks via the mobile app. If not, it may be necessary to deposit checks in a PNC branch.
- PAGC contact from NSGC, Carrie. She indicated that the NSGC would recommend a second account be set up for donated JEDI funds, which will make financial reporting and auditing much cleaner.
- PAGC has a standard agreement that is used with sponsors outlining expectations, have not had the need to create one for donations. Recommended to look into what NSGC uses as we are a subchapter of that group.

*NSGC:*

- Khalida Liaquat MS, LCGC (Kal): NSGC has not gotten to the phase of identifying resources. We seem to be the first group to inquire about this from a process standpoint. It appears as if the NSGC group (as well as other state-level organizations) are mostly in their long-term goals/logistical phases. There is a big focus on breaking down the Exeter report and determining an action plan from there.
- Labs would likely be very open to contributing since they have specific discretionary funds for initiatives such as these. NSGC has not discussed the ethics of corporate donations vs grassroots fundraising, but it is thought that there would not be an issue and it would ultimately come down to what PAGC is comfortable with.

- Concurred, it may be easier to obtain donations for PAGC as a whole and have them earmarked internally for JEDI purposes.

**Internal Discussions:**

- Corporate donors - target companies with established JEDI initiatives or are demonstrating progress on these issues. Having corporate donors whose values and goals align with ours may be most ethical. A limitation of this is that it is subjective by nature.
- Create 'tier system' to determine priority of use of funds obtained

**Plans for implementation:**

After discussion, it was determined that approaching commercial entities as possible donors is reasonable. Potential sponsors will be screened for activity surrounding JEDI initiatives and historical progress in this area.

Ideally, funds for JEDI efforts will be earmarked and placed in the general fund to be subsequently distributed directly.

**Documents:**

Packet of information created to post on the PAGC website and to give to potential donors (see Appendix).

### 3. Outreach and Mentorship Committee Recommendations

Miranda Hallquist, Gabrielle Shermanski, Laynie Dratch, Michelle Rochman, Amanda Back, Aaron Baldwin (Director)

Domain/Brief Rationale	Recommendations	Action Timeline and Metric	Notes
Need for a single resource with information surrounding genetic counseling graduate school application	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Providing and creating a structured and universal resource for prospective students</li> <li>-Creation of a genetic counseling toolkit detailing admissions requirements and application tips</li> <li>-PAGC-sponsored mock interviews for prospective students</li> </ul>	Implementation in 2022	
Push for intervention with younger aged students and earlier introduction to the professions. These efforts are especially important for prospective students from underserved groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Lunchtime outreach program for elementary, middle school, and high school aged students with focus on underserved communities</li> <li>-Involvement with DNA Day—targeting impact towards underserved communities and populations</li> <li>-Collaborating with middle-school and high-school science teachers to integrate information about genetic counseling into the classroom (current thesis of GC student Rachel Graziano, in collaboration with PAGC)</li> </ul>	Implementation in 2023	We emphasize the importance of approaching outreach initiatives in a systematic manner to ensure all communities are reached

<p>Need to improve access to patient based experiences for prospective students with additional focus on prospective students from underserved communities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Development of a list of possible crisis center and patient based experiences to help with graduate school application</li> <li>-Routine PAGC-sponsored virtual case conferences and/or journal clubs for prospective students to learn more about the field</li> </ul>	<p>Implementation in 2023</p>	
<p>Need for more opportunity for patient based experience for all prospective students and establishing strong relationships with the local community</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Creation of a collaboration program (ex. SIBSHOPS) to connect prospective students with mentorship opportunities prior to application</li> </ul>	<p>Long Term Implementation</p>	
<p>Desire for mentorship and outreach based activity that is targeted towards minority populations</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Highlight and utilize the Minority Genetics Professional Networks (MGPN) for mentorship of prospective and current students for racial/ethnic minorities</li> <li>-Marketing this resource to prospective and current genetic counseling students towards those from a racial or ethnic minority background</li> </ul>	<p>Implementation in 2022</p>	
<p>Need to expand services for prospective students (without</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Utilization of departmental and institutional outreach and mentorship systems that already in place (UPenn/Geisinger/Pitt/Jefferson/MGPN/etc)</li> <li>-Expansion and creation of genetic counseling assistant roles and collaboration</li> </ul>	<p>Long Term Implementation</p>	

creating a new system)	between sites to create opportunity for paid experiences		
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## Background

The Pennsylvania Association of Genetic Counselors (PAGC) Mentorship and Outreach Committee feels very strongly that there are many improvements and changes we can make within our statewide system to help increase the reach of support and mentorship for prospective genetic counseling students, with special focus being placed on students from underserved, ethnic and racial minority groups. This effort is imperative as admission into graduate genetic counseling programs becomes more competitive with every passing year. This impact is magnified for prospective or current students coming from a racial or ethnic minority background. In examining US Census data, by 2044, more than half of all Americans are expected to be from an ethnic minority group; however, this level of ethnic minority membership is not seen amongst genetic counseling programs applicants and within the genetic counseling workforce (U.S. Census, Colby, 2015). Additionally, the 2019 National Society of Genetic Counselors (NSGC) Professional Status Survey found that 90% of the workforce identifies as White (PSS, 2019). While 90% of the workforce identifies as White, this same demographic makes up only 60% of our overall population (U.S. Census, 2019). This discrepancy suggests that more can be done by both state and national leadership groups to increase participation, exposure and equity amongst racial and ethnic minority prospective students, with increased competitiveness and lack of corresponding patient-based and shadowing opportunities.

Ethnic diversity in the genetic counseling field is an ongoing issue and has received significant attention within recent years, with the Journal of Genetic Counseling even designating a special issue to study minority and health disparities in research and practice (JOGC, 2020). The Exeter Group also released a NSGC Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Assessment in April of 2021, which detailed common barriers within the profession, including emphasis on increased diversity in board membership, development of leadership and mentorship programs as well as measures to capture and monitor growth (Exeter Group, NSGC, 2021). In addition to the Exeter findings, past research examining graduate program admissions and opinions on diversity showed that 95% of genetic counseling program administrators indicated that racial and ethnic minorities are not well represented in the profession (Sarmiento et. al., 2019). These statistics are indicative of a need for change and we feel that the PAGC can begin to address many of these outstanding issues while creating a model of success for other states to follow moving forward.

## Information gathering process

Our group's literature search identified different issues in the profession relating to Outreach and Mentorship. We subsequently compiled a list of action items that we believe will improve connection to resources, support, and mentorship opportunities for prospective and current genetic counseling students.

The Outreach and Mentorship committee identified internal and external factors that may influence a high school student's career choice. These included; impact of middle and high school science teachers, career advisors and counselors as well as personal connections to someone in the profession, all of which could be strong targets in our outreach endeavors. Obtaining relevant opportunities for observation and volunteer work to support a GC graduate school application can be challenging. Additionally, it can be difficult to navigate the application process due to differences in application requirements amongst the programs. Improving knowledge of, and access to, available patient-based experiences—both remote and in-person—may help prospective GC students in underserved communities gain access to critical experiences needed to successfully be accepted into genetic counseling graduate programs. This ideology served as the foundation of our information gathering in order to form recommendations accordingly.[BAH1]

### **Precedents to help provide context**

Workforce diversity is an important topic that has garnered further discussion within other health-related fields, including nursing, dentistry, translational research, and osteopathic medicine. Publications describing these efforts have highlighted the importance of providing information and supportive resources to garner interest and assist individuals in pursuing these careers. Using these identified methods and applying them towards prospective genetic counseling students may assist in the strategic priority of expanding the diversity of GCs. Past studies support this reasoning, stating that “strategies must reach diverse student populations, make connections with middle and high school students, and support students during the application process” (Mitchell et. Al 2007). Additionally, past publications have supported the need for early identification of the profession for underserved and minority patients by “developing campaigns that increase the visibility of health professions in communities where underrepresented minorities reside and thereby pique interest in pursuing health professions careers” (Moquin et. Al 2018).

### **Research/Committee Discussions**

The Outreach and Mentorship Committee within the PAGC JEDI program is represented by members from a variety of different healthcare systems in the state, including Geisinger Health, University of Pennsylvania as well as the Bay Path Graduate Genetic Counseling Program. We acknowledge the importance of collaborative efforts between these sites in order to minimize duplicative efforts on this subject. For example, we hope to promote established mentorship and outreach programs, including an annual genetic counseling “open house” and a summer internship with Geisinger. We hope to help the recruitment efforts for existing genetic counseling assistant positions and provide contact information for the Minority Professionals Genetic Network (MPGN), a group which has already created a robust minority mentorship program

(Mann et. Al 2020). We believe that establishing and promoting these programs will lead to an increased opportunity for students to gain advocacy experiences throughout the state, while supporting the ongoing need for further diversity within graduate school applicants.

Our committee discussed the importance of implementation of DNA Day, and other miscellaneous lunchtime outreach programs, to be primarily focused on underserved and minority based schools. This would allow us to expose these groups of students to the profession earlier in their academic career. Additionally, we aim to create an applicant toolkit containing information on admission requirements and necessary application pieces. This toolkit would also include a list of pre-vetted crisis and patient-based experiences that can help bolster and strengthen an application.

Our team identified a need for more opportunities to provide patient-based experience for prospective students from underserved and minority backgrounds. We envision creation of a system where we are able to connect with local advocacy groups within the state of Pennsylvania. Past publications support the need for prospective and current genetic counselors in working with patients and people with disabilities, stating that “genetic counselors should pursue opportunities for conversation and collaboration with disability communities; education for professionals should always include experience with the lives of people with disabilities, outside a clinical setting” (Madeo et. al, 2011). Potential advocacy groups include; Sibshops PA, The Association for Frontotemporal Degeneration (AFTD), The Sickle Cell Disease Association of America and the ALS Association PA chapter among others. Our group plans to establish relationships with volunteer coordinators at various support and advocacy organizations throughout the state to help brainstorm ways in which prospective genetic counseling students may become involved in their organizations in the future.

Another focus of our committee is to create mentorship and outreach programs that are specifically aimed towards underserved and minority students. A study looking at mentorship to address the underrepresentation of ethnic minorities in nursing reported that mentor support during this process as a role model or advisor had positive outcomes (Brown-Devaux et Al. 2021). A post assessment survey in this study also showed that mentorship support increased self-efficacy and desire for upward mobility within their company for participants. An additional study, examining the journey of racial and ethnic minority members highlighted different negative impacts and barriers to entering the career, including late awareness of the profession, observing lack of diversity in the field, financial burden of the application process, and micro aggressions from peers, program leadership, and clinical supervisors (Alvarado-Wing et. Al 2021). Results from these studies demonstrate a need for a particularly thoughtful and targeted process incorporating feedback from participants, in order to have a program that can effectively recruit and retain employees from ethnic minority and underserved backgrounds. This represents an approach that could be utilized by our own group – setting up pairings among ethnic minority GC’s and prospective GC’s and creating families, including KCL ambassadors, seasoned doctors and medical professionals in development of our own Widening Participation Program (WP). These ideas and concepts could be utilized by the PAGC JEDI Outreach and Mentorship group to advance ethnic minority membership in the genetic counseling profession.

## Helpful processes

- Virtual meetings were used for committee meetings
- Shared Google documents were utilized to edit general action plan items and recommendations
  - Important to note that Google documents typically needed to be shared over personal email
- Email communication in between meetings for scheduling, agenda-setting and other quick communication

## 4. Research and Education Committee Recommendations

Rachel Paul, Anna Raper, Zachary Salvati, Kelsey Bohnert (Co-Director), Natasha Berman (Co-Director)

<b>Domain/ Recommendation</b>	<b>Action Steps</b>	<b>Proposed Timeline/Metric</b>	<b>Notes</b>
Enhance CEUs	-Review already scheduled webinars/ CEU opportunities w/ JEDI lens (Incorporate JEDI into all presentations)	Revisit in 6 months after establishing JEDI definition	
Enhance CEUs	Create webinar series around JEDI topics	2022	Primarily designed by JEDI committee in collaboration with the Education committee
Support CEUs	-Offering to cover costs/ subsidize cost of CEUs specific to JEDI -Consider opening JEDI CEUs for non-members	2022	
Enhance CEUs	-List/ toolbox with recommended speakers by JEDI committee	Establish within 6 months establishment of the committee Annual review and update	On website not behind a paywall
Enhance CEUs	Ensure JEDI-aligned panelists for conferences	ASAP	
Incentivize research in JEDI space	-Grants for GC student and practicing GC JEDI research	Create application in 2022, accept applications in 2023, first disbursement in 2024	
Incentivize research in JEDI space	-Live workshop and recording available around working with historically excluded/exploited populations	Longer-term implementation	GC programs: toolkit/ rotating to help with integration in to research lectures Practicing GCs, recorded webinar with updated resource list; must complete

			module to receive research funding
Incentivize research in JEDI space	<p>-Titles/ awards for JEDI research, given at PAGC annual conference</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Excellence in JEDI Research Award”</li> </ul> <p>-Create process for review of funding requests</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Available to full-members and PA students</li> </ul>	To announce first award at 2023 conference, and announce plan at 2022 conference	
Incentivize research in JEDI space	-Create toolkit of research ideas with timelines (to help decide between student vs professional research)	Completion by 2023	Create a “match board “ for GCs to collaborate across locations
Incentivize research in JEDI space	Amend abstract application to include “how does this apply to JEDI initiatives”	Applications for 2023 conference and webinars	To be implemented by the Education Committee
Support supervisor training	PAGC statement to encourage clinical supervisor to complete annual JEDI training	Upon establishment of standing JEDI committee	Link to online resources
Amplify other JEDI CEU opportunities	<p>-Include in PAGC newsletter (membership)</p> <p>-Highlight other groups (MGPN &amp; GC4C)</p>	Upon establishment of standing JEDI committee	JEDI/ membership liaison responsible for curation of content
Amplify other JEDI CEU opportunities	-Add toolkit to website of other opportunities/ online courses (education)	2023	JEDI / education liaison curate content and submit to membership for publication on the website
Supporting education for current students	-Toolbox of vignettes	2023	Direct outreach to programs for current cases. Consider a general call

## Background

One of the guiding principles of the National Society of Genetic Counselors (NSGC) is integration of genetics and genomics to improve healthcare, but this has to be achieved through equitable care. As genetic professionals we have a unique responsibility to promote Justice, equity, diversity and inclusion for our patients, our profession and our society. The historical use and abuse of genetics to justify continued inequity and repression of historically minoritized individuals. As genetic counselors it is our obligation to use our unique skills and education to benefit everyone, and ensure that disparities in healthcare are not compounded by genetics. This important work starts with us, increasing diversity within genetic counselors. There are currently three accredited genetic counseling programs in the state of Pennsylvania, with one that is in the process of building/becoming accredited. All of the fully accredited program directors were interviewed by current members of PAGC to better understand the current needs of the programs and ongoing JEDI efforts. The goals of our committee were to increase our understanding of the current needs of genetics counseling students, programs and practicing genetic counselors here in Pennsylvania. Overall there were many themes that we noticed during our research, including the importance of increasing awareness to be able to better support students and encourage additional research.

## Information gathering process

Basic questions were provided to each of the interviewers to help create a baseline of information for their conversation with the program directors. These were reviewed by the committee and discussed.

- The following includes the current efforts being made at the different programs across PA:
  - Thesis projects that include JEDI efforts
  - Faculty/supervisor workshops that include JEDI training
  - Current scholarships that are used to promote diversity in the field

**Precedents to help provide context** - Summary of ideas or recommendations set by other organizations:

- NSGC – **Statement on J.E.D.I** (<https://www.nsgc.org/JEDI>). NSGC breaks up their statement into three main topics:
  - *Acknowledge the history of genetic differences* that are being used/misused to justify injustices and reinforce social inequalities. We are responsible for learning about past and current injustices to pursue equity within our profession.
  - *Advocate for underrepresented people* within the field of genetic counseling, both present and future, and those being served by GCs.
  - *Commit to an inclusive future* by recognizing the duty to use our skills and knowledge to benefit all people, minimizing healthcare disparities. It is necessary “to extend the same types of support we are trained to provide to patients and clients to ourselves and our colleagues.”

- NSGC – **Summary of Findings and Recommendations** (*DEI Assessment Report*) ([https://www.nsgc.org/Portals/0/Docs/Policy/JEDI/NSGC%20DEI%20Assessment%20Report%20of%20Findings%20and%20Recommendations%20Final\\_April%202021.pdf?ver=-06RizeKHbSKnBXUTj7\\_8w%3d%3d](https://www.nsgc.org/Portals/0/Docs/Policy/JEDI/NSGC%20DEI%20Assessment%20Report%20of%20Findings%20and%20Recommendations%20Final_April%202021.pdf?ver=-06RizeKHbSKnBXUTj7_8w%3d%3d)). Seven themes emerged from the data collected:
  - Take Action, Over Talk
  - Increase Accessibility to Annual Conference and Website
  - Develop DEI Metrics and Communications
  - Increase Diversity Within Leadership
  - Address Barriers to Entry into the Profession
  - Promote Celebration over Tolerance
  - Provide DEI Training and Resources
  
- American Medical Association – **Best Practice Research** (*DEI Assessment Report*). ([https://www.nsgc.org/Portals/0/Docs/Policy/JEDI/NSGC%20DEI%20Assessment%20Report%20of%20Findings%20and%20Recommendations%20Final\\_April%202021.pdf?ver=-06RizeKHbSKnBXUTj7\\_8w%3d%3d](https://www.nsgc.org/Portals/0/Docs/Policy/JEDI/NSGC%20DEI%20Assessment%20Report%20of%20Findings%20and%20Recommendations%20Final_April%202021.pdf?ver=-06RizeKHbSKnBXUTj7_8w%3d%3d)). The AMA “aims to build a more diverse pipeline of physicians in this country, tackle health disparities and inequities, and advocate ‘in the courts and on the Hill to remove obstacles to patient care and confront today’s greatest health crises.’”
  - Hired Dr. Aletha Maybank in April 2019 as AMA’s inaugural chief health equity officer to lead the Center for Health Equity.
  - AMA Health Equity Work Group: Cross-departmental team to “normalize conversations around racism as the primary driver of health inequities”, provide educational opportunities and internal events to further promote collaboration and engagement surrounding health equity, and to provide tools and resources for all departments.
  - Multiple working groups dedicated to addressing DEI efforts such as the Veterans Community Resource Group and the Minority Affairs Section Governing Council.
  - Produce publications related to DEI research in healthcare including gender inequity regarding different experiences in residency.
  
- Stanford Medicine GC Program – **The Stanford Genetic Counseling Diversity Equity Inclusion Action and Outreach Committee (DEI AOC)**. (<https://sites.google.com/stanford.edu/sgc-dei-aoc/about-us?authuser=0>) Grassroots effort established by Stanford GCs and GC students, launched in March 2020.

- Goal: “Execute projects focused on education, outreach, advocacy, and service delivery needs in order to promote systemic change and build a more diverse, equitable, and inclusive genetic counseling community.”
- Primary aims:
  - Education – Provide GC education in an equitable and considerate manner in order to empower people of all backgrounds and identities.
  - Outreach – Collaborate with diverse partners to expand community outreach and awareness of the GC field.
  - Advocacy – Identify strategies to increase resources, minimize recruitment and retention barriers, and maximize wellness and career opportunities for all GCs, regardless of their background.
  - Service Delivery – Engage in complex ideas for the provision of culturally competent and humble patient care and access to GC services.
- Referenced a [medium.com](https://medium.com) article that includes the following graphic, highlighting the *need* for all aspects of DEI (and now JEDI):
- Western States Regional Genetics Network – **Minority Genetics Professional Network Resources** (<https://www.westernstatesgenetics.org/mqpn-resources/>) was “created by the Western States Regional Genetics Network to address the limited racial and ethnic diversity among medical genetic professionals.”
  - Created to foster one-to-one mentoring relationships, build networking opportunities, and gain new insights and skills.
- Southern California Genetic Counselors (SCGC) – **Anti-Racism Resource Page** (<https://www.socalgc.org/resources>)
  - Includes links to resources and organizations such as:
    - [An Anti-Racism Toolkit for the Genetics Educator](#)
    - [How to take action against anti-Asian racism at work and in your personal life](#)
    - [Asian Americans Advancing Justice](#)
  - Includes links to pages to donate
  - Provides a “history” section that includes articles from sources such as the 1619 Project and The New Yorker: [The History of Anti-Asian-American Violence](#)
  - Includes a list of books to read, media/TV to watch, and podcasts to listen, to better understand JEDI efforts

- Provides a list of social media accounts to follow in order to amplify Asian/Asian American and Black voices.

### **Committee discussions**

- The Education and Research committee met as a separate group approximately once per month for 5 months
  - Initial meeting focused on making a plan for information gathering, including delegation of contact with PA program leadership to the members
  - Subsequent meetings included debriefing on information gathered and initial recommendation writing
  - Last two meetings dedicated to finalizing action plan recommendations and discussing group feedback
- An email chain was maintained for Education and Research committee contact in between meetings
- Issues identified:
  - Issue: Overlap of recommendations with other JEDI sub-committees
  - Solution: Dedicated discussion of which sub-committee would be most appropriate to take the lead, engagement with other sub-committee directors
  - Issue: Delegation of recommendations to standing PAGC committees
  - Solution: Dedicated discussion of which efforts would be best led by existing standing committees, and how to utilize JEDI committee to jump start

### **Helpful processes**

- Zoom meetings were used for Education and Research committee meetings
- Shared Google documents were utilized to edit general action plan items and recommendations
- Email communication in between meetings for scheduling, agenda-setting and other quick communication

# Works Cited

## Appendix

### A. Resource flier

**PAGC**  
Pennsylvania Association of Genetic Counselors

## The Pennsylvania Association of Genetic Counselors Needs Your Help!

Who are we?  
PAGC is a 501 (c)(6) non-profit organization that supports the growing genetic counseling community in Pennsylvania.

The Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (JEDI) working group aims to:

- foster a more diverse field of genetic counselors
- increase awareness and access to genetic counseling in PA
- diversify "best-practices" for genetic counselors as they relate to minority patient populations.

With the support of our community members, local institutions, and corporate partners, PAGC's JEDI Working group hopes to secure financial resources that will allow us to accomplish our goals in the coming years:

Increase access to genetic counseling and testing		Provide financial assistance for GC program applications	
Introduce the field of genetic counseling to students in underserved PA school districts		Award research grants to genetic counselors interested in furthering PAGC JEDI initiatives	

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HOW TO DONATE | CONTACT INFO

"The greatness of a community is most accurately measured by the compassionate actions of its members."  
- Coretta Scott King

For reference - Current sub-committees (consider whether the recommendation is for a specific subcommittee or for a JEDI group)

- Education
  - Plan annual Spring meeting
  - Plan CEU-eligible webinars throughout the year
- Professional Issues
  - Updating GC licensure in PA

- Examine barriers to credentialing of GCs in PA
  - Develop education on process and benefits of credentialing
- Genetic Services
  - Implemented PSS for PA GCs and analyzed results
  - Continue to evaluate GC services in PA
- Membership
  - Implemented new website design and maintain content
  - Manage e-blast communications
  - Create PAGC newsletter