# Celebrate Diversity Month Programming Guide

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# Celebrate Diversity Month **Programming Guide**

Celebrate Diversity Month is an international observance established in 2004 "to recognize and honor the diversity surrounding us all." Now, each April, many organizations choose to observe and celebrate this month by highlighting, honoring, and learning more about diverse customs, cultures, and experiences. By doing so, we gain a greater awareness of and appreciation for the unique backgrounds and identities of others and can better leverage diverse perspectives for greater innovation, problem-solving, productivity, and collaboration.

As you start to design your Celebrate Diversity Month programming, it's important to consider the many dimensions of diversity that each merit recognition and celebration, including gender identity, sexuality, race, ethnicity, religion, generation, disability, age, nationality, ancestry, regional identity, veteran status, economic status, social class origin, language, dialect, and more. Each of us is a unique mix of intersectional and overlapping identities which contribute to our full sense of self.

Remember that April should not be the only month in which you celebrate diversity. Instead, it's helpful to think of this month as a kick-off or a high note in your yearly schedule of diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) programming. If you are not already prioritizing DEI at your organization, it's important to realize that these programs may appear insincere or performative without a deeper organizational commitment. If that's the case, Celebrate Diversity Month offers the chance to take solid, foundational steps toward greater DEI at large, which we recommend you communicate and begin before launching a full month of diversity programming.

# What are the first steps in creating a celebration that is authentic to the diversity of your organization?

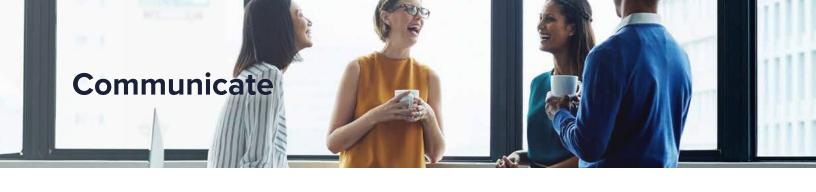


Start by collecting qualitative and quantitative data to measure your internal diversity and inclusion. This baseline data will help you look objectively at the current state of diversity and inclusion within your organization so that you can create an authentic celebration and begin to think about potential future goals. Consider a survey that asks employees to voluntarily contribute their demographic data in each of the categories above, plus any others that may be relevant to your organization, such as highest level of education completed, tenure, or marital status. Include questions that help to gauge feelings of belonging and inclusion, like "do you feel that your voice is heard and valued?" and "do you feel welcomed, respected, and empowered to grow?" And remember to explain why you are collecting this data: so you can better understand, celebrate, and embrace the unique diversity of your organization.



Then, have fun with it! Food, art, music, and games are a huge part of any culture. Encourage your team to share what's most meaningful to them. Perhaps, create a multicultural movie list or playlist of songs for employees to enjoy throughout the month. Or, ask your team to contribute their favorite recipes and create your own organization-wide digital cookbook. If your employee population speaks many languages, learn the word for "diversity" in all of them.

Celebrate Diversity Month is a wonderful opportunity to seek out and promote diversity of thought and experience within our workplaces and communities. Below are some ideas and examples for how to create an authentic celebration of diversity at your organization.



#### Internally

Include a commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) in your mission, vision, or values. Highlight diverse stories from your organization, local community, or industry in team meetings, employee newsletters, or internal Slack channels. Learn best practices for inclusive language to be sure these communications are respectful of all identities, and stimulate conversation around diversity by asking your team who they might like to honor as part of your Celebrate Diversity Month festivities.

#### **Externally**

Amplify diverse identities, stories, and cultures on your social media, publications, and external newsletters. For instance, you may choose to highlight history-making local community members or professionals in your industry who are part of marginalized or underrepresented groups. Emphasize what you are already doing to increase diversity and inclusion in your organization, even if you are only starting out on that journey. Encourage people within your organization to share their personal stories of diversity. Always be sure these posts are voluntary and that all participants feel encouraged to speak authentically.

NOTES & IDEAS	



### **Learn More About Unconscious Bias**

Embracing diversity isn't always easy, especially when our brains can so easily get in the way. Everyone has unconscious biases -- even people who have the best intentions to celebrate and embrace diversity. The key is understanding how to identify them and mitigate their effects. To learn more, consider offering a voluntary, organization-wide unconscious bias course or share online articles and videos that explain what bias is and what it does, like Anurag Gupta's TED Talk on the subject.

#### **Consider a Virtual Workshop**

Take the initiative to understand other cultures and perspectives by engaging with external speakers who have diverse identities. You may consider a virtual privilege walk, a workshop about inclusive language, or dig deeper into specific experiences by hiring a speaker from the LGBTQ+ community, disability community, immigrant community, etc. to share their personal story. By intentionally seeking multicultural perspectives, we create more deeply-felt, memorable, lived experiences of working alongside people who aren't like us.

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As mentioned earlier, a multicultural movie list, playlist of songs, or digital cookbook is a great way to start in celebrating the unique diversity of your organization. Below, you'll also find a short list of resources that may be helpful in broadening your perspective on the value and dimensions of diversity.



#### **BOOKS**

We Can't Talk About That At Work by Mary Frances Winters

Demystifying Diversity by Jiten Patel & Gamiel Yafai

Lead Like An Ally by Julie Kratz

Same, Same but Different by Jenny Sue Kostecki-Shaw

Diversify by June Sarpong

#### **DOCUMENTARIES/MOVIES**

Life In A Day
What Was Ours
Disclosure
Crip Camp

#### **PODCASTS**

Code Switch

Diversity: Beyond the Checkbox

The Deep Dive

Unlocking Us

## NOTES & IDEAS



#### Create volunteer opportunities

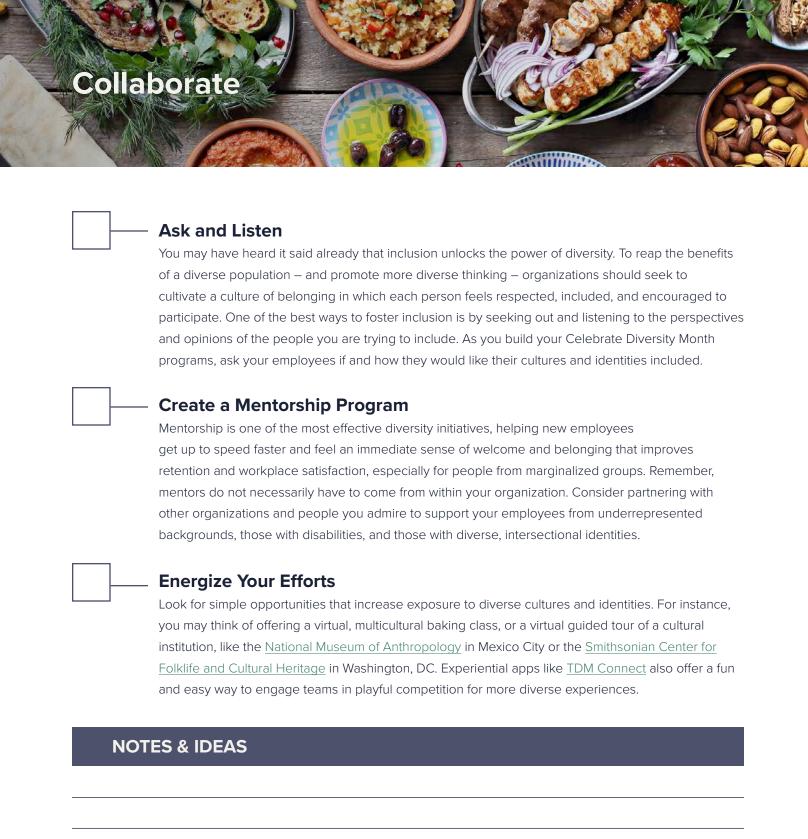
Use Volunteer Match to find virtual and in-person volunteer opportunities, or ask your employees which local nonprofits they would like your organization to support. Allow employees to take paid time off for volunteer hours, or consider creating an organization-wide Day of Service. Most metropolitan areas have volunteership programs that connect interested volunteers with opportunities for community service in city departments and city-funded agencies. To find specific opportunities within your city, try Idealist or Engage.

#### **Donate money**

Sometimes, money is the most meaningful contribution you can give to make a difference. Use Charity Navigator or Volunteer Match to find vetted options that align with your company values, or ask your employees to nominate causes and specific nonprofit organizations where they would like to make an impact. For example, you may consider creating a regular annual donation to the National Diversity Council, National Urban League, Southern Poverty Law Center, or Inclusive America.

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	Understand Where You Are  Take the time to understand your organization's existing diversity. Obtaining baseline data about your employee demographics will help you see your strengths and needs more objectively, so y can celebrate where you are successful in embracing diversity and where you may need to focu improvement. Collect quantitative demographic data plus qualitative data about whether employ feel included and respected at work. Once you know where you are starting from, it's easier to understand where you want to go.
_	Support Diverse Professionals  Consider engaging or partnering with diversity-focused trade and professional associations that provide support for traditionally underrepresented groups. For instance, if you are in healthcare, may consider a relationship with the American Muslim Health Professionals or the Association of Black Cardiologists. If you are in engineering, consider the Association for Women in Science or American Society of Engineers of Indian Origin. To make a deeper local impact, you might also the creating a paid internship or annual scholarship for one or more students from your local Historical Black College or University (HBCU).
	Start to Increase Your Supplier Diversity  Investigate how you can make a positive impact and deepen your relationship with diverse peoplin your local community or within your industry. Kickstart an effort toward greater supplier diversity re-examining which companies and people you partner with for your foundational business servicely like legal services, insurance, pest control, office supplies, catered lunches, or accounting and passed to make an intentional impact both socially and economically.
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#### Conclusion

Celebrate Diversity Month draws attention to the great diversity of human identities, perspectives, and experiences that surround us every day. At an organizational level, highlighting diversity encourages us to celebrate the strength in our differences and to look outside our own perspective to see the world differently. By investing time and energy in celebrating diversity, your organization shows current employees, potential hires, customers, clients, partners, and all stakeholders that you value a broad range of identities, cultures, backgrounds, and perspectives.

ADDITIONAL NOTES & IDEAS	
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# **About TDM** The Diversity Movement is a results-oriented, data-driven strategic partner for organization-wide diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives. Our team of experts provides a customized mix of online learning, tools, events, and consulting services that help our partners create sustainable culture change and better business outcomes. Learn more at thediversitymovement.com.