



Identify yourself:

Why it's important to claim your ethnic minority status and support OEA's commitment to racial, social, and economic justice.

Identity matters. It allows OEA to provide focused leadership trainings for ethnic minority members. It gives OEA the ability to provide statewide networking opportunities. And it helps OEA put our words into practice—our ethnic minority members can help create and maintain our association's vibrancy and relevancy by being active at all levels—their local associations, OEA, and NEA.

Claiming your ethnic minority status supports OEA's commitment to racial, social, and economic justice.

In the lower left column of the OEA/NEA Membership Enrollment form, is an unassuming data box labeled ETHNICITY. Below this box is the following statement: "Ethnic minority information is optional and failure to provide it will in no way affect your membership status, rights or benefits in NEA, OEA or any of its affiliates. This information will be kept strictly confidential."

On the back of the form, ethnicity codes include nine choices from which members can select if they choose to identify. Included in these choices are Native American/Alaska Native, African-American/Black, Hispanic, Caucasian (not Hispanic origin), Asian, Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, Multi-Ethnic, Other, and Unknown.

OEA has one simple ask: please select the appropriate choice for you. You can do this on the membership enrollment form or when you sign up for an OEA/NEA event.

The OEA Board began the journey of establishing a priority centered on racial and social justice at its retreat in February 2020. At that time, Board members discussed whether or not OEA should embed racial/social justice work into each of its other priorities or create a standalone priority. The board decided it was important to establish a standalone priority for this crucial work.

NEA Human and Civil Rights (HCR) staff member Nilka Julio joined the board for its retreat in February 2020 to help members begin this work with the goal of helping board members learn strategies to better identify and support racial, social, and economic justice and develop their personal journey in advancing OEA's strategic priorities to be equity-centered and justice-minded.

The Strategic Priorities Oversight Committee, a subcommittee of the Board, worked with Julio and OEA leadership to craft the following language for the new priority for presentation to the Board at its September 2020 meeting:
Priority 4: Educate and organize OEA and its members to advocate for racial, social, and economic justice.

The Board adopted the priority and established conditions of success in October 2020. The conditions include the number of members attending OEA trainings on racial, social, and economic justice; number of OEA programs and activities facilitated or curated on the issues of racial, social, and economic justice; and number and percentage of members of color who are elected to and attend the OEA RA.

With input from staff, the Board reworked the conditions of success for all strategic priorities in October 2021.

OEA's 4th Strategic Priority provides a new focus for the way OEA organizes its programs, resources, and people to carry out its work and drives its partnerships, issue advocacy, training, and leadership development.

Join OEA in its mission to reflect Ohio's population, to be a diverse organization of people from all backgrounds working towards one common goal—providing and supporting a great public education for our students.