

# Our Commitment

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion at Axios

**AXIOS**

# Our mission is to create a better world within our company than the world around us

— a company that is just, fair, transparent, diverse, equitable and inclusive for all people and that is held accountable for these stated values.

We believe that:

- Diversity, equity and inclusion are the pillars upon which a sustainable, respectable, successful, and worthy company is built.
- Diversity, equity, and inclusion are business and moral imperatives.
- Every employee must embrace these values in order for us to succeed and must adhere to the processes that support them.
- These ideals will crumble without sustainable and maintained structures in place.
- DEI underlies all parts of Axios, from the hiring process to developing accessible technologies to fostering DEI values in our editorial department.
- HR and DEI are inextricably linked — every single part of the employee experience is designed through the lens of DEI.

This is Axios



**We believe in diversity:** Unique identities, life experiences, differing perspectives, and nuanced opinions inform the debate needed for both innovation and success. Diversity is the spark of creative thought while uniformity is its death.

**Diversity is the fruit of an effective hiring process.** Developing a diverse workforce is the direct result of prioritizing, investing and building a hiring team with a meticulously designed process to mitigate bias and ensure fairness. It requires work upfront to build a robust pool of candidates for every role each time. It is not about lowering standards or changing qualifications, as decisions are based on each candidate's merit.

**A lack of diversity is not a pipeline problem.** This common excuse tends to be a crutch for underinvesting in a qualified hiring team and not doing the hard work. With support from our hiring partners and ample resources, time and collaboration, we believe we can produce a diverse pipeline of candidates for any role.



**We believe in equity:** Equal pay, opportunity and treatment stem from our fair and transparent system that aims to support, grow, reward, and advance all employees.

**Data and analytics are key** to understanding our company's current status and setting goals.

- We designed our own Demographics and Inclusion survey because we couldn't find one that was truly inclusive. We run this annually, analyze the results, and share and publish our demographics.
- We review and analyze our performance management outcomes to ensure all employees are being compensated fairly and have equitable access to opportunities and advancement.

**Adhering to standard processes** in hiring, onboarding, development, and offboarding ensures equity across the organization and the employee experience.

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**We believe in inclusion:** All voices are welcomed in company conversations and all identities are respected and accepted. We use strengths-based assessments and User Guides to help individuals better understand one another and we mandate ongoing educational training for managers and leaders. Inclusion is at the core of all design — both for our products and the employee journey.

**Psychological safety** is a fundamental building block in any great company culture. We work to establish and protect psychological safety in several ways.

- **Transparency:** Leaders solicit and answer anonymous, often complicated or sensitive questions, without censorship, at our weekly staff meetings, department team meetings and company-wide retreats. We believe giving people the option of anonymity creates safety.
- **Candor:** We live this. We address questions head on, in real-time, with unapologetic candor. We admit our mistakes and we crave feedback.
- **Ongoing support:** In addition to the support an employee should receive from their manager, the People Ops team checks in with all new employees at the 30, 60 and 90-day mark to ensure our employees are being properly supported.
- **Mistakes:** Everyone learns from mistakes. We work to use these moments as opportunities to figure out what could be improved going forward, instead of assigning blame.

**We encourage employee resource groups (ERGs)** to create safe spaces for colleagues to build a community around a shared identity. Our ERGs offer employees...

- A sense of community and belonging.
- Professional development.
- Another avenue to strengthen relationships.
- A collective voice around a shared interest or concern that helps promote a more inclusive and respectful workforce.

**We support Allyship.** An ally uses their power to support and protect people who are marginalized or targeted for who they are and how they look. Allyship means educating oneself about the struggle and experiences of others, and doing one's part in resetting our social contract to one of justice and equality for all.

- We organize monthly programming for employees to help broaden their perspectives and foster allyship.

# How it works



# Attract

## How we find talented candidates & how they find us

We proactively source candidates from and promote our jobs on myriad job boards to ensure we are reaching a broad audience that includes underrepresented communities. (an effective recruiting process does not rely on referral networks).

We attend annual conferences and career fairs that support our DEI initiatives.

We host events with partnership organizations to establish real bonds with underrepresented communities.

## How we manage bias throughout the hiring process

We use **standardized interview guides** to ensure the interview team is asking the same well-defined, performance-based questions.

We use **standardized rubrics** that help interviewers assess their conversations post-interview.

We don't allow interviewers to see other interviewer's feedback until they first submit their own, in order to **mitigate conformity bias**. We also ask that people not share information with the interview team on candidates they refer.

We use **"interview tests"** to best assess abilities, not personalities.

Our hiring team counsels the interview committee to ensure we're being thoughtful in our decision-making approach.

We ensure hiring managers make final decisions from a diverse group of qualified candidates.

## How we determine compensation

We use multiple data sources to validate compensation for each job.

Compensation is determined on a number of factors and some are weighed more heavily than others. These include:

- Your specific role at Axios and the skill set required (current market value for your skill set).
- Current regional job market (cost of living is taken into account and varies from city to city).
- Your years of applicable work experience and total work experience.
- The level of that position within Axios.

In an effort to combat perpetual and systemic pay inequality, we do not ask candidates for their current or historic compensation. We work with candidates to understand their compensation expectations and then validate that request with our robust internal and external data sources for that particular role.

## How we negotiate

Ultimate compensation for an offer considers three things:

- What compensation the candidate is looking for.
- What internal compensation ranges ensure parity between analogous jobs.
- What is recommended from external market data (Payscale and variable sources based on specialties).

## How we use equity

We believe in ownership for all. All employees receive equity as part of their offer and we do not lower pay based on that offer. Equity is distributed in tiers, much like PTO, and the amount you are offered depends on your position.

# Integrate

## How we onboard

Onboarding leaves a lasting impression — the onboarding process starts the moment a candidate becomes a new hire and continues well after their first week.

**Pre-boarding:** We developed a pre-boarding program to help our team engage with our new hires before their first day. Helping the new hire begin the company integration process early and calm anxiety due to ambiguity around the first day.

**Onboarding:** A new hire's first day is dedicated to: culture and policies, mission statements and values, employee handbook, performance management, benefits education, job training, and team introductions.

- We use Donut in Slack to help the new hire track and manage the tasks they're asked to complete at arrival all the way through their 100th day at Axios.
- The editorial department has a separate onboarding to ensure new team members understand the importance of DEI values in our best practices and standards.

**Get Smart:** We run comprehensive orientation sessions for new hires once a month to teach new hires about our business, values, standards, and history. These sessions are updated frequently to ensure the new hires are receiving the most up-to-date information.

**30/60/90:** We measure the success of our onboarding programs through the use of 30/60/90 day surveys of the manager and the new hire. This also helps us see who needs additional support.

# How we ensure inclusion

**User guides:** Each employee completes a user guide within their first three months at Axios to help educate others on their style and preferences. This exercise helps new teammates integrate into their team quicker and adapt to their new environment.

**Gallup Strengths:** We are a Gallup StrengthsFinder-based organization. We believe that each individual has a unique set of strengths and prioritizing those strengths will help an individual tap their greatest potential. These strengths assessments serve as the basis for training and supports the relationship between the manager and their direct reports.

**Allie bot** administers our bi-annual Demographics and Inclusion survey. This diversity and inclusion tool from Slack also shares helpful DEI learning content in our #General channel to help our employees stay informed on topics related to DEI. We also use this tool as a safe and anonymous way for our employees to report non-inclusive behavior.

- Our demographic survey data includes the following: age, race/ethnicity, gender, transgender, sexual orientation, pronouns, veteran status, disability, caregiver status, educational attainment — including first generation status, religious affiliation, immigration status, and language proficiency.
- Our inclusion survey explores the areas of belonging, equity, and safety as it relates to inclusion in the workplace.

# Develop

## How we assess performance

Every employee goes through a consistent process of goal-setting, assessment and reward, to ensure fairness, equity and transparency. Our performance evaluation process runs every July and December.

- We use competency maps with growth tracks. Our upcoming competency maps are department-specific and identify core competencies for each position and detail possible growth tracks.

## How we support ongoing education

Everyone completes a “managing bias” training in onboarding.

Axios offers training on a variety of topics year-round. To date, we have held trainings on the following topics: microaggressions, bystander intervention & allyship, unconscious bias, pronouns, etc.

- The editorial team holds a monthly editorial meeting and posts an internal bimonthly standards newsletter, where DEI values are often discussed and emphasized in the best practices used in our content.

Stay Smart is the name of our monthly learning program that gives all Axions the chance to learn about new topics, and also get to know each other.

Axios invests massively in manager training to ensure leadership can understand, support and help their employees develop their strengths and reach their aspirations

# Reward

## Promotions

Promoted employees will gain greater responsibility, a new title and more compensation.

- All employees being considered for a promotion must be considered on both the merits of their performance (both qualitative and quantitative) and their adherence to our cultural values.
- Managers and executives nominate individuals for promotion. They fill out applications which describe past performance, new job responsibilities, adherence to our values (audience first, excellence always, and candor), among other things.
- The Founders + People team give final approval on all promotions.

## Merit Increases

A merit increase is a monetary, performance-based increase in compensation that employees may earn once a year. Merit increases are between 1%–5% of an employee's base salary and are ultimately approved by executives.

## Awards

We have two quarterly awards to recognize extraordinary employee performance:

- **Be like Mike:** Axions nominate and recognize colleagues who go above and beyond in their generous and humble service.
- **Quarterly MVP:** Nominated and voted on by founders.

# Support

## How we invest in DEI

Axios has a top-notch professional People Ops team.

**On budget** reflects our commitment with a large annual amount set aside for DEI efforts (ERG budgets; recruiting conferences; DEI training; job boards for hiring; veteran fellowships; and our Emerging Leaders Program).

**DEI programming:** Across a quarter we host key events, including...

- Continuing the conversation with an external speaker and educators.
- Continuing the conversation via internal interviews with Axios colleagues.
- Quarterly ERG group meetings.
- Annual ERG sponsored company learning sessions.

**Pandemic support:** We created a family fund to support those disproportionately affected by COVID; built robust programming to promote good health; instituted new benefits and created varied programming to enhance engagement for all Axios to stay connected.

**Floating religious/cultural days off:** We evolved our three “religious holidays” benefit to be more inclusive. We now support employees applying these days in recognition of whatever religious OR cultural days they wish to celebrate.

# Transition

**How we offboard:** How an employee leaves an organization should reflect an organization's values. We work hard to keep all parties updated, organized and aligned so that communication and transitions from Axios are smooth and respectful for all.

**Becoming a manager:** When someone becomes a manager they take on more responsibility than ever before. To ensure each of our new managers knows their expectations, we created a new manager guide that helps explain the Axios Management Principles, the tenets of a good manager, and the manager mindset. We also fold our new manager into our existing training that includes individual coaching sessions.

**Stepping into a new role:** When an employee moves into a new role we work hard to make sure it's a smooth transition. This includes mapping out what happens with their current responsibilities and ensuring clarity around their future responsibilities.

What we can  
do better

**AXIOS**

# Innovation

## New for 2020

### **Emerging Leaders Program**

This program identifies two emerging leaders within the company and accelerates their growth with mentorship, a seat in executive team meetings, \$5,000 in financial support, and additional programming.

### **Increased diversity on the executive team and on editorial leadership**

We've made a commitment to fill one of four open executive positions with a person of color.

### **Increased transparency into our executive recruiting process**

We do not share demographic data gathered during the hiring process, instead we:

- Established regular meetins with the Emerging Leaders in 2020 to review pipelines and process for key hires to add additional accountability for the diversification and thoroughness of our hiring strategies for each role.
- Share more information for other positions (time to hire, total applicants, etc.).

What we need  
from you

**AXIOS**

## Keep speaking up and speaking out

Each Axion is expected to join our collective commitment to our DEI goals to realize success.

## Assume positive intent

Remember we all have different life experiences and communication styles.

## Hiring managers should take extra steps to ensure our DEI values are followed

We ask you to challenge your notion of what you need in a role — be honest about what skills can be taught and what you need on day one. Be open-minded to the possibility that what you think you need might be different from what you need.

We all have implicit biases that may get in the way with how we think, hire and manage. Please reach out to the People Team if you have questions on any part of DEI and Axios' commitment to hire and retain good people from different backgrounds. Being a manager is a huge responsibility — how you manage and who you hire sets a precedent among your team and future leaders.

**Interviewers should prepare for the interviews** by having a strong understanding of the role and what questions you'll ask all candidates. Be as objective as possible in your assessment, which should be documented as quickly as possible into Greenhouse.

**Help promote and share open roles in your network** so we can broaden our accessibility and the audience it reaches.