



AEO celebrates the diversity of one through the inclusion of many. At AEO, we believe our success is the result of being inclusive, diverse, equitable and accessible. It's about more than simply bringing people together who are different, it's about celebrating what makes us REAL.



*"Together we are making real—and lasting
—change to build an even stronger, more
diverse workplace that provides opportunities
for our associates to continue to develop and
grow within our AEO family."*

-Jay Schottenstein
Executive Chairman of the Board
& Chief Executive Officer, AEO Inc.



every associate feels empowered, respected and part of something real. This report is an opportunity to reflect on the important work that AEO has done and our journey forward as we continue to build a future that integrates inclusion, diversity, equity and access into everything we do. Click [here](#) to read the report.

AEO continued its positive momentum in 2021, including:

- Achieved Year over Year increases in hiring rates and representation of Persons of Color across each of its business units (corporate, stores and distribution centers).
- Announced inaugural 15 recipients of the REAL Change Scholarship for Social Justice, a scholarship program supported by a \$5 million investment, providing annual scholarships to 15 associates who are actively driving anti-racism, equality and social justice initiatives.
- Completed first I&D survey and focus groups providing important qualitative data regarding inclusive culture and belonging. The survey and focus groups established benchmarks for future measurement of progress.
- Launch of Interactive and Data Driven DEI training platform.
- Mandatory training for leadership + select departments (e.g., Inclusive Leadership, Unconscious Bias, Micro-Aggression, Cultural Appropriation).
- Launch of Co-Mentorship Program and College-based Mentorship.
- Introduced inaugural Inclusive Language Guide for managers and associates.
- Launched English as a Second Language (ESL) program.
- Expanded family and health and wellness benefits to include on-site health care, new telemedicine options and benefits app, fertility benefits and increased emphasis on mental health resources.
- Partnered with organizations such as Harlem's Fashion Row, Open to All, PNC Partner Up, Asian Americans Advancing Justice and Black Equity Coalition.
- Participated in Disability Mentoring Day for the first time.
- Began piloting new interview scorecard and training guide focused on creating a more equitable and consistent assessment of candidates.
- Conducted IDEA focused workshops + sessions with departments and groups throughout the business.

Learn more about our Strategic Vision and the diversity of our team [here](#).



Our IDEA Pillars

Creating an environment where everyone feels respected and empowered is more than just a statement, it is an expectation and part of our core values. We structure our Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Access efforts under the

following pillars: *hiring, community and development*.

Hiring

AEO is committed to hiring a diverse workforce. We welcome the unique contributions that our associates bring to our organization from their ethnicity, race, age, gender identity and expression, veteran's status, religion, disability, sexual orientation, nation of origin, and education. We are focused on ensuring candidate diversity in the recruiting process, offering interview panels comprised of diverse associates, expanding our candidate pools through strengthened relationships with community organizations and HBCUs, providing inclusive leadership and unconscious bias training for all hiring managers, and providing accommodations for candidates as needed.

Community

AEO believes that our people are our most valuable asset and we are committed to a culture that fosters inclusion and a true sense of belonging. Our associates have the freedom to be themselves, uniquely helping to create a vibrant community. AEO is a place where our people are excited to come to work, they believe in the work that they do, feel valued, and are appreciated for their contributions. At AEO we also know we not only have the power to touch lives within our company but can also make a lasting impact in the communities in which we operate. We know that living our values of People, Innovation, Passion, Integrity and Teamwork will allow us to enrich our internal and external communities and sustain our inclusive culture.

Development

AEO is dedicated to educating our workforce, at all levels, on important topics and issues for marginalized communities in order to foster an inclusive and supportive workplace for our associates. In addition, we are committed to the continuous improvement of our talent development process, performance metrics, mentorship opportunities, and people analytics to ensure our associates achieve personal and career growth while at AEO. We continue to strengthen our leadership practices with inclusive leadership training and open forum discussions, and plan to further invest to understand how we can improve long-term.



In 2018, a group of associates passionate about inclusion and diversity founded the I&D Alliance. It has been a group that has advocated for REAL change, to create an environment where everyone feels respected and empowered. The Alliance informs and educates the three pillar working groups (Hiring, Culture and Development) and the I&D Steering Committee on the changes they would like to see. The core purpose of the group is centered on developing and implementing strategic action plans to embed I&D into the core functions of the business. The Alliance is open to all associates who are eager to do the work to make our great culture better.

AEO Associate Networks & Connections

Associate Networks + Connection groups promote educational opportunities and foster our associate community. Associate Networks are shared interest groups, generally tied to AEO's Purpose, Values and Corporate Responsibility. These groups have a clear mission, specific goals and an Executive Sponsor. Associate Connections are less formal than Networks and are designed for associates to engage with others with similar interests, hobbies and passions.



The REAL Parents Network

The REAL Parents Associate Network was founded in 2019 to establish supportive connections to acknowledge the realities of working parents. Their goals are to recognize the challenges of navigating personal and professional lives, maternity, paternity and new dependent leave, medical benefits, re-entering the workplace, and balancing career development as parents. The group provides mentoring, resources and inspires their community with REAL stories and education.



The Real Jewish Connection

AEO's REAL Jewish Connection is a group created to celebrate the Jewish culture through education and recognition of holiday rituals throughout the year. This associate connection is open to all associates interested in sharing their experiences and learning and honoring Jewish culture! This past year, the REAL Jewish Connection virtually celebrated holidays with events such as Apples & Honey for Rosh Hashanah, the Dreidel games and latke making for Hanukkah, and they will commemorate International Holocaust Remembrance Day on January 27.

Associate Network

- The Green Team
- REAL Parents
- The REAL Pride Network
- Women in Technology
- Veteran & Military Employee Resource Group
- REAL Black Alliance

Associate Connections

- The Anti-Racism Connection
- AEO Boomerangs
- New-ish to Pittsburgh
- AEO REAL Creators

- [AEO REAL Dogs](#)
- [AEO REAL Jewish Connection](#)
- [Women @ AEO](#)
- [Asian-American Pacific Islander \(AAPI\)](#)

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