



Where We Stand: NAVTA's First-Ever DEIB Landscape Survey



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The veterinary nursing profession thrives when it is built on passion, skill, and teamwork. But like many healthcare professions, it is also shaped by who is welcomed, represented, and supported in the workforce. Recognizing that inclusivity strengthens the profession and the community it serves, NAVTA recently released its first-ever Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging (DEIB) Landscape Survey Report: Where We Stand.

This landmark project offers the most detailed snapshot to date of credentialed veterinary technicians' perspectives on DEIB in both their workplaces and the broader veterinary community. The report highlights encouraging signs of acceptance, while also uncovering areas where more progress is needed—providing a valuable baseline to measure change in the years ahead.

Why DEIB Matters

Veterinary medicine has undergone dramatic demographic shifts in recent decades. One of the most visible changes has been the feminization of the profession. Yet, progress in racial and ethnic representation has lagged behind. Veterinary technology reflects these broader workforce trends: a field that is predominantly female and White, with persistent barriers that make it harder for underrepresented groups to enter and advance.

Focusing on DEIB is not just about fairness—it's about sustaining the profession. Inclusive workplaces foster higher job satisfaction, longer career tenure, and greater innovation. In a field already challenged by compassion fatigue, burnout, and retention issues, the importance of fostering belonging cannot be overstated. As NAVTA's DEIB position statement notes, “By actively embracing diversity, advancing equity, fostering inclusion, and promoting belonging, we can strengthen the veterinary nursing profession, enhance the quality of care provided to animals, and create a more just and equitable professional landscape for all.”

About the Survey

NAVTA's DEIB Committee designed and distributed the survey in September 2023. Invitations went to more than 3600 credentialed members, and 259 technicians responded. To improve accessibility, the survey was offered in both English and Spanish and took about 15 minutes to complete.

Participants were asked about demographics, workplace experiences, and perceptions of DEIB. Participants could also provide open-ended feedback on ways to strengthen inclusivity in both the association and the profession.



Key Findings

Demographics

The following demographic details were reported. These results confirm what many already suspected: While the profession is inclusive in some respects, representation gaps remain, and barriers tied to disability and language persist.

- **Gender:** 69.9% identified as cisgender women
- **Race/ethnicity:** 61.4% identified as White/Caucasian; smaller percentages identified as Hispanic/Latino (6.9%), biracial (7.3%), Asian (1.2%), or Black/African American (1.2%)
- **Sexual identity:** 60.6% identified as heterosexual, while 15.8% identified as members of sexual minority groups
- **Disability:** 22% reported a disability or workplace challenge
- **Language:** 8.5% completed the survey in Spanish; 8.1% reported being bilingual in English and Spanish

Workplace Acceptance and Belonging

Overall, veterinary nurses/technicians reported high levels of workplace acceptance. More than half gave the highest possible rating when asked whether they feel accepted for who they are at work. Respondents also expressed strong comfort discussing their social and cultural backgrounds, averaging 8.26 out of 10.

For those who identified as belonging to an underrepresented group, however, the story was more nuanced. Their average scores for belonging were lower: 6.8/10 for the workplace and 6/10 for the veterinary community at large.

Disability Inclusion

Experiences varied widely among those who reported having disabilities. Some felt well supported, while others reported limited accommodations or lack of understanding. These mixed results underscore the need for proactive measures to ensure accessibility is consistent across all workplaces.

Language Barriers

Spanish-speaking veterinary nurses/technicians highlighted the lack of translated educational materials and exams, including the Veterinary Technician National Examination. Without these resources, many talented individuals face unnecessary barriers to success. Addressing language accessibility will be a key step toward creating a more equitable profession.

Generational Differences

Younger respondents and those identifying as LGBTQIA+ were more likely to view

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DEIB as highly important. This finding suggests that expectations for inclusivity are going to grow stronger as newer generations enter the workforce.

Opportunities Ahead

The survey offers a roadmap for where to focus energy and resources:

- **Improving representation** by recruiting and retaining students and professionals from underrepresented backgrounds
- **Supporting disability inclusion** with consistent accommodations and universal design practices
- **Expanding language access** through translated resources and licensure exams
- **Recognizing generational expectations** and tailoring initiatives to meet different perspectives
- **Collecting better data** to more fully capture diverse identities and experiences

Looking Forward

This survey marks a beginning. For the first time, NAVTA has a benchmark for understanding how credentialed veterinary technicians experience diversity and inclusion in their profession. Future surveys will allow NAVTA to track changes over time, evaluate the impact of initiatives, and ensure that those of all backgrounds can thrive.

Fostering DEIB is not just about creating a welcoming workplace—it directly impacts patient care. Practices that reflect and embrace the diversity of the communities they serve are better positioned to provide compassionate, effective care for all animals and clients.

We are grateful to NAVTA's DEIB Committee, the contributing authors, and the NAVTA members who took the time to share their experiences. Their voices will help guide the profession toward a more inclusive and sustainable future. **TVN**



Explore the Full Results

For more details or to read the full survey results, scan the QR code.