



About AMC Affinity Groups

• • • • •

The AMC is committed to creating affinity spaces as part of our ongoing effort to create welcoming communities. Affinity spaces provide an opportunity for individuals to participate in an experience without the fear of judgment from others who do not share an understanding of their lived experience, i.e., what it can feel like to be “the only” of a specific group in a space.

Creating affinity spaces demonstrates that AMC is listening to all voices in an aim to deliver safe, supportive programming for everyone. Affinity spaces can help break through problematic traditions or norms when those traditions can lead to assumptions about a person’s ability or experience. Affinity spaces provide a group with a supportive space to develop new skills without having to push against a dominant culture.

While our affinity spaces are open to everyone, we ask that you take a moment to reflect if you consider yourself a true ally before signing up for an affinity trip. Allyship can be defined as the actions, behaviors, and practices that individuals take to support, amplify, and advocate with others, most especially with individuals who don’t belong to the same social identities as themselves. (Note that we say “advocate with ...” rather than “advocate for ...” because advocacy should be done in partnership with the affinity group).

It’s important to note that allyship isn’t a single action; rather, it’s ongoing action itself, with a focus on other people, not on yourself. That being said:

Being an ally also requires deep education about the communities that you’re interested in demonstrating allyship toward. We always recommend the approach of educating ourselves through the avenues available first, before reaching out or leaning on others to teach us. Educational sources are readily available through a multitude of platforms (e.g., local libraries, on the Internet via advocacy websites, social media accounts, and local and national organizations, among others).

Building a strong foundation of competencies, knowledge, and awareness is the best way to turn allyship from a buzzword into actual, sustainable behaviors that create welcoming communities and build a sense of belonging.

• • • • •

Interested in Showing Allyship?

Avoid:

1. **Preforming:** Take meaningful actions to show real support.
2. **Platitudes:** Commit authentically without empty gestures.
3. **Positions:** Focus on listening and learning; not titles or labels.
4. **Perfections:** Be humble; you won’t get it right everytime.

Sample Descriptions of AMC Affinity Groups

• • • • •

We provide these descriptions to support volunteers and staff efforts to invite people to affinity groups. Please contact Volunteer Relations at volunteerrelations@outdoors.org if you have questions.

Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC)

Experiences specifically designed for and led by people who are BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color).

Women's+

These experiences are led by women, gender-nonconforming, trans, and non-binary folks for members of these groups. AMC encourages women's trips to include the + to signal a safe space for people with more diverse gender expressions.

LGBTQ+

Experiences led by and for people who identify as part of the LGBTQ+ Community; this acronym includes but is not limited to; Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex, Non-Binary, Asexual and/or Questioning.

People with Disabilities

There is a broad spectrum of physical, cognitive, and psychological disabilities. However, that should not limit anyone from going outdoors. The AMC offers many trips on all person's trails and other activities for individuals with disabilities. We do ask that you refer to our Essential Eligibility Criteria prior to signing up to ensure your safety.

20's and 30's (or Young Members)

AMC 20's and 30's groups are dedicated to getting people between the ages of 20-39 who enjoy the outdoors involved with AMC for generations to come. [Here](#) is more information on the discounted AMC membership for individuals under 30.

55+

AMC's 55+ groups are dedicated to getting people 55 and older outside by making it easier to find trips that focus on ability and comradery or trips that are offered during typical working hours.

FAQ's

• • • • •

How do staff and volunteers promote Affinity Groups at AMC?

Volunteers and staff in leadership positions for these groups and experiences should be a member of the Affinity Group they are looking to lead. **Volunteers and staff are the protectors of the spaces they create and have the authority to redirect anyone who does not demonstrate allyship of the Affinity Group.** This may happen during the participant screening process, at the trailhead, or at a social event. This vetting ensures that participants have a positive experience. AMC offers thousands of trips each year, and people can be encouraged to seek an alternate trip to participate in.

I want to organize an event/trip for an Affinity Group I identify with. What wording can I use?

In the event title, make sure to list the Affinity Group audience you are targeting and the keyword "Affinity." This will help members find your trip. You can include multiple affinities in trip listings. Here are some examples:

- [Affinity] 20's and 30's Canoe and Camping Trip- Saco River, ME
- [Affinity] Women's 70+ Mt. Auburn Cemetery Local Walk
- [Affinity] BIPOC Women's Weekend (Black Indigenous People of Color) at Fire Island Cabin
- [Affinity] Disability 5 mile Biking/Cycling for Wheelchair Users & others w/Mobility Needs
- [Affinity] LGBTQ+ over 60 Hike Mt. Washington

In the description of your event, you should also include the following language:

"This is intended to be a [INSERT] affinity trip, but everyone is welcome. If you do not identify with that group, we trust that you have reviewed our allyship criteria, have done your due diligence to educate yourself, and have committed to abide by our [Code of Conduct](#). If you have questions, please contact the trip leader(s) by emailing them for more information.

Where can I find the Essential Eligibility Criteria?

Please note that the AMC has Essential Eligibility Criteria (EEC) that apply to all participants in AMC-sponsored activities. These criteria were created to help potential participants identify and understand the fundamental cognitive and physical requirements of participating in AMC activities. The EEC are a resource for anyone considering participating in an AMC-sponsored activity; please speak with the program manager with any questions or requests for accommodation regarding the EEC.