

DEI Frequently Asked Question (FAQ)

For Potential Employees, Donors, Providers, Future Board Members, and Sponsors

Q: How do diversity and inclusion practices benefit an organization?

A: There are several financial benefits that organizations can gain by incorporating diversity and inclusion into their procedures. These practices can help companies boost their annual earnings, attract the best talent, and increase innovation. Additionally, diversity and inclusion are attractive to consumers: Studies show that people are willing to spend more money with companies that value diversity and inclusion over those that do not.

Q: What are the benefits of diversity and inclusion for employees?

A: Just as diversity and inclusion benefit an entire organization, gains are also enjoyed by individual workers. These values create a sense of comfort and belonging at a company that can help to significantly increase engagement among employees, as well as their ability to be creative in the work that they do. In addition, working in an inclusive environment makes employees happier than when they are in a less inclusive one.

Q: Are there ways to measure diversity and inclusion within an organization? If so, how?

A: In order for organizations to understand where they currently are in terms of their diversity and inclusion, as well as identify areas where they need to improve, it's imperative for them to understand the metrics. Some areas that you can look at include your company's hiring rate of workers from underserved populations, the attrition rate of these workers, the rate of promotions these employees receive, and the amount they are given in raises and bonuses compared to other employees. To get a clear picture of what these figures are, your company should measure the markers over time and throughout each department of the organization. Also, be sure to evaluate diversity levels among leadership teams and your organization's board of directors.

Q: How can a company demonstrate its dedication to diversity and inclusion when recruiting?

A: There are several ways that you can let job seekers, and your entire community, know that your company is dedicated to diversity and inclusion as you look for new hires. One way is by partnering with local colleges and universities and building relationships with campus groups that represent the needs of underserved populations. Also, your company can create internships and scholarships specifically for the groups you want to attract, post jobs on message boards catering to underrepresented job seekers and build relationships with professional organizations for minority groups.

Q: How can bias be eliminated from the hiring process?

A: Although your company may have the best intentions of creating a culture of inclusion and diversity, some biases may still creep into the hiring process—biases that your hiring managers may not even be consciously aware of. However, there are some strategies you can employ to minimize bias when recruiting.

For example, your company can use a blind hiring process, which can include a blind resume practice, where you black out all of the personal information on resumes—such as names, addresses, dates of birth, and locations—so that you’re not using these factors to evaluate candidates. Also, blind interviews that allow candidates to anonymously answer initial screening questions electronically through a recruitment platform further reduce the chances of biases creeping into the process. Additionally, the use of personality tests and technology can help ensure that candidates are screened for their job qualifications.

Q: Does having a diverse organization help with employee retention?

A: Not necessarily. Although letting your community know about your organization’s commitment to diversity may help you attract top talent, that alone will not retain great workers. It’s also important for organizations to invest in the inclusion piece of the puzzle, otherwise the underserved workers they hired will not stay. People need to feel valued after they’ve been onboarded and if they don’t, they will experience stress and dissatisfaction, as well as low productivity, which will cause them to look for a company that makes inclusion a priority.

Q: How can a company promote diversity and inclusion within the organization?

A: In order for a diversity and inclusion program to be successful, everyone in your organization needs to be on board with it. This starts with all employees understanding the importance of diversity and inclusion in the company, which you can outline in your policies and reiterate during training sessions. Also, it’s important for there to be accountability in your culture, so when people behave in ways that are contrary to a healthy, inclusive environment, they need to be taught about their biases and given instruction on how to correct these behaviors.

For Families Caring for People with Disabilities/ Differently abled Individuals

Q: What is diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI)?

A: Diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) is a set of values that defines a business' ability to create a safe and equitable workplace for all employees and Families regardless of background.

Let's break down the three terms even further:

Diversity means that there is widespread representation of people with different backgrounds (race, age, gender, etc.) within an organization.

Equity means justice or rightness or fairness and impartial treatment for everyone. At work, employees have access to all opportunities and are held under the same standards, NOT sameness or equal distribution.

Inclusion means creating a welcome environment at work where employees are empowered to participate equally also the act or practice of including and accommodating people who have historically been excluded (as because of their race, gender, sexuality, or ability).

The concept of DEI continues to evolve, and many organizations have also started recognizing "belonging" as part of their **DEI(B)** efforts. **Belonging** is the outcome of diversity, equity, and inclusion. It's the feeling of comfort, connection, and acceptance.

Q: What is a culture of diversity?

A: Diversity in its most simple form can be defined as "all the similarities and differences amongst people." In other words, it's a combination of all the characteristics that make us individuals such as age, ethnicity, national origin, sexual orientation, religious beliefs, disability, military experience, and socio-economic background; ideas, attitudes, beliefs, educational background, perspectives, values, and so on. A culture of diversity embodies understanding ourselves and each other, moving beyond tolerance to acceptance, and wholly embracing the richness of each individual.

Q: Isn't diversity just another fancy name for Affirmative Action or Equal Employment Opportunity?

A: No. Affirmative Action is a legally driven mandate that government contractors take positive steps (affirmative action) to ensure the recruitment and advancement of qualified minorities, women, persons with disabilities, and covered veterans, as in education and employment. Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) is employment practices that ensure nondiscrimination, fairness, and equity in the workplace.

Q: As a family member, why should I be concerned with diversity?

A: We live in a global society. Understanding and valuing people from different backgrounds, customs, and experiences better prepares us for success. Diversity fosters a more creative and inclusive environment where every person is valued. Diverse opinions lead to more informed decisions. Diversity on campuses enables learning with people from a variety of experiences which encourages collaboration and fosters innovation, thus benefiting all. Advancing diversity and inclusion improves our collective success – we are a much stronger and better community when all voices and opinions are received and valued.

Q: What is the difference between Equality and Equity?

A: Equality is about sameness or uniformity while equity addresses universal fairness. When systems are built on equality, they assume that everyone is starting from the same point. Equity assures conditions for optimal access and opportunity for all people, with particular focus on promoting policies, practices and procedures that do not advantage one group of people over others.

Q: What is Anti-Racism?

A: Anti-Racism is an on-going, conscious effort: an actionable commitment that intentionally looks at systemic levels of oppressions and challenges the paradigms, ideas, languages, and behaviors resulting from White supremacy. Anti-Racism addresses history and how it ties to the present, while recognizing that creating comfort for the privileged is not more important than seeking and speaking to justice for the oppressed. Anti-Racism is driven to examine and, when necessary, redistribute power and resources. Finally, Anti-Racism is about healing- both the brokenness caused by historical and present trauma, and the belief that growth is possible, and that people can change.

Q: What are Microaggressions?

A: The everyday verbal, nonverbal, and environmental slights, snubs, or insults, whether intentional or unintentional, which communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative messages to target persons based solely upon their marginalized group membership.

Q: What is Discrimination?

A: Discrimination is any impermissible act or failure to act, based wholly or in part on membership in a protected class, which adversely affects existing privileges, benefits or working conditions and results in the disparate treatment of—or has a disparate impact on—members of the marginalized community.

Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 forbids discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, or sex, as well as retaliation against a person because the person complained about discrimination, filed a charge of discrimination, and/or participated in an employment discrimination investigation or lawsuit.

Q: How can we, as individuals or in groups, advance the cause of DEI at the Agency?

A: Everyone at the Agency plays a part in creating a welcoming community for all. You can make a positive impact by building collaborative and mutually beneficial working relationships with people of different backgrounds and by referring qualified candidates from underrepresented groups to support the goal of enhancing the Agencies diversity and inclusion. Also, you can support others in an awareness and acceptance of cultural differences, participate in diversity training and programming, and recognize the benefits to our community of diverse and inclusive perspectives.

Suggestions for DEI initiatives, invitations for conversation, and requests for training are welcome and can be sent to dbryant@ssp2p.org. For additional information on Agencies DEI resources and opportunities for involvement, see the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion link on the Agency web page under the About SSP2P tab.