

LWVUS Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Guidance

July 2018

Defining DEI (Excerpts)

Diversity, equity, and inclusion are mutually reinforcing. Increased inclusion is associated with increased equity; the majority of organizations with higher inclusion and equity also have greater demographic diversity.

INCLUSION

Inclusion is the act of ensuring representation of people and perspectives into a group or structure. Inclusion is an ongoing process, not a static state of being. It is a dynamic state of operating that leverages diversity to create a healthy, high-performing organization and community.

Inclusion refers to the degree to which a diverse set of individuals can *participate* fully in collaborating, strategizing, and decision-making within an organization or group.

An inclusive environment ensures equitable access to resources and opportunities for all. It also enables individuals and groups to feel safe, respected, engaged, motivated, and valued for who they are and for their contributions toward organizational and societal goals. While an inclusive group is by definition diverse, a diverse group is not always inclusive. *Being aware of unconscious or implicit bias can help organizations better address issues of inclusivity.*

EQUITY

Equity refers to systems, processes, and approaches based in fairness that ensure everyone is given equal opportunity and treated with dignity and respect. *This means that resources may be divided and shared differently to make sure that each person has a fair chance to succeed. Therefore, equity does not mean "sameness."*

Equity takes into account that people have different access to resources because of systems of oppression and privilege. Equity seeks to balance that disparity. *Improving equity involves increasing justice and fairness within the procedures and processes of institutions or systems, as well as in their distribution of resources, including opportunities.* Equity also means there is transparency regarding what actions or conditions lead to what outcomes and everyone knows what to expect in terms of consequences and rewards. Tackling equity issues requires an understanding of the root causes of outcome disparities within our society.

DIVERSITY

Diversity refers to population groups that have been historically underserved in socially, politically, or economically powerful institutions and organizations.

Diversity is about a collective or a group and can only exist in relationship to others. A team can be diverse and so can an organization. A person is not diverse. They may bring diversity to a team, but they in themselves are not diverse.

The DEI Journey: How to Figure Out What Roads To Take

As recommended in the handout, “Tips for Building Your Journey Toward DEI”, as developed by LWWNYS VP for DEI, Regina Tillman:

To evaluate where to apply changes that can best create or enhance an inclusive and equitable environment within your local league requires digging deep, and with intentionality, into your organization by using the strategy of applying the 4 P’s to each functional area, i.e., Membership Committee, BOD, Finance/Budgeting, Voter Service, etc.:

Policies: are general guiding statements used for decision-making.

{FYI: A procedure is the counterpart to a policy; it is the instruction on how a policy is followed. It is the step-by-step instruction for how, when, and where the policies outlined above will be achieved. And Bylaws? Bylaws are high-level oriented guidance while Policies are detailed oriented. Bylaws changes are only made by the house of delegates while Policy changes are made by the board of directors.}

Processes: are a series of tasks, decisions, and activities that produce an outcome or determine how work is completed. There are 3 main categories of processes: Management, Core, and Support.

People: are the humans that are truly the lifeblood of any organization, interfacing with every aspect of the organization. It is important to identify and leverage the skills, talents, and knowledge of those within your organization while prioritizing their engagement, development, and growth. By prioritizing the well-being and development of people, organizations can create a culture of caring, trust, and collaboration that leads to an inclusive organization and long-term success.

{FYI: Use of Volunteer Management strategies will aid in building a collaborative environment that seeks to develop volunteers while addressing the issues that some people may bring with them.}

Practices: are what is usually or regularly done, often as a habit, tradition, or custom.

Suggestion: This “4 PPPP” evaluation will require multiple applications for the organization to complete. You may choose to pick one area (membership, Board, voter service, advocacy, etc.) and apply all 4 P’s to it by those involved, or even those outside of it for unbiased assessments, before moving on to the next at a predetermined interval.

Alternatively, the organization can choose to pick one “P” and apply it across all functional areas with inputs from perhaps a group setting. The primary objective of presenting these choices is for each local League to determine a methodology to use over time to most effectively consider your barriers - along with your current successes - toward being an organization that actively supports a multicultural and multiracial democracy.