

DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT

DIVERSITY

Diversity is about respecting the inherent value in the different perspectives, experiences, and characteristics that make people unique. A diverse community or organization is one in which differences in psychological, physical, social, and cultural characteristics (such as race, ethnicity, nationality, religion, economic class, age, gender identity, sexual orientation, mental and physical ability, and learning styles) are embraced as essential to the function of the whole.

INCLUSION

Inclusion is about intentionally bringing people from diverse backgrounds and perspectives into conversations and decision-making processes. An organization that is inclusive acknowledges its vulnerability in making equitable and just decisions without the participation of its diverse constituents, actively seeks to invite and include the voices of those who have been historically and systemically excluded, and creates ongoing pathways to ensure that any individual or group can feel welcomed, respected, and fully participate in all aspects of the organization and community.

EQUITY

Equity is both the process and outcome of ensuring the consistent and systemic fair, just, and impartial treatment of all individuals, especially those who belong to historically underserved and marginalized groups. A commitment to equity involves a focused effort to involve the participation of staff from multiple departments as well as diverse community voices in the assessment and review of policies, practices, and procedures that perpetuate inequities within an organization and the broader community.