



## DEI FAQs

## What is Diversity, Equity and Inclusion?

Diversity is the variations of characteristics in a given group of people. These characteristics can range from our cognitive skills and personality traits, along with our identity (e.g. race, age, gender, religion, sexual orientation, cultural background, age, life experience, socio-economic class, national origin, ability and religion). Inclusion is an active and intentional commitment to valuing any and all differences whilst regarding those differences as assets rather than hindrances.

An inclusive space should make all individuals feel safe, valued, and respected regardless of identity. Equity ensures that systemic barriers are accounted for when providing opportunity. Whereas equality offers the same opportunities regardless of circumstance, equity acknowledges that certain individuals can experience disproportionate consequences or challenges while others experience disproportionate benefits and privileges. Equity requires organizations to review for these injustices and seek to provide opportunities for people who have historically had less access.

## Why is DEI important?

DEI initiatives are declarations of commitment to foster an environment that reflects the broader community. They are plans for the future that communicate the needs of the community and the vision of what organizations can be. In a perfect world, DEI would not be necessary; however, reality continuously proves that active work must be done for organizations to be representative of the community at large. DEI creates a future in which all people regardless of background are welcome.

## **How are diversity, equity, and inclusion connected?**

Focusing on diversity without equity and inclusion is an unjust approach to solve for lack of representation. Simply increasing the number of individuals from marginalized or minority communities without correcting for systemic injustice can lead to tokenism and often reproduces and exacerbates the same harms of racism and discrimination that diversity aims to correct. The addition of equity and inclusion requires organizations to focus on correcting for the systemic barriers that result in lack of diversity to begin with. We cannot focus solely on increasing minority representation, we must also address systemic injustice internally in order to truly make this a diverse space.

## **When will the DEI initiative be complete?**

The work of DEI will be complete when all systemic inequalities have been eliminated for all people. Thus, this is an ongoing and continuous effort. Until equality is achieved, DEI will need to continue cultivating safe spaces for all individuals by deconstructing and eliminating systemic and social inequalities and oppression.