



DEI  
FAQs

# 1. What is diversity, equity and inclusion?

**Diversity** is the variety 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 all differences as assets rather than hindrances. An inclusive space should make all individuals feel safe, appreciated, and respected regardless of identity.

**Equity** ensures that systemic barriers are accounted for when providing opportunities. Whereas equality offers the same opportunities irrespective of circumstance, equity acknowledges that individuals can experience disproportionate consequences or challenges while others experience excessive benefits and privileges. Equity requires organizations to investigate these injustices and seek to provide opportunities for people who have had less access.

# 2. Why is DEI important?

DEI initiatives are declarative commitments to foster environments that reflect the broader community. DEI initiatives are plans for the future that communicate the community's needs and the vision of what organizations can be. In a perfect world, DEI would not be necessary; however, given the significant gaps in minority representation, it is clear that active work must be done for organizations to represent the community at large. DEI allows organizations to intentionally correct for demographic and systemic disparities while creating a future in which all people, regardless of background, are welcome.

### **3. 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 marginalized or minority communities without correcting for systemic injustice can lead to tokenism and often reproduces and exacerbates the same racism and discrimination that diversity aims to alleviate. The addition of equity and inclusion requires organizations to focus on correcting for the systemic barriers that result in a lack of diversity. We cannot focus solely on increasing minority representation; we must also address systemic injustice internally to truly make San Diego Oasis a diverse space.

### **4. What is the role of the Diversity Outreach Coordinator?**

The role of the diversity outreach coordinator is as follows:

1. Increase recruitment and representation of minority communities.
2. Cultivate partnerships that support DEI goals.
3. Educate staff, volunteers, and members on issues of identity.
4. Actively evaluate the progress of the DEI initiative.
5. Monitor equity, inclusivity and diversity in organizational projects (i.e. inclusive language, representation, accessibility, and equity of opportunity).

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

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