

## **What is a Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Statement?**

A diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) statement serves as the public declaration of the organization's commitment to advancing diversity, equity and inclusion in the mission and work of the organization, in interactions with community members, businesses and other stakeholders. It is also the lens through which decisions are made that shape daily business practices, helping ensure DEI is embedded into organizational values and culture, meetings and business decisions.

In nonprofits, the DEI statement is a connector between the vision and the values - mission, vision, DEI, values. It should be in alignment with our values, and with the approach to our work. Adopting this statement is another leadership step for OLMCOS in the larger Charleston nonprofit community as we continue to be seen as a rising thought leader. It also helps in grant seeking efforts. The final statement will be shared with all staff, will live on our website and other print and electronic media and in grant writing. Staff will more intentionally use a DEI lens in daily operations, culture and decision-making.

## **Definitions**

### **Diversity**

Diversity is the presence of difference within a given setting. In this case the workplace is the setting and the differences typically refer to identity like race and gender, and sometimes ethnicity, religion, nationality, or sexual orientation. A person isn't diverse. They're unique. They can bring diversity to a group though. You're not looking for a diverse candidate. Diversity is about a collective or a group.

### **Inclusion**

Inclusion has to do with people with different identities feeling and/or being valued, leveraged, and welcomed within a given setting (whether that's a team, workplace, or industry). Longtime Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion educator, Verna Myers, said: "Diversity is being asked to the party. Inclusion is being asked to dance." Inclusion isn't a natural consequence of diversity. You can have a diverse team of talent, but that doesn't mean they feel welcomed or valued or are given opportunities to grow.

### **Equity**

Equity is an approach that ensures everyone has access to the same opportunities. Equity recognizes that we don't all start from the same place because advantages and barriers exist. It's a process that acknowledges uneven starting places and seeks to correct the imbalance. Diversity and inclusion are both outcomes. Equity is not. It refers to the process an organization engages in to ensure that people with marginalized identities have the opportunity to grow, contribute, and develop.

## **DRAFT DEI STATEMENT**

Our Lady of Mercy Community Outreach is committed to using the principles of diversity, equity and inclusion to guide our daily work, community interactions, and business practices. These principles also influence how we create and cultivate our teams and how we deliver our mission. We celebrate differences. We welcome and value all. We seek to help remedy inequity amongst marginalized identities and bring balance to uneven starting points in the lives of many.