

**Ability** - having the qualities, skills, competence, or capacity to perform an action, or perceived as having the qualities, skills, competence, or capacity to perform an action.

**Ableism** – the belief that people without disabilities are superior, have a better quality of life, or have lives more valuable or worth living than people with an actual, perceived, or non-apparent disability resulting in oppression, prejudice, stereotyping, or discrimination.

**Access** – creating and advancing barrier-free design, standards, systems, processes, and environments to provide all individuals, regardless of ability, background, identity, or situation, an equally effective opportunity to participate in, utilize, and enjoy the benefits of: employment, programs, services, activities, communication, facilities, electronic/information technology, and business opportunities.

**Ageism** – oppression, prejudice, stereotyping, or discrimination based on a person’s actual or perceived age. The dominant culture assigns value based on a person’s actual or perceived age.

**Ally** – a person of one social identity group who advocates with and supports members of another group; typically a member of the dominant identity advocating with and supporting a marginalized group.

**Anti-Semitism** – oppression, prejudice, stereotyping, or discrimination based on a person’s actual or perceived membership in a Semitic group. This can include members of Judaism, those that identify as Jewish ethnically, define themselves as Hebrew, are from the nation state of Israel, or are from countries where Amharic, Arabic, or Aramaic are spoken.

**Bias** – judgement or preference toward or against one group over another.

*Implicit or unconscious bias* refers to the attitudes or stereotypes that affect our understanding, actions, and decisions in an unconscious manner. These biases, which encompass both favorable and unfavorable assessments, are activated involuntarily and without an individual’s awareness or intentional control. Residing deep in the subconscious, these biases are different from known biases that individuals may choose to conceal for the purposes of social and/or political correctness.

*Explicit or conscious bias* are biases we know we have and may use purposefully.

**Bigotry** - The obstinate or intolerant devotion to one's own opinions and prejudices. The stubborn and complete intolerance of any creed, belief, or opinion that differs from one’s own.

**Biological sex** – the biological and physiological characteristics that doctors use to say “boy or girl” at birth.

**Classism** – oppression, prejudice, stereotyping, or discrimination based on a person’s actual or perceived class to advantage and strengthen the dominant class

**Colonialism** – a practice of domination, which involves the subjugation of one people to another. Historically colonizers impose their religion, language, economics, and other cultural practices upon indigenous peoples.

**Colorism** - a prejudice or discrimination against individuals with a darker skin tone, including people of the same ethnic or racial group.

**Culture** – a set of values, beliefs, customs, norms, perceptions, and experiences shared by a group of people. An individual may identify with or belong to many different cultural groups. Culture is passed to others through communication, learning, and imitation.

**Cultural competence** – an ability to interact effectively with people of all cultures and understand multiple cultural frameworks, values, and norms. Cultural competence comprises four components:

- Awareness of one’s own cultural worldview,
- Attitude towards cultural differences,
- Knowledge of different cultural practices and worldviews, and
- Cross-cultural skills

A key component of cultural competence is respectfully engaging others with cultural dimensions and perceptions different from our own and recognizing that none are superior to another. Cultural competence is a developmental process that evolves over an extended period.

**Cultural humility** – approach to respectfully engaging others with cultural identities different from your own and recognizing that no cultural perspective is superior to another.

**Disability** – an actual, perceived, or non-apparent physical, sensory, mental, or cognitive condition that has an adverse effect on a person’s ability to carry out day-to-day life functions. Environmental barriers may hinder persons with disability from fully and effectively participating on an equitable basis.

**Discrimination** – inequitable treatment of an individual or group based on their actual or perceived membership in a specific group.

**Diversity** – describes the presence of differences within a given setting, collective, or group. An individual is not diverse; a person is unique. Diversity is about a collective or group and exists in relationship to others. A team, an organization, a family, a neighborhood, a community can be diverse. A person can bring diversity of thought, experience, and trait, seen and unseen, to a team...and the person is still an individual.

*Workforce diversity* means a collection of individual attributes that together help agencies pursue organizational objectives efficiently and effectively. These include, but are not limited to, characteristics such as national origin, language, race, color, disability, ethnicity, gender, age, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, socioeconomic status, veteran status, and family structures. The concept also encompasses differences among people concerning where they are from and where they have lived and their differences of thought and life experiences.

**Dominant culture** – it is the most institutionally normalized power, is widespread, and influential across societal structures and entities in which multiple cultures are present.

**Equality** - Ensuring that every individual has an equal opportunity to make the most of their lives and talents. Equality recognizes that historically certain groups of people with protected characteristics such as race/ethnicity, age, disability, sex and sexual orientation have experienced discrimination.

**Equity** – the act of developing, strengthening, and supporting procedural and outcome fairness in systems, procedures, and resource distribution mechanisms to create equitable (not equal) opportunity for all people. Equity is distinct from equality which refers to everyone having the same treatment without accounting for differing needs or circumstances. Equity has a focus on eliminating barriers that have prevented the full participation of historically and currently oppressed groups.

**Ethnicity** – a social construct which divides people into smaller social groups based on characteristics such as values, behavioral patterns, language, political and economic interests, history, and ancestral geographical base.

**Gender** – refers to the socially constructed roles, behaviors, activities, and attributes that a given society considers appropriate for men and women.

**Gender identity** – A person’s sense of their own gender. It may or may not conform to their assigned sex. Gender identities may change over time.

**Heterosexism** – discrimination or prejudice against LGBTQ+ people on the assumption that heterosexuality is the cultural norm and the prejudiced belief that heterosexuals are socially and culturally superior.

**Homophobia** – a term for fear, anger, intolerance, resentment, hatred, discomfort, or mistrust that one may have toward LGBTQ+ people. The term can also connote a fear, disgust, or dislike of being perceived as LGBTQ+.

**Inclusion** – intentionally designed, active, and ongoing engagement with people that ensures opportunities and pathways for participation in all aspects of a group, organization, or community including decision-making processes. Inclusion is not a natural consequence of diversity. There must be intentional and consistent efforts to create and sustain a participative environment. Inclusion refers to how groups demonstrate that people are valued as respected members of the group, team, organization, or community. Inclusion is often created through progressive, consistent actions to expand, include, and share.

**Intersectionality** – intersectionality is a framework for understanding the interaction of cultures and identities held by an individual. Intersectionality explains how an individual with multiple identities that may have been marginalized can experience compounded oppression (such as racism, sexism, and classism) or how an individual can experience privilege in some areas and disadvantage in other areas. It considers people’s overlapping identities in order to understand the complexity of their life outcomes and their experiences.

**Intersex** - A person with anatomy or physiology that differs from cultural ideals of male and female. Intersex individuals may be born with “ambiguous genitals” and/or experience hormone production

levels that vary from those culturally “ideal” female and male. Many intersex individuals are subjected to “corrective surgeries,” often without their consent.

**LGBTQIA+** - An acronym for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender (trans), queer/questioning, intersex, and asexual/aromantic individuals; usually referring to the community as a whole. At times, other letters may be added.

**Microaggression** – the everyday verbal, nonverbal, and environmental slights, snubs, stereotypes, or insults, whether intentional or unintentional, which communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative messages to target persons based solely upon their marginalized group membership.

**Military status** – A person’s connection to the military (disabled veteran, military spouse, National Guard and Reserve Service, Active member, Veteran).

**Misogyny** - dislike of, contempt for, or ingrained prejudice against women.

**Nationality** – A specific legal relationship between a person and a state, whether by birth or naturalization in the case of an immigrant.

**National origin** – system of classification based on the nation from which a person originates regardless of the nation they currently reside. National origin is not something an individual can change, though origin can change through the generations of family.

**Nationalism** – identification with one’s own nation and support for its interests, especially to the exclusion or detriment of the interests of other nations.

**Neurodiversity** - is a viewpoint that brain differences are normal, rather than deficits. The idea of neurodiversity can have benefits for kids with learning and thinking differences. This concept can help reduce stigma around learning and thinking differences.

**Neurotype:** the way a person’s brain gathers and processes different types of information based on our senses, use of language, and social interactions/ behaviors

**Non-Binary** - Umbrella term for people identifying outside the gender binary. It is also an identity on its own.

**Oppression** – systemic devaluing, undermining, marginalizing, and disadvantaging of certain social identities in contrast to the privileged norm; when some people are denied something of value, while others have ready access. This can occur intentionally and unintentionally, on individual, institutional, and cultural levels.

**People of color (POC)** – collective term for referring to non-white racial groups.

**Power** – the ability to decide who will have access to opportunity and resources; the capacity to direct or influence the behavior of others, oneself, and/or the course of events.

**Power over** – the ability to impact others without respect or their permission. Exercising control over another person or people through the use of force, authority or position, and the dissemination of punishment and reward.

**Power with** – using or exercising one’s power to work with others equitably for common ground, showing respect, leveraging strengths, and providing guidance.

**Prejudice** – Prejudice in an idea or opinion that is not based on fact, logic, or actual experience; usually a negative bias. Prejudice may be formed by a person’s previous experience, learning, and observations.

**Privilege** – Privilege is any unearned benefit, position, power, right, or advantage one receives in society as a result of their identity.

**Race** – a social construct that divides people into smaller social groups based on characteristics, most typically skin color. Racial categories were socially constructed, and artificially created whiteness as one of the main elements of the dominant culture. Race was created to concentrate power and advantage people who are defined as white and justify dominance over non-white people. The idea of race has become embedded on our identities, institutions, and culture, and influences life, opportunities, outcomes, and experiences. Racial categories change based on the political convenience of the dominant society at a given period of time.

**Racism** – a way of representing or describing race that creates or recreates structures of domination based on racial categories. In other words, racism is racial prejudice plus power. In the United States, it is grounded in the creation of a white dominant culture that reinforces the use of power to create privilege for white people while marginalizing people of color, whether intentional or not.

**Sex assigned at birth** - The declaration by a medical provider of an individual’s sex and gender are based on genitalia appearance at birth. After the assignment, the individual is expected to grow up and exist within a certain set of gender roles that are deemed “appropriate” for their assigned sex.

**Sexism** – Discrimination or prejudice against a particular sex or gender based on the assumption that another sex or gender is the social or cultural norm.

**Sexual orientation** – A person’s physical, romantic, emotional, aesthetic, and/or other form of attraction to others. Gender identity and sexual orientation are not the same.

**Stereotype** – Characteristics attributed to an individual or group based on generalization, oversimplification, or exaggeration that may result in stigmatization and discrimination.

**Transgender** – Sex assigned at birth does not match gender identity.

**Transphobia** – A term for fear, anger, intolerance, resentment, hatred, discomfort, or mistrust that one may have toward people who are transgender or gender non-conforming. The term can also connote a fear, disgust, or dislike for being perceived as transgender or gender non-conforming.

**White supremacy** – a political, economic, and cultural system in which white people are believed to be the normal, better, smarter, holier race over all other races. This system entitles whites with overwhelming control, power, and material resources. Conscious and unconscious ideas of white superiority and entitlement are widespread. White dominance and non-white subordination are daily reenacted across a broad array of institutions and social settings. A white supremacy mindset is perpetuated when elements of this system are not named, attended to, or actively undone.

**Xenophobia** – a term for fear, anger, intolerance, resentment, hatred, discomfort, or mistrust that one may have toward people from other countries. The term can also connote a fear, disgust, or dislike for being perceived as a person from other countries.