

## **Building an Inclusive Community**

Valuing, Engaging, and Leveraging the Diverse Population We Serve.

For: Michigan Municipal League

## What is an Inclusive Community?





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#### An inclusive community is one that:

- Promotes respect, equal treatment, and equal opportunities for everyone.
- Eliminates all forms of discrimination.
- Engages all citizens in decision making.
- Values diversity.
- Responds to racist and discriminating incidents.



# Why are you here?



## Why is it important?





## Why is it important?

- Injustice should not be tolerated.
- Each citizen has the right to help make decisions that affect them.
- Diversity enriches our lives.
- When left unaddressed, the tension that builds between rival groups can lead to cyclical injustice.



# How inclusive is your community?







The types and sequence of strategies should be selected based on motivation and current need.

#### For example:

- If there was a crisis you might have to start with a strategy to address the conflict.
- If there was no crisis, but just a strong vision of an inclusive future, you might start with a public education campaign.





What resources are available to support the initiative?

- Individuals
- Groups
- Businesses & Foundations
- Funding/grants
- Legislature





What institutions and community groups will support or obstruct the change?

#### For example:

- If a dominant group in the community is motivated to be more inclusive there is likely to be more support.
- However, if a dominant group has no interest in changing the status quo, there are likely to be more barriers.





#### What outcomes do you desire from the initiative?

- Raise awareness
- Address a specific incident
- Promote fair treatment
- Initiate policy change









Assess the demographic landscape.





#### Assess the demographic landscape.

- Find out what groups live in the community and learn their history (length of residence, migration patterns, socio-economic status).
- Observe and ask about group characteristics (cultural traditions, ethnicity, employment categories, religion).
- Learn about different groups' social points, support networks, and major institutions.
- Identify the major events that affect the community (political, social, and economic).



Create a community council with influential leaders from all demographic groups.





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- Engage this group of influential leaders throughout the initiative to provide input, guidance, and feedback.
- Review, analyze, and summarize the information you gathered about the community.
- Identify potential entry points and strategies for engaging the different groups in the community.
- Be careful to consider the history of exclusion and power differences and ensure that power is shared equally within the council.



Foster a community culture of inclusion based on cultural competence.





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- Bring groups together to learn and share.
- Increase familiarity and acceptance through repeat exposure.
- Create a forum for informal social opportunities to talk, share a meal, etc.
- Coordinate activities and events to celebrate the community's diversity.
- Educate community members about the history and conditions that help shape each group's identity and current situation.



Identify the cultural assets that each group brings to the community.





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- Consider values, traditions, historical events, art forms, language, and other characteristics that make a group proud of their identity.
- Create discussion about cultural assets within the community council.
- Share cultural assets with the community through local newspapers, radio stations, and local public television.
- Create community events to share and celebrate cultural assets.



Resolve conflicts and improve relations within the community.





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- Conflicts occur when groups do not understand or appreciate each other's cultures, they hold negative stereotypes about one another, and/or must compete for resources and power.
- Remember that different groups have their own way of dealing with conflict, i.e., some are encouraged to conform while others are encouraged to confront.
- Consider using an outside facilitator/mediator to help work through the conflict.



Examine and change systemic issues that prevent groups from having equal access to resources and opportunities.





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- Public safety
- Education
- Workforce development





Ensure institutional support for inclusion, equity, and justice.





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- Everyone deserves equal access to economic, social, and educational opportunities.
- Fair treatment must be upheld in accordance with honor, standards, or law.
- Because of their status, power, resources, and relationships, institutions have the ability to either sanction or support your efforts.
- Engage institutional leaders in your efforts and find a way to show them how they could benefit from being more inclusive.



Inclusion, equity, and justice in public safety.

- Creating healthy relationships with the community
- Appropriate alignment of crime and punishment





Inclusion, equity, and justice in education.

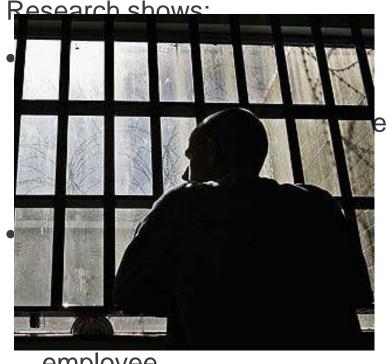
- Inclusive and collaborative relationship between parents and educators.
- Courageous conversations around the achievement gap.
- Appropriate use of standardized testing.





Inclusion, equity, and justice in workforce development.

- Create community based rehabilitation opportunities.
- Ban the Box
- Think out of the box in your HR practices.



employee.



Acknowledge and celebrate successes.





#### Acknowledge and celebrate successes.

- Reinforce the positive experience and outcome of working with different groups.
- Even small accomplishments should be celebrated (e.g., dinners, awards, open houses).
- Invite important members of the community to attend celebration events (e.g., the mayor, superintendent, faith leader).
- Point out that success was possible thanks to all the groups working together and highlight special achievements.
- Publicize the event in the local paper, etc.



Sustain the relationships, strategies, and changes.





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- Building an inclusive community is an ongoing process.
- Accept that some failure and regression is a natural part of creating change and don't let it stop you from pressing forward.
- It is important to sustain the relationships, strategies, and changes you establish, no matter how small, because they create the foundation for future progress and change.
- Create opportunities to maintain frequent contact and cooperation between groups.



#### Summary

#### Creating an inclusive community benefits us all.

- Everyone deserves to have equal access to economic, social, and educational opportunities.
- All people must be treated with respect, dignity, and fairness.
- Cultural differences should be acknowledged and celebrated.
- Diversity enriches our lives and our community.
- Injustice and discrimination should not be tolerated.







#### Personal Action Plan

How will you create an inclusive community?





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How will you create an inclusive community?

- What strategies will you implement?
- What challenges will you have to overcome?
- What resources will you need?
- Who are potential partners in your effort?
- In what timeframe will you implement?



#### Thank You!



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