

League of Women Voters of Michigan  
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Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion – Definitions

**Diversity, equity, and inclusion are mutually reinforcing.** Increased inclusion is associated with increased equity; the majority of organizations with higher inclusion and equity also have greater demographic diversity.

**DIVERSITY**

Diversity includes all of the similarities and differences among people, not limited to: gender, gender identity, ethnicity, race, native or indigenous origin, age, generation, sexual orientation, culture, religion, belief system, marital status, parental status, socioeconomic status, appearance, language, accent, ability status, mental health, education, geography, nationality, work style, work experience, job role function, thinking style, personality type, physical appearance, and political perspective or affiliation.

Diversity refers to population groups that have been historically underrepresented in socially, politically, or economically powerful institutions and organizations. These groups include but are not restricted to populations of color, such as African Americans and Blacks, Latinx, Native Americans and Alaska Natives, Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders. They may also include lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender populations, people with disabilities, women, and other groups.

A team can be diverse and so can an organization. A person is not diverse. Diversity is about a collective or a group and can only exist in relationship to others. A candidate is not diverse—they are a unique,

individual unit. They may bring diversity to your team, but they in themselves are not diverse. They are a woman; they are a person of color; they are part of the LGBTQ community.

*We commit to increase diversity in the recruitment, retention, and retainment at the national, state, and local level, and in the leadership and executive roles.*

## **EQUITY**

Equity is an approach based in fairness to ensuring everyone is given equal opportunity; this means that resources may be divided and shared unequally to make sure that each person has a fair chance to succeed. Equity takes into account that people have different access to resources because of system of oppression and privilege. Equity seeks to balance that disparity.

Improving equity involves increasing justice and fairness within the procedures and processes of institutions or systems, as well as in their distribution of resources, including professional growth opportunities. Tackling equity issues requires an understanding of the root causes of outcome disparities within our society.

Equity prioritizes efforts to ensure the most underserved and marginalized among us has as much of an opportunity to succeed as the most well-served and advantaged. By taking into account the various advantages and disadvantages that people face, we work to ensure every person has an equal opportunity to succeed.

*We commit to prioritizing equity in the work of the LWV staff, board, and members.*

# INCLUSION

Inclusion is an ongoing process, not a static state of being.

Inclusion is the dynamic state of operating in which diversity is leveraged to create a healthy, high-performing organization and community.

Inclusion refers to the degree to which diverse individuals are able to participate fully in the decision-making processes within an organization or group.

An inclusive environment ensures equitable access to resources and opportunities for all. It also enables individuals and groups to feel safe, respected, engaged, motivated, and valued for who they are and for their contributions toward organizational and societal goals.

*While an inclusive group is by definition diverse, a diverse group is not always inclusive. Being aware of unconscious or implicit bias can help organizations better address issues of inclusivity.*

*We commit to making deliberate efforts to ensure LWV is a place where differences are welcomed, different perspectives are respectfully heard, and every individual feels a sense of belonging and inclusion. We know that by creating a vibrant climate of inclusiveness, we can more effectively leverage our resources to advance our collective capabilities.*

*We commit to working actively to challenge and respond to bias, harassment, and discrimination.*