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LEARNING & DEVELOPMENT CATALYSTS

## **Building an Inclusive Community**

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

**For: Michigan Municipal League**

# What is an Inclusive Community?



# What is an Inclusive Community?

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?



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# 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?

# Factors to consider:





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*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.



# Factors to consider:

*What resources are available to support the initiative?*

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



# Factors to consider:

*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.



# Factors to consider:

*What outcomes do you desire from the initiative?*

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



# How do you do it?



# How do you do it?

*Assess the demographic landscape.*



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## *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).

# How do you do it?

*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.

# How do you do it?

*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.

# How do you do it?

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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.





# How do you do it?

*Resolve conflicts and improve relations within the community.*



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*Resolve conflicts and improve relations within the community.*

- 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.

# How do you do it?

*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



# How do you do it?

*Ensure institutional support for inclusion, equity, and justice.*



# How do you do it?

*Ensure institutional support for inclusion, equity, and justice.*

- 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.

# How do you do it?

*Inclusion, equity, and justice in public safety.*

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



# How do you do it?

*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.



# How do you do it?

*Inclusion, equity, and justice in workforce development.*

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

Research shows:



employee.



# How do you do it?

*Acknowledge and celebrate successes.*



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*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.



# How do you do it?

*Sustain the relationships, strategies, and changes.*



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*Sustain the relationships, strategies, and changes.*

- 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?*

A hand-drawn diagram of an action plan. It features a green rectangular border with two red circular fasteners at the top. The title 'ACTION PLAN' is written in large blue capital letters across the top. Below the title is a table with four columns labeled 'WHO', 'WHAT', 'WHEN', and 'HOW' in red capital letters. The table has three rows, with the top row containing the column headers and the two rows below being empty.

WHO	WHAT	WHEN	HOW

# Personal Action Plan


*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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