DEFINE DIVERSITY, EQUITY, INCLUSION, AND ACCESS

OVERVIEW

The terms diversity, equity, inclusion, and access (DEIA) mean different things to different people. There are also various thoughts about what organizations should do in that space. It's important to collaborate with key stakeholders to develop a shared understanding of DEIA. This is the beginning of fostering a sense of ownership that translates into increased passion, loyalty, creativity, and innovation.

DIVERSITY

Diversity encompasses all dimensions of human differences. We often focus on one dimension of diversity, and that's why common practices are collecting workforce demographics and making targeted hiring and retention goals. Without equity, inclusion, and access for everyone, targeted hiring, retention, and promotion goals are merely performative in nature. There are four dimensions of diversity with a variety of factors in each dimension.

Dimension	Description
Personality	An individual's likes and dislikes, values, and beliefs. Personality is shaped early in life and influenced by the other dimensions of diversity over an individual's lifetime.
Internal	Aspects of diversity over which we have no control. Some of them can change over time. This is the dimension that can result in divisions between and amongst people groups. In some cases, it's the first thing we see. We also make assumptions and judgments based on aspects of this dimension.
External	Aspects of an individual's life over which they have some control. They might change over time. Some form the basis of our decisions on careers and work styles. This is the layer that often determines whom we like, with whom we develop friendships, and what we do for a living.
Organizational	Aspects of workplace culture. Ironically, workplace DEIA programs tend to focus on the Internal dimension; however, most of what happens in the workplace is about preferential treatment and opportunities for development or promotion based on this particular dimension.

Intersectionality describes the intersection of each individual's diversity dimension factors. The combination of those factors makes up each individual's social identity. This concept speaks to potential modes of discrimination and privilege and factors of advantage and disadvantage.

EQUITY

Equity is giving each individual what they need to be successful. Equity is often mixed up with equality which is more about fair treatment across the board. Equity is giving each individual what they need to be successful.

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INCLUSION

Inclusion is building and maintaining culture, systems, policies, and practices considerate of various dimensions of human differences. It requires valuing uniqueness and a high sense of belonging. An inclusive workplace welcomes everyone and values their contributions resulting in a sense of belonging, connection, and community. There are four characteristics of an inclusive workplace.

Characteristic	Description
Respect	Uniqueness is valued and individuals can bring their best selves to work; including distinguishing identities
Belonging	Essential to a workgroup community, meets social and emotional needs for connection, and feels emotionally safe and supported
Empowerment	Included in decision making process, unique needs and challenges are recognized, and accommodations are made for differences
Fairness	Diverse talent developed and promoted, practices and policies are equity, and leaders are rewarded and held accountable for inclusive behaviors.

ACCESS

Access in the workplace is ensuring that employees have access to the tools and resources to do their job, the organization's support to help them identify their desired career path, and connecting them to development opportunities, people, and information relevant to help them achieve their career goals.

KEY ACTIONS

The diversity, equity, inclusion, and access definitions in this documents were crafted by the Columbus Chamber's DEIA Committee. Here are some actions you can take to align on common definitions for these terms in your organization.

1. Have a conversation with key stakeholders in the organization to determine how each of them defines diversity, equity, inclusion, and access.

2. Share the Columbus Chamber's definitions.

3. Facilitate alignment conversations to agree on common definitions for these terms in your organization. Here are some suggestions for groups to convene for these conversations.

    a. Executive leadership team

    b. Focus groups with representatives from the various business functions or departments in your organization

    c. DEIA Committee

    d. Change Network

4. Build a communication plan to share the finalized definitions and next steps.

5. Refresh the organization's web page and other relative collateral with this information.