

TRAINING HANDOUT

CONSIDERATIONS FOR HEALTH CENTER BOARDS ON DIVERSITY, EQUITY, INCLUSION, AND JUSTICE IN GOVERNANCE

Background

“Considerations for Health Center Boards on Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Justice in Governance,” is a short introductory module intended as a resource for boards starting to explore or reevaluate diversity, equity, and inclusion in health center governance. The module could be viewed by the full board or a board committee. This accompanying handout includes definitions from the module, discussion questions for the board, and additional resources.

Definitions

The definitions used in the module follow:

- **“Diversity** is having a variety of social identities (such as sex, race, gender, class, religion, ability, health, ethnicity, migration history and many others) that spend time in shared spaces, communities, institutions or society.”ⁱ
- **“Equity** is the notion of being fair and impartial as an individual engages with an organization or system. It reflects processes and practices that both acknowledge that we live in a world where everyone has not been afforded the same resources and treatment while also working to remedy this fact.”ⁱⁱ Equity involves using customized tools that identify and address *inequity*.ⁱⁱⁱ
- **Inclusion** refers to “Being included within a group or structure. More than simply diversity and quantitative representation, inclusion involves authentic and empowered participation, with a true sense of belonging and full access to opportunities.”^{iv}
- **Health Equity** “means that everyone has a fair and just opportunity to be as healthy as possible. This requires removing obstacles to health such as poverty, discrimination, and their consequences, including powerlessness and lack of access to good jobs with fair pay, quality education and housing, safe environments, and health care.”^v
- **Social Justice** refers to the “Full and equal participation of all groups in a society that is mutually shaped to meet their needs. Social justice includes a vision of society in which the distribution of resources is equitable” and all members of a space, community, or institution, or society are “physically and psychologically safe and secure.” (Adams et al. 2016)^{vi}
- **Racial Justice** refers to “The systematic fair treatment of people of all races, resulting in equitable opportunities and outcomes for all. Racial justice—or racial equity—goes beyond “antiracism.” It is not just the absence of discrimination and inequities, but also the presence of deliberate systems and supports to achieve and sustain racial equity through proactive and preventative measures.”^{vii}

Discussion Questions

After watching the module, below are some questions boards may wish to discuss. Depending on the situation, the board may wish to engage a skilled facilitator to support the board with such discussions.

- How are diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI), as well as social justice defined in relation to the health center’s mission, vision, values, and strategy?

- Does the center have DEI priorities? Are they adequately resourced in the budget?
- Is our board composition truly diverse and reflective of the community we serve?
- Do all board members have access to the same information?
- Do all board members have an opportunity to share their perspective at meetings?
- Do we periodically evaluate the board’s meeting structure and practices to ensure they are inclusive?
- Do we have a Board Culture Statement and does it fully signal our commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion?
- Do we reflect DEI principles in health center policy and strategy?
- Do we hold the CEO accountable for hiring a diverse and inclusive leadership team?
- Has the board discussed social justice and explored the implications for the health center? If not, how can the board approach this authentically and what support is needed? If so, what is the board’s commitment?
- What additional important questions are important for the board to consider regarding DEI in governance, as well as social justice?

Additional Resources and Information

The board may also wish to explore various additional resources, including:

- [The Governance Gap: Examining Diversity and Equity on Nonprofit Boards of Directors](#) by Koya Partners
- [Building an Inclusive Organization Toolkit](#) by the Association of Asian Pacific Community Health Organizations (AAPCHO), the Association of Clinicians for the Underserved, and the National Health Care for the Homeless Council (September 2020)
- [Getting to the “Heart” of Racial Equity](#) by Jim Taylor, BoardSource
- [Facing the Challenge of Racial Inequity — or Avoiding It](#) by Jim Taylor, BoardSource
- [Recruiting for Board Diversity — Without Disrespecting People of Color](#) by Jim Taylor, BoardSource
- Beyond the Board Statement: How Can Boards Join the Movement for Racial Justice by the Nonprofit Quarterly (recorded webinars) featuring Vernetta Walker and Robin Stacia
 - [Part One](#)
 - [Part Two](#)
- A curated list of additional resources is available from [BoardSource](#)

Should you have suggestions about resources that would be helpful for your board or wish to share practices your board is utilizing, please contact trainings@nachc.org.

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ⁱ Brandeis University, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion. <https://www.brandeis.edu/diversity/resources/definitions.html>. These definitions are also included in [“Building an Inclusive Organization Toolkit”](#) by the Association of Asian Pacific Community Health Organizations (AAPCHO), the Association of Clinicians for the Underserved, and the National Health Care for the Homeless Council (September 2020).

ⁱⁱ Ibid.

ⁱⁱⁱ <https://designintech.report/2019/03/11/%F0%9F%93%B1design-in-tech-report-2019-section-6-addressing-imbalance/>

^{iv} Definitions from the “Race Reporting Guide” by Race Forward as cited in Koya Partners, The Governance Gap: Examining Diversity and Equity on Nonprofit Boards of Directors.” https://koyapartners.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/KOYA_GovernanceGap_FINAL.pdf.

^v “What is Health Equity” by Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, <https://www.rwjf.org/en/library/research/2017/05/what-is-health-equity-.html>

^{vi} Brandeis University, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion. <https://www.brandeis.edu/diversity/resources/definitions.html>.

^{vii} Definitions from the “Race Reporting Guide” by Race Forward as cited in Koya Partners, The Governance Gap: Examining Diversity and Equity on Nonprofit Boards of Directors.” https://koyapartners.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/KOYA_GovernanceGap_FINAL.pdf.