

## Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Terms & Definitions

As the City of Lewiston, Maine, strives for equity in all policies and inclusion in our diverse community, we must respect one another and promote a culture of peace and dialogue among our residents. To this end, it is necessary to understand the shared language when addressing topics such as such as equity, race, and gender.

**Ally:** A term used to describe someone who is actively supportive of LGBTQ people. It encompasses straight and cisgender (*gender matches identity at birth*) allies, as well as those within the LGBTQ community who support each other.

**Antiracist:** Proactive efforts to root out racism within communities, organizations, and yourself while also advocating for equity, inclusion, and justice.

**Bias:** Prejudice in favor of or against one thing, person, or group compared with another, usually in a way considered to be unfair.

**Disparity:** A measurable difference in outcomes for populations.

**Diversity:** The range of human differences (race and ethnicity, culture, gender identity, age, socio-economic status, religion, political affiliation, physical and mental ability).

**Equity:** The creation of equal outcomes for all people through fair treatment, opportunity and allocation of resources across all systems (housing, education, economics, healthcare, environmental, social and community)

**Equity Lens:** A process for analyzing or diagnosing the impact of the design and implementation of policies on under-served and marginalized individuals and groups and to identify and potentially eliminate barriers.

**Explicit Bias:** Attitudes and beliefs we have about a person or group on a conscious level.

**Implicit/Unconscious Bias:** Biases that people are unaware of usually stemming from family upbringing, prejudice, media messages, stereotypes and life experiences.

**Inclusion:** A sense of belonging in which different groups or individuals having different backgrounds are culturally and socially integrated. These differences could be self-evident, such as national origin, age, race and ethnicity, religion/belief, gender, marital status and socioeconomic status, or they could be more inherent, such as educational background, training, sector experience, and organizational tenure.

**Institutional Racism:** Discriminatory treatment, unfair policies and inequitable opportunities and impacts, based on race, produced and perpetuated by institutions (schools, mass media, etc.). Individuals within institutions take on the power of the institution when they act in ways that advantage and disadvantage people, based on race. Nonetheless, each individual is equally welcomed, respected, and valued.

**Intersectionality:** An intersectional approach to equity, diversity, and inclusivity begins from the understanding that the different paths of social diversity, (race, class, gender, sexuality, disability, nationality, religion, language, age, etc.) do not exist separately or in isolation from each other. Instead, the various paths of social diversity are interwoven and affect each other. These interwoven paths shape

social belonging, cultural representations, social and political institutions, as well as the material conditions of our lives in ways that are not reducible to any singular social category.

**LGBTQ+:** Lesbian, Gay, Bi-Sexual, Transgender, Queer/Questioning Plus

**Microaggressions:** “Everyday verbal, nonverbal, and environmental slights, snubs, or insults, whether intentional or unintentional, which communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative messages to target persons based solely upon their marginalized group.” (Derald Wing Sue)

**Privilege:** An unearned set of advantages, entitlements and beliefs gained by birth, social position, effort, or concession (white privilege, male privilege).

**Race:** An arbitrary social construct created by Europeans during the time of worldwide colonial growth, to assign human worth and social status using themselves as the model of humanity, for the purpose of legitimizing white power and white skin privilege. - Dr. Mulana Karenga

**Racial Equity:** The condition where race no longer predicts a person’s quality of life and outcomes.

**Structural Racism:** A history of racism that is embedded through laws and regulations within society or an organization. It can lead to such issues as discrimination in criminal justice, employment, housing, health care, political power, social constructs and education.

**Underserved Communities:** Refers to populations sharing a particular characteristic, as well as geographic communities, that have been systematically denied a full opportunity to participate in aspects of economic, social, and civic life, as exemplified by the list in the preceding definition of “equity.”