

Five Part Framework for Launching DEI Work (Short Version)

I. Five Steps – the 5 As

Step # 1 – Announce and Anchor – announce the work; offer a compelling – and personalized – starting vision for what the organization is about to do; ideally, the communication will answer key questions regarding who, what, when, where, why and how?; the articulation of a starting (or draft) vision also serves as an intellectual and emotional touchstone; it helps to anchor and ground the work;

Step # 2 – Assess – conduct x # of in-person, one-on-one conversations with key staff; pay particular attention to those considered to be “boosters” or champions; and/or potential “blockers” or those who may be resistant to this work for one reason or another; supplement the one-on-ones with a survey of the full staff.

Step # 3 – Assemble and Aspire – plan and facilitate a half-day or full-day gathering of the full staff; engage in a vision exercise in which staff are invited to imagine, in vivid detail, what a more equitable and inclusive organization looks like/feels like; and then share ideas for things the organization can do over the next 12 months to move toward this vision; feedback and ideas from this gathering can be used to produce a final version of the draft vision language noted in step # 1.

Step # 4 – Align -- Convene and facilitate at least three meetings of a newly-formed DEI committee; the committee will take the ideas from the half day/full day gathering and translate them into a one-year action plan; at a minimum, the plan will include SMART goals and a timeline.

Step # 5 – Act (or Activate) – implement the one-year plan with specific attention to three key areas of systems change work and transformation:

- Individual and interpersonal
- Organizational (Intra)
- External/public facing -- community/societal

Step # 5 – Assess (again) – evaluate the work done in year one; take stock of lessons learned; press forward into year two and beyond.

II. Three major challenges with DEI work that we should be aware of and solve for (on the front-end and throughout the process):

- **Pacing** – moving too slow; the paralysis of analysis; getting stuck on assessments, analysis, training, etc. Never moving to action/practice; or not moving fast enough.
- **The practice gap** -- too much focus on process (i.e., assessment, training); not producing outcomes that stakeholders feel result in a tangible (and increased) sense of equity, inclusion and belonging.
- **The emotional gap** – not paying attention to the emotional side of DEI work; the hopes, fears, anxieties, etc. that get in the way of meaningful engagement and sustained practice.