



CUWA Policy Principles

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

December 31, 2020

COVID-19 and recent social events have highlighted longstanding health and economic disparities for Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC). CUWA agencies are committed to addressing systemic racism, promoting equity, and catalyzing change for marginalized communities throughout the water community. We do this by creating and upholding organizational core values that are rooted in this commitment, demonstrating transparency, modeling behaviors, and sharing best practices with an initial focus on the BIPOC community. The following policy principles summarize CUWA's views on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI).

1. **Create an inclusive work environment** where all employees feel welcome and comfortable (psychologically safe) sharing diverse ideas, approaches and perspectives—both within our own agencies and for our member agencies—which reflect and support the diversity of our communities and enrich our own perspectives.
 - Create an environment where employees can be their most authentic self without limitations, and organizational fit is not dependent upon one's national origin, language, race, color, ability/disability, ethnicity, sex/gender, age, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity/gender expression, socioeconomic status, veteran status, marital status, or family structures.
 - This responsibility for a wide-reaching inclusive environment should be equitably carried across the organization, without overburdening BIPOC or other marginalized communities.
 - Leadership is responsible to set the tone for a culture of respect that is embraced throughout all levels of the organization.
2. **Increase diversity, representation, inclusion, and a sense of belonging at all levels**, including Board, Leadership, Professional, and Trades.
 - Provide equal access to and increase the effectiveness of recruitment and selection processes to ensure increasingly diverse candidate pools. Utilize diverse panels and assist supervisors with transparent decision-making regarding hiring, promotion, retention, discipline, and addressing any counter diversity resistance.
 - Provide equitable assignment of work across the organization to develop and empower employees to their desired potential.
 - Create and expand development opportunities and advancement of diverse and inclusive contracted services, vendors, and others, considering both firm ownership and team members assigned to each project.
 - Treat every customer equitably, with dignity, and respect cultural differences.
 - Achieve effective public engagement through equal access to decision-making processes and transparent, open communication that informs and generates participation among all

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communities, including disadvantaged communities, communities of color, and communities with limited English proficiency, as well as other key stakeholders.

3. **Ensure our work benefits all communities** by promoting environmental justice, including an accessible and affordable water supply, environmental restoration, and land use and watershed stewardship projects to mitigate the impacts of climate change, such as providing equitable flood protection.
4. **Remain accountable** by periodically assessing progress, identifying gaps, and prioritizing improvements that lead to diversity, equity, and inclusion.
 - Establish protocols and zero-tolerance policies to protect both the internal and external workforce and customers. Address complaints and resolve conflict in a transparent and timely manner.
 - Provide regular and sustained learning opportunities for employee education to build awareness, knowledge, empathy, and communication competencies as a sender and a receiver of sensitive DEI content.
 - Share best practices and lessons learned to help lift benefit and improve the entire water community in their DEI efforts.

CUWA DEI recognizes the vast stakeholder benefits when organizations embrace and commit to such policy principles: improved customer service satisfaction; enriched collaboration with innovation in products, services, and problem-solving; heightened employee morale; decreased costs associated with lower productivity and turnover; money savings with diverse suppliers; increased revenue for reinvestments; strategic preparation for the future; increased public trust and public service social responsibility.