



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®  
FOR HEALTHY LIVING  
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

# DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION BEST PRACTICES

The Y is a diverse organization of people joined together by a shared commitment to ensure that everyone has the opportunity to learn, grow, and thrive. Cause-driven YMCAs are led by staff and volunteers who intentionally and continuously strive to promote an inclusive organizational culture that values diversity, strengthens inclusion, and builds global community in the U.S. and abroad. By prioritizing diversity and inclusion, we seek to ensure that all segments of society have access to the Y and feel welcome and fully engaged as participants, members, staff, and volunteers. The Y is a force for building bridges among all people to advance our cause of strengthening community.

## 1. STAFF AND VOLUNTEER ENGAGEMENT

The Y excels by intentionally engaging the entire organization and actively involving staff, policy volunteers, and program volunteers in the development and implementation of diversity, inclusion, and global efforts. This helps YMCAs create an environment where members and the community feel appreciated and connected. Ensuring that Y staff, policy volunteers, program volunteers, members, and community stakeholders know and represent the community is vital to organizational success and advancing the Y's cause of strengthening community.

**1.1 RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION:** The Y actively and intentionally recruits from a diverse pool of candidates and actively seeks ways to promote and support current staff, policy volunteers, and program volunteers.

**1.2 LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT:** Staff, policy volunteers, and program volunteers are trained to be inclusive leaders through the development of cultural competencies and

through participation in a variety of professional development opportunities (e.g., EMLE, MEDI, MMP, Employee Resource Groups).

**1.3 MEASUREMENT:** Y leaders, both on staff and board, are engaged and accountable for diversity and inclusion goals and participate in measuring progress.

## 2. ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT

The Y is committed to creating a culture in which diversity and inclusion are integral to everyday operations. YMCAs empower communities through access to the support and connections all people need to learn, grow, and thrive. Through welcoming, inclusive practices and environments, Ys engage people from all segments of the community and help to effect lasting, meaningful change.

**2.1 POLICIES:** Organizational policies that drive diversity and inclusion efforts are actively promoted to support access and engagement of all in the community regardless of race, ethnicity, age, income level, sexual orientation, immigration status, and other protected classes.

**2.2 CAPACITY-BUILDING:** Development and sustainment of resources for diversity and inclusion engagement are promoted and evaluated across the organization. Examples may include having a diversity advisory council, staff time for assessing organizational climate, and staff trainings around cultural competency.

**2.3 STRATEGIC PLAN:** Diversity and inclusion goals are integrated into the strategic plan and are clearly communicated internally and externally as fundamental to advancing the Y's cause and achieving organizational success.

**2.4 MEASUREMENT:** Diversity and inclusion measures are integrated into all Y evaluations, practices, policies, and procedures.

## 3. MEMBER ENGAGEMENT

The Y is for all. Ensuring access for the entire community is fundamental to making Y staff, volunteers, members, and others feel welcome and included. For the Y to strengthen community, it is essential that we understand the makeup of the community and respond with relevant, meaningful programs and activities.

**3.1 INCLUSIVE POLICIES:** Membership categories, fee structures, programs, facilities, and marketing and communication strategies reflect community needs and interests and are measurably inclusive.

**3.2 COMMUNITY DEMOGRAPHICS:** Community demographics and the diversity of Y constituencies are actively tracked and analyzed on an annual basis to ensure policies and procedures remain inclusive.

**3.3 CONSTITUENT NEED:** The needs and interests of constituents are routinely surveyed.

**3.4 PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES:** All programs and activities are inclusive and meet the needs and interests of constituents.

## **4. STRATEGIC RELATIONSHIPS**

The Y brings people together. YMCAs strive to connect an extensive network of community stakeholders, connecting people of all ages and backgrounds to bridge gaps, meet community needs, and ensure that everyone has the opportunity to learn, grow, and thrive.

**4.1 STRENGTHENING RELATIONSHIPS:** Strategic relationships with diverse community organizations are promoted, maintained, and evaluated to increase the trust and credibility of the Y and improve outreach to underserved communities.

**4.2 SUPPLIER DIVERSITY:** Minority- and female-owned businesses and organizations are included among the YMCA's vendors and partners.

**4.3 COMMUNITY PERCEPTION:** The YMCA is viewed by its community as a diverse and inclusive place.

## **5. DIVERSE AND INCLUSIVE PHILANTHROPY**

YMCAs expand their reach by developing and committing resources across the community. As the nation's leading nonprofit for youth development, healthy living, and social responsibility, the Y practices the intentional engagement of diverse community members and leaders to help make a meaningful, enduring impact in their community.

**5.1 DIVERSE DONORS:** Opportunities for philanthropy are cultivated with members, individuals, businesses, government, and foundations representing a variety of stakeholders in the community. These donors all have a commitment to supporting the Y as being open to all.

**5.2 ENGAGING NEW DONORS:** The Y actively recruits from a diverse pool of potential donors and cultivates relationships with them. These donors become committed to the Y's cause because the efforts are responsive and relevant to their needs.

**5.3 PHILANTHROPIC INVESTMENT:** Philanthropic resources are raised and invested in organizational diversity and inclusion efforts.

**Diversity:** The presence of differences that make each person unique and that can be used to differentiate groups and people from one another.

**Inclusion:** The full engagement and development of all YMCA stakeholders (participants, members, staff, policy volunteers, program volunteers, partners, local communities, vendors, etc.).

**YMCA OF THE USA**

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