DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION AT PUBLIC HEALTH LABORATORIES

A diverse, equitable and inclusive public health laboratory (PHL) workforce is required to attract qualified talent, achieve lasting change and meet the needs of the communities we serve. Getting there can be challenging, but learning about diversity, equity and inclusion (DE&I), its impact on the PHL workforce and strategies you can implement to improve DE&I at your laboratory are important first steps.

THE IMPORTANCE OF DE&I AT PHLS

77% of the public health workforce feels it is important to address the needs of diverse populations in a culturally-sensitive manner.④ Better Serve Your Community. A workforce that reflects the diversity of the communities it serves can better address health equity issues.⑤ Support Social and Workplace Justice. Improved social equity helps to mitigate disproportionate harm, addresses historical disinvestment and exclusion, and promotes integration at all levels of public health infrastructure and service.⑥

DEFINING DE&I

DIVERSITY
The collective shared human differences, abilities, experiences, perspectives and group characteristics among a group of people. A key indicator in work force development.⑦ ⑧

EQUITY
Opportunities and access to achieve, contribute and advance are distributed fairly, creating an environment that allows people to attain their full potential.⑨

INCLUSION
Leverages diversity to create fair, healthy and high-performing organizations/companies in which everyone can thrive.⑩

Dimensions of diversity: race, ethnicity, culture, gender, sexual orientation, social and economic classification, age, disability, religion and more.⑩

Equity is not the same as equality.⑩

Inclusion is a universal human right! Everyone deserves a chance to fully participate.⑩

KEY DE&I TERMS AND CONCEPTS

ALLY & ADVOCATE
Someone who stands up in support for people from underrepresented or marginalized groups.② Ally: Works to support people outside of their own group.② Advocate: Speaks up for themselves and members of their own identity group.①

GENDER
A personal identity expressed through behavior, roles, expectations and activities within society. Gender is a spectrum that includes the male/female binary and a variety of non-binary identities.①

ETHNICITY
A group that reflects a person’s social and cultural identity, which can be based on nationality, language, culture, religion, history, geographic origin, and more.①

SEX
Biological sex characteristics, most often expressed as male or female, but which also includes an array of biological intersex variations.①

RACIA
A group that a person identifies with, usually on the basis of physical characteristics, and can also include cultural and social attributes.①

BIAS
Attitudes, judgments or stereotypes that affect our understanding, actions and decisions. Implicit, or unconscious, bias is often subtle, accidental and/or unintended.② Explicit, or conscious bias is overt and often intentional.②

DISCRIMINATION
Unfair treatment based on race or ethnicity, gender, social class, sexual orientation, disability, religion or other categories.①

TOLERANCE
Acceptance and open-mindedness of different practices, attitudes and cultures. It does not necessarily mean agreement with the differences.①

RECOGNIZE AND INTERRUPT MICROAGGRESSIONS
Understand the impact of microaggressions. The use of small or sometimes unconscious offenses can be severe and long-lasting, especially in the workplace. ⑩ ⑪ ⑫

Be the change. Doing no additional harm, practicing inclusive language and actions, and removing barriers to help improve the success of diversity initiatives.⑩

Learn to recognize common microaggressions and how to respond.⑩

LEADER-REFERENCES
aphl.org/DEI

This project was supported by Cooperative Agreement #U90DD005104 from the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Its contents are solely the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official views of CDC or the Department of Health and Human Services.