

(Draft Model Guidelines)

Inclusion, Diversity and Multicultural Competence as a Justice Imperative

Institutional support for the values underlying inclusion, diversity, and multicultural competence as a justice imperative is an essential attribute of equal access to justice. ATJ network members necessarily recognize that a justice system that is inclusive, fosters respect of diversity, and works to achieve multicultural competence is a goal of the highest priority. These Guidelines are intended to help organizations and entities review, assess, and identify areas in which each can take affirmative and lasting steps toward this goal.

There are three primary areas for application of these guidelines:

1. How an entity performs its duties in service to its constituents;
2. How the entity behaves with respect to its internal operations (i.e. with its employees, staff, volunteers, leadership, governance and management); and
3. How the entity promotes the values underlying inclusion, diversity and multicultural competence as a justice imperative.

Step I:

Adoption of a framework for the organization or entity to evaluate and determine whether the organization is effectively addressing barriers or obstacles (including indigent status) that may result in unfair and disparate treatment of clients, employees, prospective employees, leadership, governing bodies, or others with whom the organization interacts. Such factors or characteristics include (but are not limited to):

1. Age
2. Disability
3. Religion
4. Creed
5. Ethnicity
6. Social Class
7. Sexual Orientation
8. Indigenous Status
9. National Origin
10. Gender/Gender Identification
11. Marital or Familial Status
12. Educational level/literacy/English language proficiency as appropriate
13. Geographic factors as appropriate including isolation or remoteness
14. The extent to which some populations experience so-called “compounded bias” because they reflect multiple factors;
15. etc.

Step II:

Adoption of a periodic, systemic process, consistent with the organization's mission, for deterring whether those who the organization or entity serves are substantially affected by any of the factors or characteristics listed in the framework adopted under Step I.

Step III:

Development of an Inclusion, Diversity and Multicultural Competence (IDM) Work Plan and implementation program for making and measuring progress within an organization or entity. There are some resources available that describe such initiatives and efforts in Washington and around the country (see resources listing attached). The following is a list of areas for assessment, work plan development and implementation for the organization or entity to incorporate the inclusion, diversity and multicultural competence values into its internal operations:

1. Recruitment and hiring of diverse staff;
2. Retention of diverse staff, and creating and sustaining an organizational culture that sets out and supports inclusion, diversity and multicultural competence through constant learning, inquiry, research and educational efforts, and through training, orientation, technical assistance, etc.;
3. Provision of targeted learning opportunities, support for and provision of resources for education and training which strengthen the organization's capacity to provide its services in a manner which is consistent with the goals identified by the organization in Step II.
4. Leadership development and succession planning within the organization that reflects inclusion, diversity and multicultural competence-related goals and values;
5. Development of mechanisms that incorporate an inquiry and assessment regarding the values underlying inclusion, diversity and multicultural competence into organizational decision-making, deliberation, or policymaking consistent with the framework adopted in Step I and the determinations made under Step II. For example, if there is a large fundraising initiative planned, decisions about how to proceed should be made in the context of inclusion, diversity, and multicultural competence factors. One inquiry may be, will the fundraising campaign identify diverse groups whose membership or constituency would support the organization or does the campaign inadvertently create barriers to diverse participation? Or, better yet, how can the "opportunity" presented by a new fundraising initiative be used to creatively think "out of the box" to identify diverse resources and develop relationships with those who might support inclusion, diversity and multicultural competence within the justice community and system? The goal is to have

- inquiry and analysis related to inclusion, diversity and multicultural competence be automatic and second nature to all aspects of the organization's life.
6. Provide leadership throughout the overall justice system, the equal justice community and the community at large to ensure significant progress and accountability in promoting inclusion, diversity and multicultural competence as a justice imperative.

 7. Evaluation and accountability mechanisms for periodic review and assessment of the organizations' progress in efforts to carry out the goals of inclusion, diversity and multicultural competence. (Note that the Access to Justice Board has identified this as an area for future revision of both its State Plan for Civil Legal Services Delivery and its Performance Standards).

(Draft Model Resolution)

Inclusion, Diversity and Multicultural Competence as a Justice Imperative

Whereas (name of institution, organization or individual) is committed to equal justice for all as a cornerstone of our democracy;

Whereas (_____) recognizes that a justice system that is inclusive, fosters respect for diversity, and works to achieve multicultural competence in the increasingly diverse communities throughout the state of Washington, is a goal of the highest priority;

Whereas (_____) recognizes that the justice system reflects and presents barriers and obstacles to equal justice based on inability to afford legal assistance, and on other facts that lead to unfair and disparate treatment;

Whereas (_____) recognizes and embraces the public duty to ensure that the justice system works to overcome disparate treatment based barriers and obstacles to the justice system;

Whereas (_____) recognizes that the goal of a justice system in which inclusion, diversity and multicultural competence are an imperative can only be reached if all members of the equal justice community and the community at large agree to be accountable for progress under guidelines that are commonly adopted;

Now, therefore, be it resolved that (_____) adopts the attached Guidelines for Inclusion, Diversity and Multicultural Competence as a Justice Imperative.

Signed: _____ Date: _____