



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®  
FOR HEALTHY LIVING  
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

# OUR ORGANIZATIONAL COMMITMENT TO DIG

## ADVANCING EQUITY WORK

Working towards advancing equity is a collective effort that requires individual, organizational and societal change. There is no [Equity](#) without action. Equity is an outcome of intentional and community-driven diversity, inclusion and global engagement (DIG) work towards systems change. This resource serves to provide initial steps that Y staff, volunteers and leaders can implement to strengthen a foundation of access, equity, and inclusion for all.

Organizational commitment to DIG is an ever-evolving process that takes time, investment and strategic planning. Through empathy and relationships, individual leaders can work with community at a grassroots level building trust, reputation, and partnership to create positive change.

## INDIVIDUAL LEARNING

Individual change-leadership towards creating a more inclusive community requires deep personal understanding, reflection, and reshaping. It often times requires individuals to 'unlearn' many socially accepted norms, behaviors and perceptions of history. Organizations such as the Y, are built on people – without individuals at all levels having the same understanding of diversity, inclusion and equity– the organization cannot begin to effectively strengthen communities.

A **STRONG COMMUNITY** is made up of:

- geographically or virtually connected individuals whose physical, social, psychological, environmental, and economic needs are equitably met by people, groups, and organizations.
  - people, groups, and organizations can act—individually and collectively—to pursue goals and interests;
  - community members experience high quality of life;
  - and community resources are mobilized by individuals, groups, and institutions as needed, to thrive in stable environments as well as through change, stress, and uncertainty.
- **UNDERSTAND YOUR OWN PERSONAL IDENTITY:** Identity are the personal attributes we all have and which is unique to all of us. Take time to better understand your own identity and how others identify themselves.
    - Complete the [Dimensions of Diversity](#) training - this Y-USA training is designed to build empathy for different dimensions of diversity and how this informs relationship building.
    - Complete the [Cultural Lenses](#) training - this Y-USA training is designed to enhance cross-cultural understanding, relationships, and engagement among all YMCA staff.
    - Learn about Intersectionality and watch: ["What is Intersectionality"](#)
  - **CULTURAL HUMILITY** promotes the experiences of others over our own, encouraging us to strive for better understanding of others instead of making assumptions.
    - Read: [Reflections on Cultural Humility](#)
    - Watch: [Sometimes You're a Caterpillar](#)

- **UNCONSCIOUS/IMPLICIT BIASES** are formed by our environment throughout life: family, friends, school, media, and more contribute to shaping our biases. Bias is a normal human behavior and we must learn about our own biases to take actions that minimize their negative impact on others. To advance equity we must understand both our individual bias and the collective bias of our organization and society.
  - Complete the [Advancing Equity: Understanding My Biases](#) training. This Y-USA online training introduces the concept of bias and explores the positive and negative impact of bias in everyday situations and offers a framework for countering bias.
  - Interrupt Hate & Bias and Countering Hate & Bias
- **MICROAGGRESSIONS** are small negative statements or actions that are hurtful, devalue and dehumanize others. Our words matter. We must recognize the damage we might inflict on individuals or groups in our community through microaggressions.
  - Watch: [Microaggressions are small statements, or actions, that accumulate.](#)
  - Read: [Microaggressions cause emotional AND physical harm to the recipient.](#)
- **ALLYSHIP** An ally is someone who makes the commitment and effort to recognize their own privilege based on different dimensions of diversity - and takes action in solidarity with marginalized groups to remove advantages created by an ally's own unearned privilege.
  - Learn more through the [Allyship in Action](#), a National Employee Resource Group (ERG) Webinar Series that provides effective strategies for Allyship.
- **RACIAL EQUITY** We must recognize the significant impact of an individual's race on the way they are treated in the United States, and the way in which racism has been institutionalized and socialized historically to the advantage or disadvantage of particular racial demographics. Understanding the importance of Racial Equity starts with learning and education then take actions that promote racial equity.
  - [Starting your Anti-Racism Journey](#) addresses how to undo racism and become "anti-racists" at an individual, organizational, and societal level.

## ORGANIZATIONAL LEARNING

Intentional and clear commitment to equity and inclusion is a powerful first step towards advancing equity within the Y and the communities we serve. Integration of Diversity, Inclusion and Global (DIG) Strategies increases the Y's relevance, visibility and impact in advancing equity within community and society. Strategic planning is key to producing impactful outcomes while working with community. By identifying best practices, policy and procedures to ensure access for all; programmatic solutions address systemic issues.

Building bridges to foster a more cohesive society begins with visionary leadership, ensuring all resources are adapted to address new challenges and needs within the community. Mobilizing resources while infusing DIG principles, practices and strategy can help strengthen a Y and its ability to operate in and serve our increasingly diverse and changing communities.

- **ADVANCING DIG STRATEGIES**

Learn about DIG Strategies and the DIG Network, start with the [Orientation to DIG](#) and [YMCA as a Global Organization](#). [The Y's commitment to diversity, inclusion, and global \(DIG\)](#) provides serves as a compass as the Y works alongside communities to drive social progress. Do you know if your Y has a DIG statement?

- [Best Practices in Diversity, Inclusion and Global \(DIG\) Committee Work](#)
- [Building Bridges: Creating Safe Spaces for Healing & Dialogue](#)
- [The Business Case for Diversity, Inclusion and Global Work](#)
- [DIG Innovation Network](#)
- [Diversity, Inclusion, and Global Metrics Local DIG Metrics Dashboard Report](#)

- **DIG TRAINING AND RESOURCES**

YUSA offers [Training and Resources to advance DIG](#). Begin with the Introduction to DIG. Familiarize yourself with the [DIG Tier Progression](#) and [Six Areas of Opportunity](#).

- **FIVE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT STRATEGIES FOR INCLUSION**

Understand the [Five Community Engagement Strategies](#) to strengthen engagement and inclusion in your community

- **SHARE THE Y-USA DIMENSIONS OF DIVERSITY WHEEL**

Once you have completed the Dimensions of Diversity training utilize the [Dimensions of Diversity Wheel](#) to facilitate discussion and learning with staff and community.

- **REFLECT ON YOUR YMCA'S CULTURE WITH STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS**

Lead with inclusion, then shift to diversity. Lead discussions with staff and volunteers around the following [DIG-related terms](#).

- What **disparities** do you see in your communities? How can we address them?
- Who and which groups hold the power at the YMCA, in your community? How can that **power** be shared?
- What are the dominant **culture patterns** at the YMCA, in your community? How are other cultures celebrated?

- **LEARN MORE ABOUT YOUR COMMUNITY**

[The communities we serve are rapidly evolving](#). To achieve our mission of strengthening community, we must know who we are serving and who we are not serving, thus identifying the gaps that need to be filled.

- Collect community demographics for primary service areas (i.e., [U.S. Census](#), school data, [CDC Youth Risk Behavior](#), and [Robert Wood Johnson Foundation](#)).

- **CONNECT WITH COMMUNITY PARTNERS**

Community partners have proven to be highly effective in connecting Ys with underrepresented community groups. Identify, connect, listen, learn, and partner.

- Identify a potential community partner that serves the gap in your community.
- Invite them to the Y, ask them about their community's greatest needs and how they think the Y could play a part in meeting those needs.

- **ENGAGE WITH Ys IN THE DIG NETWORK**

[The Diversity, Inclusion, and Global \(DIG\) Innovation Network](#) consists of YMCAs that have made an organizational commitment to integrate DIG strategies across key operational and programmatic areas to strengthen their capacity to serve diverse and underserved populations, foster community cohesion, and address social equity and inclusion issues. These are just a few of the Ys in the DIG Network that have strategically and operationally committed to advancing equity and antiracism work.

- [YMCA of the Twin Cities](#)
- [YMCA of Greater Seattle](#)
- [YMCA of Greater Charlotte](#)

- **CONNECT WITH ANTI-RACISM ORGANIZATIONS**

National Antiracism Organizations have been partnering and training Ys nationally. [The People's Institute for Survival and Beyond](#) focuses on understanding what racism is, where it comes from, how it functions, why it persists and how it can be undone. Workshops utilize a systemic approach that emphasizes learning from history, developing leadership, maintaining accountability to communities, creating networks, undoing internalized racial oppression and understanding the role of organization gate keeping as a mechanism for perpetuating racism.