

From BoardSource.org

## Diversity, Inclusion, and Equity

As the decision-making body at the highest level of organizational leadership, boards play a critical role in creating an organization that prioritizes, supports, and invests in diversity, inclusion, and equity.

Whether in the hiring of the executive, the determination of strategy, the allocation of resources, or the goal of serving the community with authenticity, the board's leadership on diversity, inclusion, and equity matters.

As stewards of the public good, all social sector organizations, regardless of mission, are called on to embrace and celebrate our common humanity, and the inherent worth of all people. In doing so, we must also acknowledge that a climate of growing intolerance and inequity is a challenge to our democratic values and ideals. Divisions along economic, racial, religious, and political lines have created an increasingly polarized society in need of healing. And the complex issues and dynamics at the intersection of race, class, gender, and sexuality call for deeper thinking as we seek to understand each other.

We believe that social sector organizations are better able to do this work effectively and with authenticity when they are led by boards that are

- **diverse:** The individual leaders who compose nonprofit boards are a reflection of an organization's values and beliefs about who should be empowered and entrusted with its most important decisions. We believe that all social sector organizations can better achieve their missions by drawing on the skills, talents, and perspectives of a broader and more diverse range of leaders, and that the diversity of viewpoints that comes from different life experiences and cultural backgrounds strengthens board deliberations and decision-making.
- **inclusive:** The most effective boards work to build a culture of trust, candor, and respect — none of which is possible without a culture of inclusion. Boards that cultivate an inclusive culture ensure that all board members are encouraged to bring their perspectives, identity, and life experience to their board service. An inclusive board culture welcomes and celebrates differences and ensures that all board members are equally engaged and invested, sharing power and responsibility for the organization's mission and the board's work.
- **equity-focused:** Boards play a critical role in helping organizations understand the context in which they work and how best to prioritize resources and strategies based on that reality. An awareness of how systemic inequities have affected our society and those an organization serves enables boards to avoid blind spots that can lead to flawed strategies, and creates powerful opportunities to deepen the organization's impact, relevance, and advancement of the public good.

Read more about [BoardSource's Commitment to Diversity, Inclusion, & Equity: For Ourselves and the Social Sector.](#)