

CLEAR TERMS

Diversity, equity, and inclusion are inter-related but distinct concepts. As such, efforts toward their realization can create synergy, but each requires specific attention. **Diversity and inclusion focus, respectively, on people and processes; equity is about overall impact.** Here is what we mean by each term and how it's related to the others.

- **Diversity** refers to the wide range of differences among people and their perspectives. For this report, our focus is on diversity with regard to race and ethnicity, sexuality, gender, and ability. The definition of diversity is sometimes combined with the concept of inclusion, such as in the following: "The concept of diversity encompasses acceptance and respect. Yet, it is quite possible within a setting of people of different backgrounds and perspectives not to have acceptance and respect. That is why inclusion must stand alone conceptually. Further, diversity may or may not be linked to the issue of equity. A diverse workplace is not necessarily an equitable workplace. Nor does the presence of people who are diverse necessarily produce decision-making that optimizes results for the groups their diversity reflects. A foundation that focuses only on diversity cannot presume that it has equity as a goal. For these reasons, diversity and equity are conceptually separate. The more the term diversity is used to refer to any feature of an individual's being or choices, the more likely it is to be uncoupled definitionally from issues and structures that produce and maintain power differentials.
- We use **inclusion** to mean two things: the ability of diverse peoples to raise their perspectives authentically and for those voices to matter and affect decisions within majority-group settings; and the initiative of majority-group members to access non-majority voices in the latter's own settings and through their own informational vehicles, so that majority-group members enlarge their understanding of issues and relationships.
- Finally, for D5's purposes, **equity** refers to the impact of philanthropic investment and action wherein outcomes are not correlated with race, ethnicity, sexuality, gender, or ability.

With these definitions in mind, it becomes easier to see how it is possible for an organization to be committed to diversity but not inclusion, or to diversity and inclusion without taking the larger step toward equity.

Distinctions among Diversity, Inclusion, Equity

