



Catalysts for Common Good

“The System”

We in DEI and related fields often throw around the phrase, “the system”. If you happen not to know exactly what the system is you are not alone. Although there are many ways to describe what the system* is or what it is that needs changed, what follows is only one effort to help you conceptualize the general components of “the system” in an organizational context. We hope this is helpful for you but that you also give thought and reflection as to how you might describe the system you are a part of and how it impacts the people both inside and outside of that system.

Components of the System

(Areas to include and in which to focus your change efforts)

Policies Procedures Processes	Leadership	Staff	Beneficiaries and Stakeholders	Physical Space
Each of these should be reviewed, critiqued and modified using a DEI lens	This includes anyone with decision-making authority (e.g., board, CEO, etc.) Should also include a Chief DEI Officer (or related role)	This includes middle managers, front line staff, back-office staff, etc.	These are people who are impacted in some way by the organization. It may be customers, clients, vendors, etc. In the case of public entities such as schools this includes especially the students, parents and employees but also the taxpayers.	The physical space represents the culture of the organization. If it does not reflect the diversity of the beneficiaries, stakeholders, staff, etc. it will likely be experienced as unsafe or not inclusive.

On-going professional development related to DEI and intercultural competence for the board, leadership and all staff is critical.

The sustainability of any DEI change effort will be greatly compromised if anyone of these areas is not considered and enhanced.

Beneficiaries and stakeholders should be included and engaged as much as possible during any DEI effort through participation on advisory committees, participation in “community” dialogues, etc.

A simple motto to remember this framework: “Adapt the policies, procedures and processes. Develop the people. Engage the Stakeholders. Improve the space.”

*The system is also much bigger and broader than only one organization. Our hope with this document is that you can conceptualize what the system is for your organization and the areas of change that you should focus on in your organization.