

Mayor's Initiative on Equity & Equality Report to City Council

March 2022

Background:

Springfield Mayor Ken McClure and City Council voted unanimously in 2021 to create the Mayor's Initiative on Equity and Equality to further the City's ongoing efforts to ensure an equitable environment that celebrates diversity and inclusion. Subsequently, they named an 18-member group to develop guiding principles to improve equitable access to opportunities, recognizing the inherent dignity, value, and worth of each individual.

The appointed group of Springfieldians included individuals from different personal and professional lived experiences, different sectors of the community, and various cultural backgrounds. This group collaborated to respond to the charge posed by the City's governing body.

Definition Framework:

Diversity encompasses the entire human experience. Diversity is the wide spectrum of unique lived experiences that each individual possesses, expresses, and contributes.

Equity is promoting justice, impartiality, and fairness within the procedures, processes, and distribution of resources by institutions or systems. Tackling equity issues requires an understanding of the root causes of outcome disparities within our community and society as a whole.

Inclusion is how we make diversity work. Inclusion is the creation and support of an environment that not only accepts but celebrates differences by leveraging diversity to make stronger decisions for the greater good. Inclusive diversity is equally respectful of and embraces the unique qualities of each person.

Membership:

Co-Chair Saehee Duran

Co-Chair Doug Neff

Rita Baron

Barbara Block

Chantha Chhim (moved from the community)

Justin Clark

Adrienne Denson-Ewell (moved from the community)

Christian Lewis

Christa Moss

John Oke-Thomas

Mike Powers

Francine Pratt

Bob Roberts

Robin Robeson

Jeff Schrag

Jeanne Skahan

Carol Taylor

Shurita Thomas-Tate

Staff Support:

Anita Cotter

Cora Scott

Taj Suleyman

Charge: Develop guiding principles to improve equitable access to opportunities, recognizing the inherent dignity, value, and worth of each individual.

Vision: Together, we will create and promote a community where differences are valued and celebrated and where everyone has the opportunity to prosper and contribute.

Opening Statement: These guiding principles reflect the City's commitment to improving inclusive and equitable access to opportunities, recognizing the inherent dignity, value, and worth of each individual in our community.

Dialogue and Understanding

"We are committed to..."

- **Seeking and listening to diverse thoughts respectfully**
- **Fostering a culture of mutual learning through continual dialogue and education**

Cultural Consciousness

"We are committed to..."

- **Developing awareness of our own existing biases**
- **Understanding, valuing, and respecting diversity**

Advocacy and Partnerships

"We are committed to..."

- **Cultivating inclusive partnerships to increase intentional and effective collaboration**
- **Welcoming diverse voices and advocating for the underrepresented and the disenfranchised**

Structural and Systemic Barriers

"We are committed to..."

- **Identifying and removing diversity, equity, and inclusion barriers**
- **Refining policies and implementing practices to protect the rights of every member of our community**

Personal and Organizational Accountability

"We are committed to..."

- **Inspiring, modeling, and promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion excellence**
- **Honoring individuals and organizations that demonstrate accountability for fostering an inclusive community**