



*Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion*

# Strategic Framework



# Strategic Framework *Overview*

The Strategic Framework outlines the vision, goals, strategies, objectives, and guiding principle of the organization's commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion both within the organization and in our intersections and interactions with people we support, families, employees, and external stakeholders. It also provides a clear structure for focusing our actions and ensuring they are meaningful, targeted, and lead to sustained, deep, and powerful change. Altogether, it charts a course for building a diverse, equitable, and inclusive organization.

The framework is grounded in our mission and core values. Our DEI goals, reaffirm that our mission and core values are foundational to who we are and continue to represent who we want to be as an organization, even as we put greater emphasis on our work in DEI.

The framework itself is defined by the components illustrated in the pages that follow. Together, these components provide the necessary strategic foundation for the DEI Action Plan's initiative and next steps:

- **Vision for Transformative Impact:** This is our shared understanding of how this work integrates with our organization's core values and mission to create long-lasting change.
- **Guiding Principles:** These key ideas guide how we will accomplish our work together and codify the spirit of DEI practices at AHRC, Citizens and BCCS.
- **Overarching DEI Goal:** To become the culturally competent, human service organization of choice for all our constituents, internal and external.
- **Areas of Focus:** To guide our actions, these thematic areas of emphasis were developed based on organization surveys and an organizational assessment
- **Strategies and Objectives:** These specific directional strategies, aligned with our focus areas, provide a roadmap for targeted actions, and intended outcomes staged over time.



# Strategic Framework *Definitions*

## **Diversity**

Recognizing all dimensions of human differences. In the broadest sense, diversity refers to the inclusion of all historically marginalized people regardless of racial and ethnic background, disability, gender and gender identity, sexuality, nationality, religious beliefs, age, and socioeconomic status, among others.

## **Equality**

Guaranteeing identical distribution of resources regardless of the above-mentioned differences. Equality focuses on perceived fairness and is different from equity.

## **Equity**

Recognizes that all people do not start from the same place and focuses on adjusting imbalances, giving each person what they need to succeed. Imbalances focus on access, opportunity, and support.

## **Inclusion**

The practice of creating spaces, in and outside an organization, that celebrate and recognize the value of diversity. Of great importance is including people who have historically been excluded at all levels of the organization (representation) and ensuring that everyone can achieve their full potential regardless of difference.

## **Bias**

The term bias refers to unfair prejudice either in favor of or against a person or group in comparison with another person or group. Biases, whether conscious or unconscious, may be held by individuals, groups, organizations, or academic institutions, resulting in negative or positive consequences. Bias has negatively affected historically minoritized communities based on race, gender & sexuality, disability, immigration status, citizenship, and language among other differences.



### **BIPOC**

An acronym for Black, Indigenous, and People Of Color

### **Cisgender**

Adj: A term used to describe people whose gender identity matches the sex they were assigned at birth. Often abbreviated to “cis.”

### **Intent and Impact**

Our intentions (what we want or hope to do) do not always align with what we say or do which can impact how others perceive what one says and does. INTENT Refers to what you hope or want to do when choosing to perform an action. IMPACT Refers to the reality (e.g., results) of your actions/ behaviors. The resulting impact may not always align with what you intended. Owing the impact: When one’s impact is being called into question, especially if the action is perpetuating oppression, it is important to recognize the action is being called into question not the person’s character.

### **Reverse Racism**

A term created and used by those with power (white people within the Western context) to deny their white privilege. Those in denial use the term reverse racism to refer to hostile behavior by people of color toward white people, and to affirmative action policies which allegedly give ‘preferential treatment’ to people of color over white people. There is no such thing as “reverse racism.”

### **Reverse Sexism**

Term created to deny sexism. Fails to acknowledge that the word sexism exists because we live in a patriarchal society where men are dominant, and women are subordinate (and where men are privileged simply because they are men). There is no such thing as “reverse sexism.”

### **LGBTQIA+**

Broadly speaking, it is an acronym that includes lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer/questioning, intersex, and allied/asexual/aromantic/agender people.

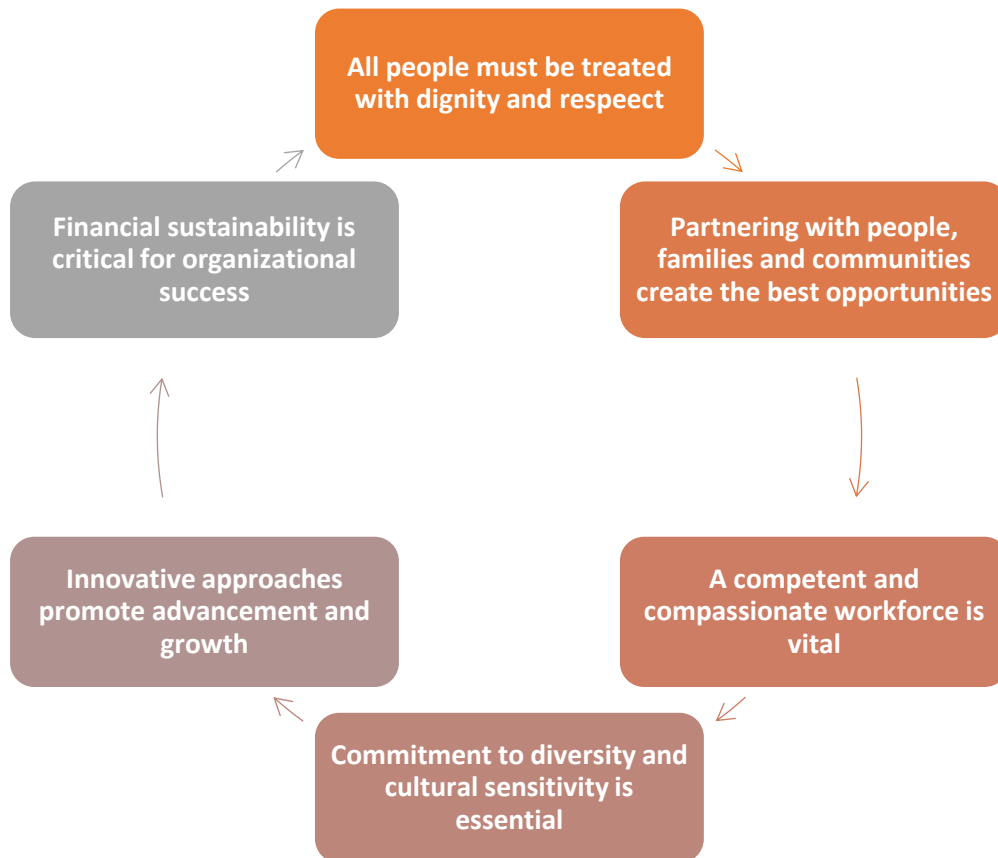
## Our Mission:

AHRC Nassau empowers people to live fulfilling lives. Together with Family – Friends – Community.

## Our Vision:

A world where people of all abilities are valued.

## Our Core Values:





## Our Core Values Defined:

*At AHRC Nassau, we believe that...*

### 1. All people must be treated with dignity and respect

Every human being has dignity and is worthy of respect. This underlies our person-centered approach to services, support and illustrates our approach to working with each other and with our stakeholders.

We treat people in a principled manner, knowing we are united by a shared mission and positive intent.

#### Observable behaviors:

1. We engage people in decisions that impact them and stay connected with them as decisions are made.
2. We express gratitude for the contributions of people across all functions of the organization.
3. We consistently demonstrate respect in our communications and in our behavior.
4. We show vulnerability, acknowledge when we are wrong, apologize when appropriate, and forgive when needed.
5. We consult with people to see what they need, talk with them about how things are perceived, and get their input on important issues.

#### What we mean by this:

1. **Show respect for people supported and employees.** Recognize that our mission is centered on the people we support and that our employees are the organization's greatest asset and make investments in them. Commit to making AHRC a place where people want to receive supports, want to work, good work is getting done, staff are valued, and people are happier.
2. **Lead by example.** Treat others the way we want to be treated. Model the behavior we expect of others in day-to-day actions, and our interactions.
3. **Model grace and empathy** at all levels of the organization. Give people allowances for mistakes. Assume good intentions, avoid hidden agendas, show vulnerability, apologize when appropriate, forgive when needed.



## 2. Partnering with people, families and communities creates the best opportunities

We encourage collaboration, bringing people into the conversation and practicing active listening. We practice and model being un-biased. We take risks and are willing to be wrong.

### Observable behaviors:

1. We are willing to take risks and allow space for “creative ideas.”
2. We structure our decision-making processes to enable collaboration.
3. We share responsibility for finding solutions and accountability for results.
4. We actively seek dialogue, finding the right way to engage individuals. We ask curious questions to gain insight and understanding.
5. We have tough conversations, acknowledge critical input.

### What we mean by this:

1. **Engage liberally** with people especially when you see that some are silent or need time to participate. Reach out to communicate with them, especially those whom you hear less from or are less extroverted. Endeavor to knock down walls, not build silos.
2. **Practice active listening** Listen attentively with the intent to understand. Active listening means repeating what you think you heard to check that you understood, it means asking curious questions to gather insights and understanding, it means acknowledging other’s perspective and ideas with sincerity. Demonstrate this through verbal and non-verbal cues. Be open to dialogue and feedback you receive.
3. **Look for solutions**, not just problems. Present and address problems in a way that promotes discussion and resolution. Have the courage to deliver bad news accurately to generate solutions not to gossip.



### 3. A competent and compassionate workforce is vital

We acknowledge that a competent workforce is vital to our ability to meet and fulfill our mission. Our ability to support our people to live full, meaningful, and happy lives is dependent on the core skills of compassion, empathy, and commitment to be of service to others.

#### Observable behaviors:

1. We seek and celebrate staff who have the competencies to effectively make a positive difference in the lives of others.
2. We seek and celebrate staff who represent the diversity of our community and the people we support.
3. We support any of our staff who are experiencing bias from anyone else in the organization by interceding and reinforcing our core value of respect.
4. We provide our staff with the training, professional development, tools, resources, and ongoing support they need to be successful.
5. We look for opportunities to solicit staff feedback and engage staff in decisions that impact their ability to do their work effectively.

#### What we mean by this:

1. **Identify the skills** needed to be successful and pursue candidates with those skills. We challenge our biases to ensure we are selecting those who will be successful regardless of race, gender, LGBTQIA+, age, disability, etc.
2. **Identify opportunities for professional growth** and help staff consider their career path and the skills needed to achieve their goals.
3. **Do not tolerate bias, prejudice, discrimination, harassment, or bullying** by anyone within the organization and we intercede to protect our staff from mistreatment.
4. **Listen and seek feedback.** We assess the needs of staff and hold ourselves accountable for the resources available to staff by engaging staff in conversations on how to find effective solutions.





#### **4. Commitment to diversity and cultural sensitivity is essential**

We advance equity, and foster equitable opportunity, addressing inequality within our organization and in our work.

##### **Observable behaviors:**

1. We find solutions to structural impediments that interfere with equity in our organization.
2. We have transparent policies and procedures; we do not have hidden rules of behavior that may be apparent to some groups and unknown to others.
3. The Senior Leadership Team and Diversity Strategic Plan Steering Committee will champion diversity and inclusion efforts at every level of the organization.
4. We cultivate a diverse and representative workforce, free of discrimination.
5. We strive to strengthen the voices of the marginalized and vulnerable, especially within our own organization.
6. We value every team member and seek to ensure everyone can fulfill their potential.

##### **What we mean by this:**

We recognize our moral obligation to respect and protect the civil rights of all. We are committed to achieving and maintaining an inclusive, diverse, and representative workforce within AHRC the organization, free of bias, discrimination, and reflecting the innovation and creativity that diversity can bring to the workplace. We value every member of our team, learn from their experience, and foster their active engagement.



## **5. Innovative approaches promote advancement and growth**

We believe innovation starts with our people and revolves around our ability to challenge our staff to strive for a continually improving mindset that focuses on turning challenges into opportunities.

### **Observable behaviors:**

1. We challenge our assumptions and always ask “why” to find creative solutions. Curiosity is a key competency and cultivated in everyone.
2. We encourage each other to share their ideas and work to foster a culture that supports failure as well as success.
3. We are dedicated to our work and take full responsibility for our solutions.

### **What we mean by this:**

We know that our success in providing supports and services to a diverse community requires us to continuously seek new and creative ways to understand the needs of different racial/ethnic communities. We are committed to creating an environment where our diverse staff can utilize their skills to find innovative solutions in supporting people to live full and healthy lives.

## **6. Financial sustainability is critical for organizational success**

Our success depends on our ability to be a viable enterprise now and in the future. We look for everyone to take ownership for ensuring the highest standards of performance and success.

### **Observable behaviors**

1. We encourage all employees to responsibly deliver and document high quality services in an efficient and impactful manner.
2. We support employees in creating solutions that bring greater efficiencies and higher effectiveness to promote financial stability.

### **What we mean by this:**

We provide high quality services and continuously strive to improve in the way we provide them. We do not sacrifice quality and [we] work as a team to ensure we deliver services efficiently. We manage and allocate our resources responsibly to advance our mission and adhere to our values.



## Vision for Transformative Impact

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A demonstrated and measurable commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion is an indivisible pillar of the values of AHRC Nassau and the way we deliver upon our mission.

This is our shared understanding of how this work integrates with our organization's core values and mission to create long-lasting change.

## Guiding Principles

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These key ideas will guide how we will accomplish our DEI goals as an organization and help set the tone of our future DEI work.

**Inclusive and Engaging** – Efforts should include representation of BIPOC experiences, roles, and responsibilities across our family of organizations and work to ensure that participation and engagement are available to everyone.

**Evolutionary and Ongoing** – A transformative DEI program takes time, intentional everyday commitment, and requires ongoing investment to support incremental, measured, and sustained change.

**Transparent, Accountable, and Measurable** – Management must openly share progress with the plan. The organization will transparently collect and share key data that monitors progress using specific, meaningful metrics, and must adjust when needed to address obstacles.

**Evidence-Based and Driven by Best Practice** – The DEI program will be rooted in organizational needs and disparities identified in objective qualitative and quantitative data. Solutions will apply historically contextualized approaches to building diversity, equity, and inclusion.

**Centered and Equity-Focused** – Efforts, actions, and decision-making should include those who are most affected by inequities, and efforts should prioritize equity over equality.




**Transformational and Bold** – Our work in this area will require a real focus on racial, ethnic, and cultural differences instead of supporting surface-level efforts. The organization recognizes that true transformation often creates discomfort for many people, resistance from some, and is prepared to respond to this without diminishing the plan.

## Overarching DEI Goal

To become the culturally competent, human service organization of choice for all people who value diversity, equity, and inclusion in the IDD community.

### Areas of Focus

To enact measurable change over time, our work in DEI will focus on growing the areas of strength and improving in the areas of deficit identified in our needs assessment and throughout the DEI strategic process.

		
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>People</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Culture</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Programs</b></p>
<p><b>Creating sustainable spaces for the composition, growth, and retention of diverse staff at all levels are directly tied to AHRC’s success in reaching our DEI goals specifically and its strategic goals more generally.</b></p>	<p><b>Using the lens of DEI to inform our work, interactions, and engagement. Embedding DEI principles into our organization through programs, transparent and equitable policies, and inclusive behaviors while influencing our environments and community.</b></p>	<p><b>Ensuring we can support a diverse IDD community in and outside the organization through culturally competent partnerships, trainings, workshops, and events.</b></p>



## DEI Strategies and Objectives

To move from intent into action and outcomes, we must develop, implement, measure, and sustain an Action Plan that aligns with our areas of focus.

<p><b>People: Strategy 1</b> Attract, retain, and develop a diverse Board of Directors and workforce at all levels so that AHRC reflects the populations in which we operate.</p>	<p><b>Culture: Strategy 2</b> Using the lens of DEI to inform our work, interactions, and engagements. Embedding DEI principles into our organization to transform the organizational culture so that staff members, people supported, and partners, particularly those who are absent, marginalized, and underrepresented, will experience AHRC, as the diverse, equitable, and inclusive workplace that we aspire to become.</p>	<p><b>Programs: Strategy 3</b> Ensuring we can support a diverse IDD community in and outside the organization through culturally competent partnerships, trainings, workshops, and events.</p>
<p><b>Objective 1.1</b> <b>Recruit Diverse Talent</b> Recruit skilled Board Members and staff members of diverse backgrounds and experiences. Specifically address disparate BIPOC representation at management and Board levels.</p>	<p><b>Objective 2.1</b> <b>Value Differences</b> Facilitate a workplace culture that integrates greater awareness, appreciation, and understanding of differences into every interaction. To provide an environment where everyone will feel comfortable and safe despite their differences.</p>	<p><b>Objective 3.1</b> <b>Strengthen Collaboration &amp; Capacity</b> Incorporate diverse talent and expertise and deeply infuse DEI principles into our work to support people, their families, and the community.</p>
<p><b>Objective 1.2</b> <b>Retain Diverse Talent</b> Directly address the higher attrition of BIPOC staff and Board Members and expand our focus on retaining diverse staff and Board Members more broadly.</p>	<p><b>Objective 2.2</b> <b>Support Learning &amp; Development</b> Improve the conditions, processes, technical support, and ongoing training for leadership, supervisors, and staff members to gain cultural competency skills.</p>	<p><b>Objective 3.2</b> <b>Strengthen Partnerships</b> Strengthen collaborative relationships with external partners and communities and consider ways to increase cultural literacy through outreach and collaboration.</p>
<p><b>Objective 1.3</b> <b>Develop Diverse Talent</b> Ensure ongoing professional development to maintain a diverse workforce at all organization levels and support future BIPOC leaders.</p>	<p><b>Objective 2.3</b> <b>Foster Action</b> Foster an environment where every person is empowered and is responsible for advancing DEI goals</p>	<p><b>Objective 3.3</b> <b>Invest our Resources with Purpose</b> Support diverse and minority-owned suppliers by providing equity in sourcing and purchasing opportunities.</p>

## Actions List

Below, is a list of initial actions that we will pursue to implement the DEI strategies and objectives outlined above. The actions are organized under AHRC’s three main DEI goals. All items are coded by the timeframe anticipated as defined above. Completed items also are identified to maintain a complete history of our DEI initiatives.



## People: Strategy 1 Actions

Create sustainable spaces that attract, support, and retain diverse workforce, Board of Directors, and constituents, in and outside the organization.

Ongoing	1.1.1	Annually assess the diversity of the Board of Directors and develop and pursue diversity recruitment goals, as needed, to compose a board that can lead AHRC Nassau in meeting the needs of a diverse I/DD community
Ongoing	1.1.2	Incorporate cultural competencies into all job descriptions to attract and identify individuals with the commitment and skills to enhance AHRC Nassau’s organizational capabilities and promote service excellence.
2023-ongoing	1.1.3	Ensure job descriptions and applications do not create disparate treatment of BIPOC and LGBTQIA+ applicants.
By End of 2023	1.1.4	Create a comprehensive recruitment plan targeting underrepresented groups
2023 -Ongoing	1.1.5	Partner with Diverse agencies to attract Board Members and staff that represent a diverse, equitable and inclusive organization (Essence Festival, Congressional Black Caucus, NAACP, National Urban League, LULAC, UnidosUS, etc.). Attend diversity-focused recruitment events such as SRED.
2023-Quarter 2	1.1.6	Improve data collection to analyze the demographic representation levels of candidates at the completion of the hiring process.
2023 Quarter 4	1.2.1	Conduct barrier analyses to identify potential barriers to equitable career outcomes at all phases of the employment cycle.
2023 – Annually	1.2.2	Ascertain whether Department attrition may be higher for employees from underrepresented groups and why.
2023- Ongoing	1.2.3	Add DEI advancement criteria for senior-level positions.
2023- Quarter 2-ongoing	1.3.1	Implement DEI training for the Board. And incorporate DEI goals and strategies into Board orientation.
2023 Quarter 3	1.3.2	Form a Board Diversity committee to support the Board’s commitment to DEI policy and action
2024 -Ongoing	1.3.3	Create & offer a variety of engaging DEI workshops & courses for professional development
TBD	1.3.4	Offer incentives via an online platform to increase participation & completion of professional development classes



## Culture: Strategy 2 Actions

Using the lens of DEI to improve our work, interactions, and engagements. Embedding DEI principles into our organization to transform the environment so that staff members, people

supported, and partners, particularly those who are absent, marginalized, and underrepresented, will experience AHRC, as the diverse, equitable, and inclusive workplace.

2023 -Ongoing	2.1.1	Prioritizing the value of bringing a DEI lens to the organization and its work
2023 - Ongoing	2.1.2	Create an educational strategy that supports staff learning about DEI, the history and legacy of structural inequity and racism, how to have meaningful dialogue on diversity and isms, and skills to engage in effective outreach with diverse communities. Ensure the educational component aligns with current events and societal changes.
By end of 2023	2.1.3	Increase person to person interaction with Executive Management Team to staff at every level.
2023	2.1.4	Development of sub-committee to review agency policies and practices to ensure that inclusive language/options are present in agency materials and recommendations to EMT for approval
By end of 2023	2.1.5	Foster ownership for DEI work by creating Employee Resource Groups to offer a conduit for information flow between employees and management.
2023 - Ongoing	2.1.6	Baseline DEI Training (Agency Culture and Belonging, Agency’s DEI Mission, Vision and Values and purpose) for existing staff, new hires, self-advocates, and families
2023	2.2.1	Core education for existing staff and new hires by people with lived experience in varied job roles. Review of organizational chart, purpose and expectations of existing roles working together to fulfill the mission of the organization
2024	2.2.2	Reimagine DEI 4-day training online and face to face.
2023 - Ongoing	2.3.1	Dissemination of DEI related materials including a DEI specific Mission/Vision, value statement and accountability statement as per this strategic plan
End of 2023	2.3.2	Development of agency wide communication and language access plan.



### Programs: Strategy 3 Actions

Ensuring we can support a diverse IDD community in and outside the organization through culturally competent partnerships, trainings, workshops, and events.

2023 Quarter 1	3.1.1	Define the primary DEI principles for the organization to be infused
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2023 Quarter 2	3.1.2	Develop a toolkit to facilitate equitable, diverse, and inclusive policies and procedures.
2023 Quarter 3	3.1.3	Develop an outreach plan to infuse DEI principles for families of people supported.
2023 Quarter 3	3.1.4	Deploy outreach strategies to discover any gaps in expertise in the workforce
2023 Quarter 1	3.2.1	Develop baseline data of existing “partnerships” the agency holds with the community
2023 Quarter 1	3.2.2	Evaluate baseline partnerships for any gaps
2023 Quarter 2	3.2.3	Evaluate data and determine engagement strategies with collaborative partners
2023 Quarter 2	3.2.4	Establish criteria to select and nurture mutually beneficial and reciprocal external partnerships that reinforce and fulfill AHRC Nassau’s commitment to DEI principles and goals.
End of 2024 - ongoing	3.2.5	Partner with local/national organizations that represent and serve diverse communities.
End of 2024	3.2.6	Create new community engagement opportunities for people served from expanded partnerships
2023 Quarter 1	3.3.1	Develop baseline data of all active/current suppliers and vendors
2023 Quarter 1	3.3.2	Establish agency desired percentage diverse and Minority owned vendors and partners and identify gaps.
By end of 2023	3.3.3	Deploy outreach strategies to discover and engage new vendors to fulfill our demographic goals



## Action Plan Overview

The Action Plan outlines specific activities to support the strategies and objectives set in the Strategic Framework. These actions were developed based on the recommendations of the DEI Strategy Committee and our Diversity Consultant. The final actions represent our priorities based on input by the Diversity Steering Committee and various staff members and teams.

Listing intended actions is only the first step in achieving our DEI goals. To ensure true success, our planned actions will need:

1. A Realistic and Shared Timeline
2. Objective Measures of Progress and Success
3. Appropriate Resources and Governance
4. Access and Accessibility to Information & Technology
5. Individual and Shared Accountability

## Timeline

To successfully implement the plan, we will need realistic and published stages of activity. To remain focused, the timeline is limited to three key timeframes.

All actions in the timeline are dependent on several factors, including but not limited to; the availability of our constituents with the necessary time and expertise to accomplish the action, and available funds to support the actions within the anticipated timeframe.

2023		2024 - Ongoing
<b>2023 – Quarters 1-4</b> The Action Plan first focuses on actions to lay a solid foundation for sustainable change.		
	<b>2023 - ongoing</b> These are actions that we hope to accomplish before the end of the current calendar year, assuming current projected availability of budget and resources. Includes actions that will need to be maintained annually.	
		<b>Starts in 2024</b> These are longer-term actions that have a multiyear timeframe for completion.



## Resources and Structure

Implementing the Strategic Framework objectives requires oversight, dedicated staff involvement, and financial investment.

1. Leadership
2. Oversight and Strategy – DEI Steering Committee
3. Implementation – Comms/Marketing – DEI Working Groups

### *DEI Resource Groups Explained*

#### Leadership

Key staff shall include executive management and other key management employees as appointed by the Chief Executive Officer to serve as members of the Steering Committee. These staff shall ensure broad based support across the entire organization for the initiatives recommended by the steering committee and the strategic plan. The Board DEI Committee along with the entire Board of Directors shall review and participate in planning and implementation of Board training and objectives to expand the Board’s awareness of DEI.

#### DEI Steering/Advisory Committee

The DEI Steering/Advisory Committee provides a connected structure that will share, report, and engage on the gaps of knowledge and skills related to the above outlined DEI goals and help make strategic decisions. Participants voluntarily come from various departments and levels within our organization, Board of Directors, and people with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities that self-advocate to increase diverse representation, encourage transparency, and maintain accountability.

1. Create sustainable organizational change in support of our DEI goals and strategies.
2. Ensure our DEI goals and strategies align with our mission, vision, and values.
3. Build and maintain a process structure that supports our DEI strategic plan.
4. Promote accountability, transparency, and engagement with our DEI goals and strategies throughout all organizational levels.



### Communications/Marketing

All internal and external communication materials produced by the organization will reflect our vision and commitment for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. Below we outline some of the main areas of focus.

- As the digital front door of our organization, the website will align with our DEI strategies outlined above by demonstrating consistent language and imagery thereby putting into action our commitment and conviction on the importance of DEI as a core value of the organization.
- Prioritize story angles that implicitly or explicitly reinforce the benefits of DEI.
- All materials are to be reviewed for biased language.
- Maintaining a strong DEI lens to craft Social Media messaging and imagery. We will leverage our diverse teams to connect with diverse networks.
- Selecting individuals for appearances and quotes through a DEI lens.
- Internal communications are imperative in creating and maintaining a culture of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. Our internal communications will set the tone for everyone within our organization, including Board Members and people with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities that self-advocate signaling our values and commitment to DEI.
- Our recruitment marketing will accurately demonstrate a work-culture of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion.
- Videos will include the option for captions.

### DEI Working Groups

DEI Working groups focus on specific strategies and ensure that the voice of people with lived experiences remain at the core of our work and decision-making process. Participants voluntarily join working groups and focus on a specific strategy. There are three main working groups representing the three main DEI strategies outlined above.

- Establish sub-committees to work on different objectives to achieve main strategy completion.
- Help identify issues, collect information, synthesize information, and make recommendations to the DEI Steering/Advisory Committee.
- Responsible for meeting deadlines, preparation and facilitation of action items, and communication with the DEI Steering/Advisory Committee.
- Identify the need for, and promote Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion events, programs, and initiatives.

### Employee Resource Groups (ERGs)



ERGs are groups made of internal representatives in support of historically marginalized or absent identities in the workplace (for example, race and ethnicity, disability, spirituality, LGBTQIA+ and parenting among others). ERGs are tasked with providing support to a diverse workforce and promoting Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion throughout the organization.

1. Promote a welcoming and inclusive environment for all.
2. Influence policies and procedures within the organization that will result in increased Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion.
3. Offer support, community building, and strengthen employee sense of belonging.
4. Spread awareness and encourage allyship regarding the obstacles minority identities experience.
5. ERGs shall be supported financially by the administration to engage in internal and external activities that support the well-being and success of the group

ERGs can have multiple goals and responsibilities that may/will shift over time depending on the needs of its members and the people they represent.

In addition to the formal roles, resources, and committees listed above, we will involve staff in decision-making roles. We expect these roles to evolve as we learn more about what resources are needed to achieve our goals. Our ambitious action plan necessitates financial resources and program budgeting. As such, our DEI work is one of AHRC's top priorities, and we will ensure it receives the attention and support needed.



## **Access & Accessibility**

Changes in access and accessibility at AHRC will be an outcome, and an enabler of our DEI efforts. Each is essential to creating the inclusive culture and positive experience we want for our internal and external constituents.

At a workplace that supports and serves the personal needs of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities, various levels of access and permissions are needed. We will create a more inclusive AHRC Nassau that facilitates inter-office, inter-departmental, and inter-agency activities, and opportunities.

We recognize disparities in experiences across the organization, particularly for our DSP workforce. Efforts to improve this are essential. We will continue to acknowledge those disparities openly and create additional pathways for the engagement and inclusion of this critical part of our organization.

Finally, access is only one piece of the inclusion promise. Accessibility, which ensures that individuals with varying hearing, movement, sight, or cognitive abilities can navigate our physical and digital environments, is also critical as we forge ahead in this work.

## **Accountability & Measurement**

Our work as a human service organization, includes a focus on measurement and evaluation in the supports we provide for people. We must hold ourselves rigorously and transparently accountable to our Strategic Framework & Action Plan commitments by measuring and evaluating our own progress.

In the short term, we can evaluate our progress against our DEI objectives by tracking the plan's early actions and changes. A quarterly update on our progress, shared with all staff and Boards will be a key reporting vehicle. We will use these monthly updates to share progress and as a place where committees and work groups can share their actions with staff. Other vehicles for regular DEI reporting will include monthly newsletters, Lunch and Learns, webinars and staff meetings.

As we rollout new objectives, we will add new metrics and create specific approaches to measuring progress.