

Key Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee Structure & Key Values

Key Objective:

The Amherst Survival Center community and all entities involved will work toward, maintain, and further a diverse, inclusive, fair, and equitable environment at the ASC for all community members, including Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC), LGBTQIA, people experiencing homelessness, people living with disabilities, and/or people experiencing food insecurity. This encompasses all who are engaging with the Center as program participants, volunteers, staff, and/or board and committee members.

The Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee will

- Determine key priorities for action related to this key objective,
- Allocate designated funding for these priorities, and
- Take the leadership role in completing these priorities, working alongside other members of the Amherst Survival Center community.

Assumptions/operating statement:

The Amherst Survival Center is focusing on anti-racism in order to work towards our Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion goals. The ASC recognizes that any effort focused only on a broad Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion agenda will ultimately fail without a concerted focus to see racism, name it, and act to address it. The DEI Committee is committed to making all decisions through the lens of anti-racism, recognizing that a “race neutral” approach is harmful to BIPOC people and communities.

“What’s the problem with being ‘not racist’? It is a claim that signifies neutrality: ‘I am not a racist, but neither am I aggressively against racism.’ But there is no neutrality in the racism struggle. The opposite of ‘racist’ isn’t ‘not racist.’ It is ‘antiracist.’ - Ibram X. Kendi

Who is involved in the DEI Committee?

The Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee will include 7-15 community members, staff members, and board members. Smaller “Priority Groups” (ie Subcommittees) will form from this main group to address individual priorities. The committee will include people who have experience accessing ASC services and volunteering, the Executive Director, someone involved in outreach, someone with a detailed knowledge of daily operations, and someone who is a board member. The committee will maintain a minimum of 50% BIPOC members.

Qualifications & Expectations of DEI Committee Members:

Members are expected to demonstrate alignment with our Key Values and Operating Assumptions (see above). Priority is given to prospective members who have a history of demonstrated work in DEI initiatives and/or lived experience with the consequences of racism. Members are expected to have a working knowledge of the history of systemic racism, how it continues to be present and impact our community, and **an understanding that being non-racist is insufficient, and being anti-racist is necessary for progress.**

People interested in joining the committee should complete the interest form, and then will be invited to speak with a member(s) of the DEI Forming Group for a brief interview.

Attendance & Participation:

The full committee will have monthly meetings (additional meetings may be needed at the beginning) and continue to evaluate the required frequency of meetings as needed. Subcommittees will meet separately as needed (frequency can be determined by the members of the subcommittee).

Committee members will be expected to contribute an additional 1-5 hours per month outside of meetings for committee work.

As of Summer 2021, all meetings will remain virtual. Decisions regarding in person meetings will be made in tandem with the ASC COVID-19 operations, reopening policies, and the preference of committee members.

Stipends (up to \$1,200/year) will be available to all community members participating to honor your time. (Staff and board members are not eligible for stipends.)

Priorities:

DEI committee members will start right away with five primary objectives:

- Create policies and procedures for committee members, including reporting structures, attendance expectations, conduct expectations, decision making process, meeting facilitation, and record keeping.
- Establish outreach processes for the committee, including liaisons between the committee, the staff, the board, and the community; recruit additional members.
- Examine action items which have resulted from Staff and Board discussions in 2021 and determine whether items require a subcommittee or committee action. Establish subcommittees/priority groups.
- Begin an exploratory process for a needs assessment with community members, participants, partners, staff, board members, and volunteers.
- Create options for committee inclusion for those who do not speak English (i.e., translation and interpretation to create multilingual spaces).