Creating Inclusive Camps: Concepts and Strategies

Version 1

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Introduction

For the last 160 years, starting with the Gunnery Camp in Connecticut, summer camp has been an American institution[1]. As families moved to cities, religious and community leaders believed that youth would become morally corrupt if only experiencing urban life. Early on there was an emphasis on young boys and using nature as a developmental tool for transitioning into manhood. Over time, camp became a place for youth to engage in educational activities and build value and improve character, as well as develop individuals who would support their greater communities.

Though camp was created to improve outcomes for youth and society, not all segments of society were initially included. Race, class, gender, ability, and religion played a major role in who had the opportunity to go to camp. Over the last 100 years, camp evolved with society at large by including marginalized and excluded groups but still find difficulty bridging difference. As camps begin to or continue to apply diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) efforts to connect with communities, we must be aware of how our engagements can impact communities, both positively and negatively. Through reflection, the Camp Program Quality Initiative (CPQI) recognized that many of these efforts have aided in reaching more youth from a variety of diverse backgrounds, encouraging camps to create a more inclusive culture. The camp professionals of the CPQI created this tool to continue supporting camps in bridging that difference.

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[1] American Camp Association (2010). *100th Anniversary Timeline.* http://www.acacamp.org/anniversary/timeline/

How to Use the Creating Inclusive Camps Tool

This tool is intended to be extremely reflective and offer opportunities for you and your organization to engage with sections as needed. While the content is presented in a linear fashion, depending on the practical experience of yourself and your organization, you do not need to work through each section in order. You might even spend more time with certain sections and less on others!

This tool is designed to help you and your camp identify the work you already do to make your camp an inclusive space. It does this by supporting you in identifying where you are on a five-stage scale of diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) advancement from "Not yet started" to "Launched" to "Leading." From this scale, camps will have a good idea of what they can do to advance their DEI work. You will have the opportunity to examine how the stages of advancement look in what we have designated as four areas of influence. By the end, we hope that camps can identify potential for implementing DEI work at any level.

This work is rooted in continuous improvement. We believe that improvements to inclusion at camp is not a checklist of items, but is cyclical and deserves to continuously be assessed and improved. Continuous improvement requires acknowledgement that we don't know what we don't know and getting things wrong. When we pair that with the difficult personal work around equity, it requires *vulnerability* and discomfort and actively searching for areas in which we can learn and grow. We hope that approaching the work in this way will support the flow of committing to continuous improvement and advancing DEI work within your camp and community.

Next up, you'll find a lexicon. This lexicon is meant to create a shared understanding of terms throughout this document. As language and the needs of our communities and those we serve is always evolving, we intend for this document to evolve as well. If you have any feedback, questions, or want to get involved with ACA's DEI work, please reach out to dei@ACAcamps.org.

Lexicon

Diversity

The presence, recognition, and celebration of differences. Diversity focuses on representation. Some examples of social differences to be celebrated are race, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, disability, religion, socioeconomic status, age, language, and culture.

SOURCE: National Headquarters 18-Month Strategic Plan. (2021). *Camp Fire*.

Dominance/Dominant Group

Those within the society with the power, privilege, and social status that controls and defines societal resources and social, political, and economic systems and norms.

SOURCE: Edwards, S., Nakintu, S., and Bitanga-Isreal, O. (2021). Diversity, equity, and inclusion: Key terms and definitions. *National Association of Counties.*

Equity

To treat everyone fairly. An equity emphasis seeks to render justice by deeply considering structural factors that benefit some social groups/communities and harm other social groups/communities. Sometimes justice demands, for the purpose of equity, an unequal response.

SOURCE: Our shared language: Social justice glossary. *(*2016). *YWCA*.

Exploit

To use someone or something unfairly for your own advantage.

SOURCE: Exploit. (n.d.). *Cambridge Dictionary*.

Homophobia

Fear, prejudice, discomfort, or hatred of people attracted to members of the same gender. It occurs in a wide social context that systematically disadvantages LGBTQ+ people and promotes and rewards anti-LGBTQ+ sentiment.

SOURCE: Edwards, S., Nakintu, S., and Bitanga-Isreal, O. (2021). Diversity, equity, and inclusion: Key terms and definitions. *National Association of Counties*.

Implicit Bias

Also known as hidden bias, refers to the numerous ways in which we organize patterns "thus creating real-world implications." Exposure to structural and cultural racism has enabled stereotypes and biases to penetrate deep into our psyches. Implicit bias is one part of the **system** of inequity that serves to justify racist policies, practices, and behaviors that persist in mainstream culture and narratives.

SOURCE: Staats, C. (2013). State of the science: Implicit bias review. *Kirwan Institute, The Ohio State University.* Please see *Race Equity Tools* for more information.

Inclusion

Inclusion is actively creating spaces that not only represent diversity but create a sense of belonging and value. Unlike diversity, inclusion is about more than representation — it is about involvement and belonging (Camp Fire, 2021). Inclusion is authentically bringing traditionally excluded individuals and/or groups into processes, activities, and decision/policy making in a way that shares power (MP Associates, 2021).

SOURCES: National Headquarters 18-Month Strategic Plan. (2021); Camp Fire; *OpenSource Leadership Strategies*.

Marginalization/Marginalized

A social process by which individuals or groups are (intentionally or unintentionally) distanced from access to power and resources and constructed as insignificant, peripheral, or less valuable/privileged to a community or "mainstream" society. This term describes a social process, so as not to imply a lack of agency. Marginalized groups or people are those excluded from mainstream social, economic, cultural, or political life. The extent to which populations are marginalized is context specific and reliant on the cultural organization of the social site in question.

SOURCES: Equity and inclusion glossary of terms. (n.d.). *UBC Equity and Inclusion Office.*

Mental Models

Mental models are personal, internal representations of external reality that people use to interact with the world around them. They are constructed by individuals based on their unique life experiences, perceptions, and understandings of the world. Mental models are used to reason and make decisions and can be the basis of individual behaviors. They provide the mechanism through which new information is filtered and stored.

SOURCES: Jones, N., Ross, H., Lynam, T., Perez, P., and Leitch, A. (2011). Mental models: An interdisciplinary synthesis of theory and methods. *Ecology and Society* 16(1): 46. For more information on mental models and equity, see Dr. Nika White's *Identifying the Five Mental Models of DEI*.

Norm

An accepted standard or a way of behaving or doing things.

SOURCE: Norm. (n.d.). *Cambridge Dictionary.*

Oppression

The exercise of authority and power in an unjust, unfair manner that prevents certain people or groups from having opportunities for freedom or advancement.

SOURCE: [National Headquarters 18-Month Strategic Plan.](#) (2021). *Camp Fire.*

Power

1. The ability to name or define.
2. The ability to decide.
3. The ability to set the rule, standard, or policy.
4. The ability to change the rule, standard, or policy to serve your needs, wants, or desires.
5. The ability to influence decision-makers to make choices in favor of your cause, issue, or concern.

Each of these definitions of power can manifest on personal, social, institutional, or structural levels.

Personal Power

1. Self-determination.
2. Power that an individual possesses or builds in their personal life and interpersonal relationships.

Social Power

1. Communal self-determination.
2. A grassroots collective organization of personal power.
3. Power that social groups possess or build among themselves to determine and shape their collective lives.

Institutional Power

1. Power to create and shape the rules, policies, and actions of an institution.
2. To have institutional power is to be a decision-maker or to have great influence upon a decision maker of an institution.

Structural Power

To have structural power is to create and shape the rules, policies, and actions that govern multiple and intersecting institutions or an industry.

SOURCE: [Our shared language: Social justice glossary.](#) *(*2016). *YWCA.*

Privilege

Unearned social power accorded by the formal and informal institutions of society to ALL members of a dominant group (e.g., white privilege, male privilege, etc.). Privilege is usually invisible to those who have it because we're taught not to see it, but nevertheless it puts them at an advantage over those who do not have it.

SOURCE: [Privilege.](#) (n.d.). *Colours of Resistance Archive.*

Prejudice

A prejudgment or unjustifiable, and usually negative, attitude of one type of individual or groups toward another group and its members. Such negative attitudes are typically based on unsupported generalizations (or stereotypes) that deny the right of individual members of certain groups to be recognized and treated as individuals with individual characteristics.

> SOURCE: A community builder's tool kit. (2000). *The Institute for Democratic Renewal and Project Change Anti-Racism Initiative.*

Resistance Strategies

An approach to addressing resistance to change through communication while addressing internal bias, perceived threats, and improving understanding of topics being introduced.

> FOR MORE INFORMATION: Fransen, M. L., Smit, E. G., and Verlegh, P. W. J. (2015). Strategies and motives for resistance to persuasion: an integrative framework. *Frontiers in Psychology.*

Solidarity

Agreement between and support for the members of a group.

> SOURCE: Solidarity. (n.d.). *Cambridge Dictionary.*

Structural Change

Refers to the transformation in the structure of a society. This type of change includes changes in the structure of social institutions or the rules by which they are run. Structural changes are thus long-term and permanent changes.

> SOURCE: What do you understand by "structural change"? (n.d.). *Byju's.*

System

A regularly interacting or interdependent group of items forming a unified whole.

> SOURCE: System. (n.d.). *Merriam-Webster.*

Tokenism

Covert racism. Racism requires those in power to maintain their privilege by exercising social, economic, and/or political muscle against people of color. Tokenism achieves the same while giving those in power the appearance of being non-racist and even champions of diversity because they recruit and use people of color as racialized props.

> SOURCE: Kim Ho, H. (2017). Ways people of color are tokenized in nonprofits. *The Nonprofit Revolution.*

Underserved

Populations who face barriers in accessing and using services, including populations underserved because of geographic location, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, race, ethnicity, and special needs.

SOURCE: [Underserved populations.](#) (n.d.). *U.S. Code, Title 34, Subtitle I, Chapter 121, Subchapter III.*

Xenophobia

Any attitude, behavior, practice, or policy that explicitly or implicitly reflects the belief that immigrants are inferior to the dominant group of people. Xenophobia is reflected in interpersonal, institutional, and systemic levels of oppression and is a function of white supremacy.

SOURCE: Cokorinos, L. (2007). [The racist roots of the anti-immigration movement..](#) *The Black Agenda Report.*

What Is Culture?

The CPQI has adopted the definition of the term provided by the *Institute for Democratic Renewal and Project Change Anti-Racism Initiative²*. The initiative has defined culture as:

> *A social system of meaning and custom that is developed by a group of people to assure its adaptation and survival. These groups are distinguished by a set of unspoken rules that shape values, beliefs, habits, patterns of thinking, behaviors, and styles of communication.*

Considering the elements of adaptation and survival, many times there are identities that rise within groups, creating unspoken rules that provide power and dominance for those individuals; when this is established within social groups, communities, and organizations it is referred to as *Dominant Culture*. Those who do not abide by established norms or behaviors begin to become underserved, marginalized, exploited, excluded, and oppressed. Having this dynamic leads to **In (Privileged)** and **Out (Oppressed)** groups.

The chart below represents identities that currently, and historically within the United States, have been identified as In and Out groups.

Type of Oppression	Out Group	In Group
Race	People of Color	White People
Class	Poor, Working	Middle, Upper
Gender	Female, Transgender, Nonbinary	Cis-Gender Male
Sexual Orientation	Non-Heteronormative	Heterosexual
Ability	Persons with Disabilities	Able-Bodied Individuals
Religion	Non-Christian	Christian
Age	Young–Older Adult	Middle Aged
Language	Non-English	English
Education	No Degree	Degree
National Origin	Foreign Born	US Born

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² The Institute for Democratic Renewal and Project Change Anti-Racism Initiative (n.d.). A Community Builder's Toolkit: A Primer for Revitalizing Democracy from the Ground Up. https://drive.google.com/file/d/1mM2ATbM9aUwBRFxuk7O1hgIjzYYV5IKl/view

Considering this chart, the CPQI believes that **Diverse, Equitable, and Inclusive** practices can improve the quality of programming as well as outcomes for youth from all backgrounds and identities. For this to be achieved, the group has focused on three areas:

History — Analyzing and understanding our organization within the national context.

Examples of this include asking questions like:

If the first camp in the United States was established in 1861, four years before slavery was abolished, how might that have impacted people of color, then and now, who participate in camp?

Systems Change — Moving toward looking beyond symptoms and diving into addressing the overall system.

Examples of this include asking questions like:

How can we work to understand mental models that lead to behaviors and practices rooted in race prejudice, xenophobia, homophobia, among many implicit biases?

Policy and Practice —- Examining internal policies and practices to see how they influence decision making and opportunities.

Examples of this include asking questions like:

How can policies and practices support and reinforce exclusive behaviors within the organization?

Through analysis of camp systems by the CPQI members, who hold various positions across the country with a range of tenure, we have developed a tiered reflection tool that will aid camps in identifying tactics to advance their DEI work in four key areas of influence:

- **Community/Camper Engagement**

- **Organizational Culture**

- **Leadership Development**

- **Sustainability**
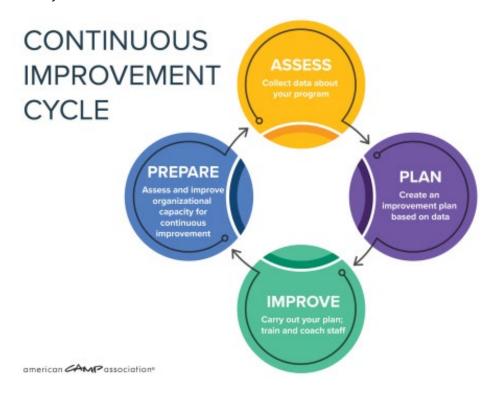
Five Stages of DEI Advancement

The CPQI also identified five stages, acquired from the *Theory and Practice of Multicultural Organization Development*, that can be used to measure progress. These stages, although a portion of the original continuum, have been selected as they represent the transition from symbolic to structural change. By using these three stages to measure efforts within DEI, camps and organizations will be able to better inform their strategies with the goal of creating an inclusive culture.

Stage of Advancement	Description of Stage
Not Yet Started	The camp does not yet prioritize advancing DEI work as an operational priority.
Ready to Start	The camp has recognized the importance of DEI work to their mission and is beginning the process by assessing the current state of the camp through audits.
Launched	The camp works toward improving youth representation while introducing elements that support individuals with diverse identities to mitigate risk. Youth and staff from underrepresented cultures are tokenized with minimal changes to existing policies.
On the Way	The camp is taking the steps to transform into a more equitable and inclusive space in practice and policy. A culture of belonging is evident by youth and staff at these camps who value difference and contribute to the collective success internally and externally. At this stage, camps work to improve inclusion but sometimes fall back on the norms of the dominant culture.
Leading	The camp recognizes transformation is an ongoing process and holds the importance of DEI to its mission. Camps reflect and adjust to ensure the opportunities to be an equitable and inclusive space. As people with various identities (racial, ethnic, gender, etc.) enter these camp spaces, policies and practices work to eliminate barriers to inclusion by allowing youth to bring in experiences from their own cultures. Individuals who represent both privileged and oppressed groups work in solidarity to challenge exclusive behaviors. Using reflection, data, and in-depth engagement with youth and communities, these camps continually reduce marginalization while allowing youth to identify and utilize their social power.

After each component of the areas of influence, we provide space for you to write down your reflections on your own program and brainstorm next steps.

Continuous Improvement

As camps begin to introduce DEI elements into their practices and policies, we highlight strategies that support camps in continuously improving the work in all for areas of influence and throughout the five stages of DEI advancement. By aligning with a continuous improvement cycle (see image), we can learn along the way, be responsive to what we learn from our experiences, and continue to improve year after year.

CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT CYCLE

ASSESS — Collect data about your program

PLAN — Create an improvement plan based on data

IMPROVE — Carry out your plan; train and coach staff

PREPARE — Assess and improve organizational capacity for continuous improvement

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Throughout a continuous improvement cycle centered around DEI advancement, special attention is drawn on the four following priorities:

1. **Understanding/Learning** — Camps engage with youth and community with the intent to seek understanding of culture and history from others' perspectives without judgment or defense.
2. **Capacity Building** — Camps focus on a variety of methods to create change to structures and governing policies. Steps may include but are not limited to policy assessment and review, data utilization, and funding strategies.
3. **Measurement** — Impact measurement becomes the standard for implementing change. Collection of measurable data and qualitative observations are utilized when considering improvement.
4. **Sustainability** — Knowing initiatives need to be resourced (people, time, and money), sustainability is discussed to maintain both accountability and longevity.

Camper/Community Engagement

To engage with youth efficiently as they develop their abilities, it is imperative that those who support youth — families, caregivers, and community members — are also involved. This will not only build trust, but demonstrate your commitment as organizations seek to recruit staff and participants for programs and services. Utilizing DEI practices when engaging with communities can lead to positive experiences and successful outcomes for both groups involved.

When engaging with youth and community always remember to:

- Avoid prescriptive solutions but collaborate with community to identify needs
- Utilize input from both the organization and community to maintain accountability
- Discuss camper needs with families and community leaders to develop effective support systems
- Build organizational capacity that allows for building relationships beyond services

Critical components we will analyze within this area of influence include:

- Historical DEI Perspective
- Participant Recruitment and Retention
- Impact Measures

Questions to consider while reviewing the five stages of advancement:

History — Which community groups, In or Out, have you historically engaged with? Are some groups engaged at a higher frequency than others? Typically, how does the power balance exist in these relationships?
Systems Change — What are your organization's beliefs about engagement with communities in the "Out" group?
Policy and Practice — When communicating with a new community, are your services based on previous communities or developed by those within that community?

Camper/Community Engagement: Historical DEI Perspective

Stage of Advancement	Opportunities for Advancement
Not Yet Started	The camp connects with alumni from both "In" and "Out" groups to discuss impact (pros and cons of camp culture).
Ready to Start	The camp considers working with a local historian (someone with institutional knowledge) to develop a timeline including policy development, recruiting processes, and philanthropic efforts.
Launched	The camp announces commitment to DEI work understanding acknowledging where camp was and the work that is planned (websites, promotional materials, etc.). Leadership within the organization seek to understand the relationships with the communities of underrepresented youth from a historical perspective.
On the Way	The camp develops engagement practices informed by past and current culture and considers potential outcomes in the future. The camp works with community leaders representing historically underrepresented youth.
Leading	The camp continuously assesses process and impacts of efforts. Camp maintains partnership with their community.
Please use this space to write down your reflections on your own program and brainstorm next steps.	

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Camper/Community Engagement: Participant Recruitment & Retention

Stage of Advancement	Opportunities for Advancement
Not Yet Started	Staff view themselves as experts in their work, seldom engage youth or community members in conversations about quality programs, and rarely ask for input.
Ready to Start	The camp recognizes the need for camper and community involvement in program assessment and improvement. Camp staff create or use a tool to ask for feedback, but inconsistently analyze and/or don't know how to review and implement changes.
Launched	Camp staff create or adapt a foundational survey or tool and share with youth and community for feedback, which is then integrated into the tool. The results of the survey/tool are reviewed and changes are made.
On the Way	Youth and community members are included in collaborating to evaluate program improvement, from the beginning of creating a tool for measurement to reflecting and making meaning of results to implementing changes in program and/or process.
Leading	Youth and community members are considered experts, driving the process of program improvement in partnership with the organization to ensure ongoing changes.
Please use this space to write down your reflections on your own program and brainstorm next steps.	

Camper/Community Engagement: Impact Measures

Stage of Advancement	Opportunities for Advancement
Not Yet Started	The camp does not measure the youth experience.
Ready to Start	Youth voice is captured through quotes, often used for marketing. This data is not supported by quantitative data across underrepresented groups. The camp works to measure the youth experience but does not analyze to explore differences in experience for underrepresented identities.
Launched	Data is reviewed to identify gaps that may lead to exclusionary outcomes, measured and analyzed to explore the experience within underrepresented identities. Data is used to reduce assumptions and implement program improvements.
On the Way	The camp is transparent in sharing findings with youth and their community.
Leading	Commitment to an annual continuous improvement cycle is used to solve root problems and implement changes at a systems level.
Please use this space to write down your reflections on your own program and brainstorm next steps.	

Organizational Culture

Culture is a common occurrence that is the result of norms developed and implemented by groups that differentiate themselves from others. Individual biases developed over time by dominant members of organizations become the practices and policies that include some and exclude others. Youth of all identities are affected by organizational culture whether they are in the dominant group or not. To fully engage with all youth, it is essential to develop practices that reduce the risk of exclusion.

Below are examples of how inclusive cultures transform:

- **Individual Power to Collective Power** — Power goes from a few in senior leadership to seeing value in individual positions and expertise. *See definition of **power** in Lexicon.*
- **Avoiding Conflict to Constructive Feedback** — Individuals move from blaming individuals for their own discomfort to holding each other accountable while continuously learning from each other.
- **Competitive to Collaborative** — Focus moves from how an individual can be successful on their own to how can we all support each other and our collective efforts.

Critical components we will analyze within this area of influence include:

- Common Language
- Understanding Culture
- Policy and Assessment Review
- Data Utilization

Questions to consider while reviewing the five stages of advancement:
    History — As new identities and cultures have entered your camp space, has the camp historically reacted by creating accommodations or working toward redefining culture?
    Systems Change — Have changes to your inclusive practices been a method to mitigate risk or develop a more inclusive and accountable culture?
    Policy and Practice — Are changes in practice and policy based on state and federal standards? How is youth voice incorporated?

Organizational Culture: Common Language

Stage of Advancement	Opportunities for Advancement
Not Yet Started	The camp has not made a statement explaining their position on DEI or provide a guide for inclusive and diverse language relevant to their context.
Ready to Start	A single department, leader, or staff member is tasked with leading a DEI evaluation of language, mission statement, goals, etc.
Launched	The camp creates or adopts a language guide, develops a DEI statement, and gathers feedback from stakeholders on what should be included.
On the Way	The camp creates or adopts an inclusive style guide, recruits diverse leaders to design an inclusive approach to building a DEI statement and organization-wide initiative, and provides training opportunities for all stakeholders.
Leading	The camp consistently evaluates their efforts, improving and updating their work. They create opportunities for diverse stakeholders to provide feedback on language and its use across the entire organization and its systems.
Please use this space to write down your reflections on your own program and brainstorm next steps.	

Organizational Culture: Understanding Culture

Stage of Advancement	Opportunities for Advancement
Not Yet Started	The camp does not address diversity and inclusivity, usually because they do not want to alienate customers, clients, or upset anybody.
Ready to Start	The camp makes statements of inclusivity and diverse values, but often does not consistently provide appropriate actions to support claims.
Launched	Camp leadership seek to understand dominant culture within the organization and how it affects those who belong to both "In" and "Out" groups. The camp creates space for discussion about culture — including individuals representing various identities — to reduce conflict.
On the Way	The camp utilizes tools and resources to counter personal and organizational bias with a focus on improvement. Individuals within the organization can express feelings, knowing that there is a process to mitigate future issues.
Leading	The camp proactively encourages discussion of values and identity from all groups, internally and externally. Individuals can discuss challenging issues without being penalized by individuals within dominant groups. These practices are continuously assessed and improved.
Please use this space to write down your reflections on your own program and brainstorm next steps.	

Organizational Culture: Policy and Assessment Review

Stage of Advancement	Opportunities for Advancement
Not Yet Started	The camp has no policies related to inclusive organizational culture. If there are policies, actions have not been taken to assess their effectiveness of supporting an inclusive organizational culture.
Ready to Start	The camp assesses current policies with a focus on politically correct language, usually with a single person or department working on it.
Launched	An improvement team has been convened to review policies with a DEI lens. Evaluation is underway, but not yet completed. A plan is in place to complete the process.
On the Way	The camp's improvement team completes an initial evaluation of current policies.
Leading	The camp provides opportunities for all stakeholders to review policies — to provide feedback and implementation plans — during regularly scheduled periods.
Please use this space to write down your reflections on your own program and brainstorm next steps.	

Organizational Culture: Data Utilization

Stage of Advancement	Opportunities for Advancement
Not Yet Started	The camp uses data to support their current initiatives, depending on traditional methods of evaluation from traditional or dominant groups or time periods.
Ready to Start	Senior camp leadership and board review and make meaning of data to understand both climate and youth voice.
Launched	A selection of stakeholders, leaders, and staff review and make meaning of data.
On the Way	An improvement team that represents all stakeholders, including program youth, makes meaning of data from all stakeholders and shares out conclusions and next steps. There are regularly scheduled periods of review throughout the year.
Leading	The camp includes all stakeholders in making meaning of data, providing ample time for reflection, feedback, and improvement planning and implementation to support youth throughout the year.
Please use this space to write down your reflections on your own program and brainstorm next steps.	

Leadership Development

Staff and leadership development with a DEI lens is a combination of preparing individuals to become employees of the organization as well as developing individuals who understand the importance of change as a component of improving sustainability. As current and future leaders strengthen their abilities to bridge the divide between individuals with different experiences, dominant practices will begin to shift, creating an environment that is both welcoming and inclusive.

Inclusive Leadership allows for:

- Individuals at all levels to learn from and hold each other accountable
- Critical thinkers to ask questions that improve the organization, and
- All leaders to be successful in their roles without limitations

Critical components we will analyze within this area of influence include:

- Leadership Pathways
- Recruitment and Hiring

- Board Member Recruitment
- Sustainability

Questions to consider while reviewing the five stages of advancement:

History — Where have your leaders traditionally been recruited from? Why is this the case?

Systems Change — When was the last time you reviewed your hiring/recruiting process? Is it based solely on state/federal regulations?

Policy and Practice — What practices do your hiring managers/human resources team use when selecting new leaders to join the organization? How are the "right people" selected for the job? And what are the characteristics of the "right people"?

Leadership Development: Leadership Pathways

Stage of Advancement	Opportunities for Advancement
Not Yet Started	The camp does not have formal mentorship opportunities, nor provide leadership training for everyone. Certain staff may be hand-picked by senior leadership to be trained toward leadership roles. The burden is placed on the staff member to "speak up" and ask for opportunities to advance.
Ready to Start	The camp recognizes that they have gaps in representation among their organization's staff and the youth they serve. They create basic responses, like a training program for staff that they identify as needing in one way or another, or sharing recognition at meetings, but there is no organization-wide initiative to create leadership pathways.
Launched	The camp creates a plan to analyze historical data to understand the lack of representation and identifies organizational processes and systems that contribute to the problem. The organization chooses one method, such as a formal mentorship program, to fix this problem.
On the Way	The camp offers multiple methods of mentorship and leadership development to those identified as benefiting. The organization promotes and provides professional development opportunities to the community to increase access.
Leading	The camp improves their systems and processes to increase engagement among all underrepresented staff and leaders in the community. Professional development opportunities are scheduled consistently throughout the year, and are meaningful, rewarding, and create actual change in participants' lives.
Please use this space to write down your reflections on your own program and brainstorm next steps.	

Leadership Development: Recruiting and Hiring

Stage of Advancement	Opportunities for Advancement
Not Yet Started	The camp follows traditional methods of recruitment, depending on traditional markers of success (such as a well-written resume without typos, cover letters, the burden of follow-up on the candidate). When the camp has an opening, leadership hand-picks who to interview and the job posting is not opened to everyone.
Ready to Start	The camp reviews the applicant experience and begins to analyze who their usual applicants are and if they typically fall in the "In" or "Out" group.
Launched	The camp begins to question long-standing beliefs about what defines a quality applicant.
On the Way	The camp removes barriers to employment that reduce the hiring pool of individuals from underrepresented and "Out" groups.
Leading	The camp's commitment to recruiting underrepresented individuals results in continuous improvement plans, increased diversity, and long-term leadership training plans for all stakeholders.
Please use this space to write down your reflections on your own program and brainstorm next steps.	

Leadership Development: Board Member Recruitment

Stage of Advancement	Opportunities for Advancement
Not Yet Started	The camp's board is made up of personal connections or people from similar networks and "In" groups. Diverse perspectives are not represented, and it is a place where ideas are not challenged from multiple perspectives.
Ready to Start	The camp's board recognizes that they do not have a diverse membership and create a plan to address that. Often, this results in the current members recruiting people that they view as part of the "Out" group (See chart on pg. 10 for examples) but have similar economic or academic backgrounds. There might be token representation.
Launched	The camp's board reaches out to community organizations, politicians, and groups to actively solicit ideas and recruit new leaders that represent the community. There might be one or two new board members as a result.
On the Way	The camp's board reduces the financial fundraising burden from its members, allowing for representation of all backgrounds, including youth, underrepresented, and marginalized groups. The board creates a new set of expectations that equally values the different types of capital that a member brings in. The board reserves seats for every stakeholder group.
Leading	The camp's board sets term limits to make the board membership more equitable and youth-/participant-led. Meetings are made public, they have review sessions for decisions that impact stakeholders, and they continuously assess and improve their practices and processes.
Please use this space to write down your reflections on your own program and brainstorm next steps.	

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Leadership Development: Capacity Building

Stage of Advancement	Opportunities for Advancement
Not Yet Started	The camp has reached its threshold within the core components (e.g., board governance and leadership, financial management, fundraising and resource development, program delivery and impact, HR, and strategic partnerships). The daily operation, employee engagement, and general productivity is low.
Ready to Start	Camp leadership recognize the area(s) of concern and makes an internal commitment to begin to understand what areas of the organization need improvement, and how their commitment to the work will impact the camp's ability to build internal capacity.
Launched	Camp leadership conducts interviews with employees and those served to gain a better understanding of any interpersonal challenges. Camp is committed to improving by asking questions related to ways they can understand capacity challenges from all areas of the organization.
On the Way	Camp leadership begins to empathize from analysis and shifts capacity building efforts to reflect short-term and long-term organizational development. The approach is human-centric and invests in the learning, adapting, and shifting of power and resources from within to better serve areas of need.
Leading	Camp leadership is able to articulate this process to those they serve and other stakeholders. Systems, skills, resources, and cultures are strengthened through employee engagement and output.
Please use this space to write down your reflections on your own program and brainstorm next steps.	

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Sustainability

For camps to continue to serve the next generation of youth who are becoming more diverse over time, considering DEI practices as a measure of sustainability can be vital. Understanding the structures that drive and maintain the organization, we have an opportunity to see how change is implemented, how to navigate barriers and improve fiscal stewardship to continue servicing youth and their communities today and in the future. Where a business case drives day-to-day engagements, a case for sustainability speaks to maintaining an organizational mission while shifting to meet the needs of your community over time.

Critical components we will analyze within this area of influence include:

- Organizational Change
- Addressing Resistance

- Volunteer Engagement
- DEI Funding Strategies

Questions to consider while reviewing the five stages of advancement:

History — How your camp implemented change? Was it out of need or in preparation for what is to come?

Systems Change — When your camp is addressing change, is it adopting new language or shifting ideas and behaviors?

Policy and Practice — When change is implemented, do policies change as well? Does practice?

Sustainability: Organizational Change

Stage of Advancement	Opportunities for Advancement
Not Yet Started	The camp assesses current policies with a focus on politically correct language.
Ready to Start	Policies are discussed by the camp's improvement team with the purpose of improving outcomes for staff, participants, and the organization.
Launched	Policies are discussed by the improvement team with the purpose of improving outcomes for staff, participants, and the organization. The improvement team, consisting of individuals from both "In" and "Out" groups, is created to assess and update current policies with a focus on mitigating bias, barriers, and any unintended consequences throughout the organization.
On the Way	The improvement team assesses, adapts, and creates policies with a focus on advancing a culture of inclusivity for participants and the organization.
Leading	Actions have been taken to enact new policies. Guidance is provided by the review team with continued assessment and input from stakeholders.
Please use this space to write down your reflections on your own program and brainstorm next steps.	

Sustainability: Addressing Resistance

Stage of Advancement	Opportunities for Advancement
Not Yet Started	The camp has not begun to think about or implement strategies to address resistance to focusing and improving the inclusivity of their camp.
Ready to Start	In preparation to begin inclusive practices, the camp has identified resistance (pushback from community and organizational stakeholders) in four categories (avoidance, contesting, biased processing, and empowerment)[3].
Launched	The camp begins to utilize tools that counter forms of resistance while working to educate during onboarding.
On the Way	The camp employs strategies (e.g., conversations, trainings, tools) to reduce resistance from their internal community (staff, board, and volunteers).
Leading	The camp's internal community values improvement and supports changes when implemented with an understanding of approach and intention
Please use this space to write down your reflections on your own program and brainstorm next steps.	

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[3] Fransen, M. L., Smit, E. G., and Verlegh, P. W. J. (2015). Strategies and motives for resistance to persuasion: an integrative framework. frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fpsyg.2015.01201/full#:~:text=Four%20clusters%20of%20resistance%20strategies,%2C%20and%20concerns%20of%20of%20deception)

Sustainability: Volunteer Engagement

Stage of Advancement	Opportunities for Advancement
Not Yet Started	The camp has no formal volunteer engagement plan and provides opportunities based on already existing relationships.
Ready to Start	Camp realizes a needs to create a clear and sustainable volunteer engagement process and program.
Launched	Volunteer engagement program has been developed and examined. This plan becomes the core of all volunteer interactions moving forward.
On the Way	A volunteer engagement program is underway. Efforts have been taken to create sustainability in recruitment, onboarding and retention.
Leading	The camp employs methods of assessing and improving the ongoing volunteer engagement program.
Please use this space to write down your reflections on your own program and brainstorm next steps.	

Sustainability: Funding Strategies for DEI

Stage of Advancement	Opportunities for Advancement
Not Yet Started	No actions have been taken to identify, pursue, or secure funding in relation to DEI initiatives.
Ready to Start	Camp stakeholders have identified potential funders with a fundraising team created for the purpose of pursuing funding opportunities for DEI initiatives.
Launched	The fundraising team has taken initial steps to seek and secure funding.
On the Way	The fundraising team is in the process of completing and refining applications for various funding opportunities.
Leading	The camp has submitted proposals for funding opportunities, has begun identifying future opportunities, and is assessing and improving their processes.
Please use this space to write down your reflections on your own program and brainstorm next steps.	

Reminders and Examples

Considering where you find your camp overall in the "Five Stages of DEI Advancement," we would like to offer the following considerations and examples:

Not Yet Started — Search for learning opportunities that aren't overwhelming, but informative and supportive of what you intend on implementing at your camp.

> ### *Organizational Culture: Understanding Culture*
>
> Find a community partner and peer who has a different lived experience than you. ask for the opportunity to discuss culture (e.g., organizational, local, national) and share perspectives. Remember, though this individual may share their perspective, they should <u>not</u> be urged to share more than offered or be criticized for what was shared.

Ready to Start — Find the best way to transition from using only qualitative observations to quantitative data that aids in your new direction. Instinctively, you will be looking for the bright spots, but remember to look at the statistics to require critical change.

> ### *Camper/Community Engagement: Participant Recruitment and Retention*
>
> When preparing to promote your upcoming programs, work to collect data solely from campers who have participated for fewer than 2 years. Additionally, be sure to connect and converse with families who have decided not to return beyond their first year.

Launched — Keep in mind that this may be your first venture into working with a community that you haven't supported in the past, some things may not work. Lean into the mistakes made and use hindsight to redesign.

> ### *Organizational Culture: Common Language*
>
> Language is consistently shifting when related to how communities wish to be identified and the right practice doesn't always exist across the globe. Be sure to lean into those at your camp to guide others on what language to use. Always remember, the articles and research can inform of trends, but there is no better source for identification than starting a conversation with, "Hi, I'm [*insert name*] and my pronouns are [*insert pronouns*]." Others will follow.

On the Way — As you work to normalize new behaviors of inclusion and belonging, continue to create opportunities for deeper conversation. Celebrating our accomplishments is necessary to share what has been done and should also be used to propel your efforts. When you share stories of work that has been done, be sure to ask, "Is there anything we missed?"

> ### *Leadership Development: Capacity Buidling*
>
> As we develop methods to improve leadership, we should find a nice blend of internal trainings that can be delivered along with external trainings that can provide insight to best practices. As trainings become institutionalized, be sure to survey participants and use that information to improve them annually.

Leading — You have been doing the work and have both the know how to support others. As a leader in DEI as it applies to your camp, work to understand that other individuals may be at a standstill because their communities do not offer the rich diversity that yours may have. Find the best ways to vulnerably share your challenges and process with other camps while holding judgment or becoming frustrated.

> ### *Sustainability: Organizational Change*
>
> As you continue to establish your proficiency with marginalized communies, you realize how you can use the lessons learned to engage with other communities that may have been overlooked or have intersections with the community you have been supporting. Many camps have found success working with LGBTQIA+ communities and others have found success with youth who identify as races other than white. Next steps would be to begin discussing how to better support LGBTQIA+ youth of color, most importantly, Trans Black Youth.

Next Steps

In the spirit of continuous improvement, ACA is committed to reviewing and improving this tool. We will engage a team of representative stakeholders to assess the applicability, usability, and outcomes of this tool, with making improvements as the goal. Please share your perspectives by emailing dei@ACAcamps.org.