

# INCLUSIVE DUBUQUE NETWORK PARTNERSHIP

INCLUSIVE dubuque  
Connecting People • Strengthening Community

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Inclusive Dubuque is a partner-driven network dedicated to having an informed, equitable and inclusive community where all people are respected, valued and engaged. This document provides a framework of what it means to be a network partner and includes individual and organizational applications to join the network.

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## Background

In early 2012, community members began to take notice of challenges related to diversity, equity and inclusion in Dubuque. Individuals were having trouble accessing needed services and connecting to parts of the community, neighborhoods were experiencing struggles related to demographic changes, and businesses were reporting difficulty attracting and retaining a diverse workforce. With a shared desire to understand challenges and engage community members, leaders from business, nonprofits, education, government, philanthropy and the faith community came together. Together, this dynamic group of individuals developed a vision for a network called Inclusive Dubuque, which has grown to include more than 60 organizations and individuals.

Partners of the Inclusive Dubuque Network understand there are long-standing and complex systemic, structural, and social challenges we will have to address as we move ahead in order to create and foster an informed community where all people are respected, valued, engaged, and treated fairly. The following principles guide this work:

- No single organization or individual can eliminate implicit/explicit bias in our community on their own
- Racial and social equity education occurs through building relationships with others

- Partner-owned actions lead to shared outcomes
- Decisions are made by the network through an equity lens

## **What is the Inclusive Dubuque Network?**

The Inclusive Dubuque Network is a peer-learning network that provides partners with *equity learning opportunities, equity tools, and data*. The Network enables community leaders and members from faith, labor, education, business, nonprofit, and government to share equity and inclusion best practices and learning opportunities. The Network also supports partner-led sector groups to address implicit and explicit bias within sectors.

Our work is partner-led and partner-driven, meaning that partners collectively determine priorities and lead the work to carry them out. For example, when the network realized the need to create a baseline for how diverse groups experience life in Dubuque, network partners worked together to develop a strategy for this effort, including creating the surveys needed. The Inclusive Dubuque Network also builds and strengthens the connections between members in order to quickly access each other's knowledge and expertise to achieve better, more effective outcomes. The connections fostered by the network have become increasingly important as members work to advance social and racial equity and inclusion in their own organizations and personal lives. By creating an environment of learning within and between organizations, partners learn from each other's experiences to leverage change. Our network will benefit from continuous and intentional learning and feedback.

## **What does it mean to be a partner?**

Inclusive Dubuque's focus is working with partners from across all sectors, including faith, labor, education, business, nonprofit, government, as well as individual citizens who are interested in creating a community where all people—regardless of religion, race, ethnicity, class, age, gender expression, sexual orientation, or disability—are respected, valued, engaged, and treated fairly. Network partners benefit through connections made in the Network, participation in peer-learning meetings and events, professional development opportunities, and sector group work. Partners also have access to our data and equity tools. All of these benefits contribute to empowering organizations and individuals to create a more inclusive and equitable community.

## **How does an organization or individual become a partner?**

All who accept and are committed to our mission of creating an informed, equitable and inclusive community where all people are respected, valued, and engaged are welcome to become a part of the Network. There is no fee. Organizations and individuals that are interested in becoming partners of the Inclusive Dubuque Network should complete the appropriate (individual or organization) enrollment form at the end of this document or on-line. Partners and organization representatives will be automatically added to our communications.

If you become a partner, the information you provide may be shared with other members of the Network to help you learn about each other's interests and experiences.

## **How is the Inclusive Dubuque Network organized?**

The Inclusive Dubuque Network is organized with the understanding that no single organization or individual can address community-level issues such as eliminating implicit and explicit bias on their own. In a network, individuals, groups, and organizations must work together collectively to achieve goals.

The Inclusive Dubuque Network is supported and guided by the following groups: Network Impact Council, Peer-Learning Council, Data Team, sector groups based on focus areas, including health, transportation, economic wellbeing, housing, education, safe/thriving neighborhoods, and arts and culture. The Community Foundation of Greater Dubuque is the backbone organization, and network coordination and communication is provided by a coordinator, assistant coordinator, and an assistant director of communications.

The Network Impact Council (NIC) is the advisory group for the network, and is responsible for:

- Determining and evaluating whether the network is having the desired impact in the community
- Making connections between focus/sector area working groups
- Acting as a liaison between partners and working groups in accordance to the vision and values of the Inclusive Dubuque Network
- Helping determine and formulating Inclusive Dubuque's role in a crisis response situation

- Advising the network on operating procedures and structure, including decision making

The Peer-Learning Council (PLC) is responsible for:

- Providing regularly scheduled professional development opportunities related to issues of diversity and inclusion to the network
- Facilitating guided questions or themes for network meetings, and provide learning opportunities for partners to further their understanding of implicit and explicit bias
- Reconciling the different approaches network partners have to remedying inequities
- With NIC, identify the vision and strategies of Inclusive Dubuque and communicate it clearly to partners and those who wish to be in the network
- Developing racial equity toolkits to give partners and sector group members the equity and communication tools needed to affect change in their organizations and sectors

The Focus Area Sector Groups are responsible for:

- Using a racial and social equity lens within sectors
- Addressing implicit and explicit bias within sectors
- Using disaggregated data and Results-Based Accountability (RBA) to determine the groups' priorities and trajectories
- Identifying partners and voices who should be involved in the work
- Creating and assessing action plans

The Data Team is responsible for:

- Providing data to sector groups as needed
- Communicating analyzed data to sector groups to help influence and guide their work
- Advising Inclusive Dubuque staff in utilizing gathered data for sector groups' Results Scorecard<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Results Scorecard is a program that houses critical performance data in an interactive and visual format.  
Inclusive Dubuque Network Partnership

## **How does the Inclusive Dubuque Network communicate?**

Communication amongst members takes place on multiple levels:

- Overall, the Inclusive Dubuque Network communicates through regular monthly meetings and bi-weekly updates. Agendas for the monthly meetings include equity educational opportunities, updates from various sector groups, and presentations from one or two network partners.
- An annual meeting / convening takes place to celebrate the efforts of the network partners and to highlight and honor milestones.
- A dropbox link on the Inclusive Dubuque website provides a mechanism for Inclusive Dubuque partners, sector groups, and the community at large to share resources and be involved in the work. The dropbox contains meeting agendas, notes, documents, and resources from monthly network and sector group meetings.
- Inclusive Dubuque's website provides an outward facing platform that provides information about Inclusive Dubuque broadly.

## **How does the Inclusive Dubuque Network make decisions?**

The success of Inclusive Dubuque as a network is largely dependent on the engagement of its members. Our work is member-led and member-driven, meaning that members in the network and sector groups collectively determine what priorities they have each year and lead the work to carry them out. Sector group work plan priorities and initiatives are collectively defined by group members.

All bodies of the Inclusive Dubuque Network, including the Network Impact Council, Peer-Learning Council, Data Team, and focus area sector groups, will strive to make decisions by consensus. In the event of conflict, decisions will be deferred to the Network Impact Council and the network at large.

Focus area sector groups use Results-Based Accountability (RBA) to make decisions. RBA is a disciplined way of taking measurable actions to further equity and inclusion in each working area. The RBA process is tracked and measured using Scorecard, which enables sector groups to improve their performance and impact through interactive scorecards, strategy visualization, program management, and data sharing.

## What belief statements do the Inclusive Dubuque Network Partners collectively adhere to?

Working within an institution to transform the institution can be fraught with challenges. We have therefore identified a set of core beliefs about how to operate in a manner that advances social and racial equity. Embodying these beliefs in our routine operations can strengthen our ability to work through the many challenges we face while bolstering our resiliency.

We believe:

- Inclusion matters - people impacted by a decision should be engaged in the decision-making process.
- Understanding matters - Our institutions, systems and structures are complex. To transform our institutions and organizational cultures, it is critical that we develop a more nuanced understanding of that complexity. This includes moving beyond only quantitative approaches and incorporating qualitative and experiential ways of knowing.
- Learning matters - Creating environments of learning within and between our organizations will help to replicate success, expand learning from each other's experiences and leverage change. Our network and this movement will benefit from continuous, intentional learning and feedback.
- Difference matters - although tensions or anxiety can sometimes be a part of conversations about social and racial inequities, we know it is necessary for us to name the tensions head-on, both in the details of our work and how we work with each other.
- History matters - while the institutions of social and racial inequities was created well before our time, we are dealing with both the historical legacy and current reality. Social and racial inequities have resulted in trauma, both to individuals and to communities. A trauma-informed approach to our work is necessary for our collective humanity.
- Leadership matters - Transforming our systems towards greater social and racial equity requires consistent and courageous leadership. We recognize the importance of formal and informal leadership. We support formal leadership working to advance social and racial equity, as well as the development of emerging leadership.
- Movement matters - Social and racial inequities have been intentionally created and maintained over an extended period of time. They will not disappear on their own. To advance social and racial equity, we must be

organizing within our own institutions and across institutions, always putting community at the center. We believe that a social and racial equity movement must build and expand not only the engagement of governmental jurisdictions, but organizations and individuals.

- Power matters - Because power has so often been used to perpetuate inequities, we recognize that we can sometimes have an awkward relationship with power. We believe in intentionally examining, considering, negotiating and claiming power that advances social and racial equity.

In the spirit of continuous learning, we will be refining these statements on a routine basis.

### **What if I have questions?**

If you have questions about Inclusive Dubuque or the application, please contact Katrina Farren-Eller ([Katrina@dbafoundation.org](mailto:Katrina@dbafoundation.org)) or 563-588-2700.