Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Policy

Reviewed January 2025

The Arc of the South Shore is committed to fostering, cultivating, and preserving a culture of diversity, equity, and inclusion. The Arc promotes and protects the human rights of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities and actively supports their full inclusion and participation in the community throughout their lifetimes.

"Our vision is for The Arc to be a diverse and culturally competent organization, capable of serving people with I/DD and their families in an increasingly diverse, multi-cultural society. Our boards of directors, executives, and staff are composed of individuals who are representative of the diversity that exists in the communities they serve. Our advocacy, programs, services, and supports are relevant and accessible to persons of different races, ethnicity and other dimensions of diversity. We are leading the way promoting diversity and cultural competence among organizations that serve people with disabilities and their families, in the disability community and in the larger nonprofit sector" *The Arc of the United States.*

Our human capital is the most valuable asset we have. The collective sum of individual differences, life experiences, knowledge, inventiveness, innovation, self-expression, unique capabilities, and talent that our employees invest in their work represents a significant part of not only our culture but our reputation and our agency's achievement as well.

We embrace and encourage our employees' differences in age, color, disability, ethnicity, family or marital status, gender identity or expression, language, national origin, physical and mental ability, political affiliation, race, religion, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, veteran status, and other characteristics that make our employees unique.

The Arc of the South Shore's diversity initiatives are applicable—but not limited—to our practices and policies on recruitment and selection; compensation and benefits; professional development and training; promotions; social and recreational programs; and the ongoing development of a work environment built on the premise of gender and diversity equity that encourages and enforces:

- Respectful communication and cooperation between all employees.
- Teamwork and employee participation, permitting the representation of all groups and employee perspectives.
- Work/life balance through flexible work schedules to accommodate employees' varying needs.
- Employer and employee contributions to the communities we serve to promote a greater understanding and respect for the diversity.

All employees of The Arc of the South Shore have a responsibility to treat others with dignity and respect at all times. All employees are expected to exhibit conduct that reflects inclusion

during work, at work functions on or off the work site, and at all other company-sponsored and participative events. All employees are also required to attend and complete annual diversity awareness training to enhance their knowledge to fulfill this responsibility.

Any employee found to have exhibited any inappropriate conduct or behavior against others may be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination.

We encourage employees who believe they have been subjected to any kind of discrimination that conflicts with the company's diversity policy and initiatives should adhere to our grievance procedures.

Grievance Procedures

1. Any person who believes someone has been subjected to discrimination on the basis of race, color, gender, religion, national origin, disability, age, genetic information, gender identity, sexual orientation, veteran's status or any other basis protected by applicable federal, state or local law may file a grievance. It is against the law to retaliate against anyone who opposes discrimination, files a grievance, or participates in the investigation of a grievance.

A. Grievances must be submitted to the Chief Executive Officer and/or the Corporate Compliance Officer within sixty (60) days of the date the person filing the grievance becomes aware of the alleged discriminatory action.

Glossary of Policy Terms:

Diversity
A state of being in which members of a group represent varied social identities. It adds value to the human experience. Not the opposite of "majority" or "normal".

Ethnicity
Cultural, behavioral and religious commonalities attributed to people belonging to a group as opposed to genetic inheritance – cultural identity.

Race
A socially constructed categorization of people based on skin color, geographical origin, and other physical characteristics.

Racism
The strategic use of prejudice plus power, wherein the concept of "race" is wielded by the dominant group to oppress, marginalize, and /or silence. Can be conscious or unconscious.

Equity
A condition in which people get what they need to thrive. Not the same as "equality," where everyone gets the same thing.

Health
The state of complete physical, mental, social, and spiritual well-being.

Cultural Competence
Knowledge, understanding, and appreciation of complex needs of people from various cultural groups.

Cultural Humility
Willingness to respectively learn from people who are different. Challenges us to reserve judgement and bridge the cultural divide.