

DISCLAIMER

By viewing, accessing and/or using all or any portion of this complimentary informational database and the Materials (hereinafter defined), you agree that you have read, understood and agree to the following terms and conditions on which they are being made available to you by the National Women's Shelter Network ("NWSN"). *If you do not agree with all of the following terms and conditions, then you must not view, access, or use the Materials (hereinafter defined).*

The NWSN is providing the documents, policies, procedures, information, forms and other materials in this database (collectively, "Materials") for your information purposes only and as samples used by other contributors to the NWSN, free of charge. Neither the NWSN nor any provider in the NWSN contributing to the Materials assumes any liability for the Materials and their contents. Provision of the Materials in this database is not intended to be an approval, endorsement or recommendation of any kind on the part of the NWSN or any contributor of all or any part of the Materials. The Materials are not a substitute for professional advice. The Materials are only samples, may be changed and/or updated in the future without notification, and may not be applicable to your or any other person or organization's particular situation. Your use of the Materials is entirely at your own risk, and you should not use the Materials for any purpose without seeking the advice of an attorney licensed to practice in your jurisdiction for your particular circumstances.

Further to that end, the NWSN and all contributors of the Materials assume no responsibility for and make no representations as to the accuracy, usefulness, completeness, legal effect, or suitability of the Materials for any particular purpose. THE MATERIALS ARE PROVIDED "AS-IS" AND "AS AVAILABLE," WITH "ALL FAULTS" and THE NWSN DISCLAIMS ALL WARRANTIES OF ANY KIND, EITHER EXPRESSED OR IMPLIED, CONCERNING THE MATERIALS, INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO WARRANTIES OF MERCHANTABILITY AND FITNESS FOR A PARTICULAR PURPOSE. THE NWSN FURTHER DISCLAIMS ALL LIABILITY OR RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE CONTENTS OF THE MATERIALS OR OTHERWISE ON THIS WEB PAGE.

Neither the NWSN or any contributor to the Materials is liable for personal injury or damages of any kind arising from the provision or use of all or any part of the Materials, including, but not limited to, whether arising directly or indirectly, death, damage, destruction, personal injury, lost profits, incidental, special or consequential damages. Further, the NWSN shall not be held liable for any use or misuse of the Materials. The posting of the Materials does not imply endorsement, approval, or recommendation.

The information included in this database and the Materials may not be copied, used, disseminated or published in any manner without expressly referencing the foregoing conditions.

STRENGTHENING DIVERSITY, INCLUSION AND EQUITY INITIATIVE

August 2020

Supplemented 9.3.20

Updated 1.1.22

Updated 5.10.23

Updated 8.3.23

GOAL: Strengthen the *race, social, gender¹ and special needs/abilities* diversity, inclusion and equity culture ██████████, recognizing this important work is always ongoing. We are reinforcing our diversity, inclusion and equity culture ██████████ with deeper focus and commitment in this initiative, connecting to our mission, vision, values and strategies at all levels.

DIVERSITY, INCLUSION AND EQUITY CULTURE CHARACTERISTICS:²

Diversity: Increased *representation* in the Foundation, focused on the number of people of diverse races, social and cultural backgrounds (with a special recognition of the importance of lived experiences), gender perspectives (recognizing need for sensitivity in gender-based trauma and discrimination work in the context of a safe haven for women and LGBTQIA+ individuals), and special needs/abilities. Data in regard to race, social or lived experiences, gender and special needs/abilities, equity, diversity and inclusion is relevant, both in those served by the Foundation and its team, and continues to be a strategic commitment of the Foundation. The Foundation believes diverse representation is important and continues to *increase numbers of racially, socially, gender and special needs/abilities diverse people at all levels of the organization*. We strive to create a trauma informed, diverse and culturally competent team reflective of the races, social and lived experiences, gender and special needs/abilities of those we serve.

Diversity is always taken into consideration when hiring team members across all programs and all levels. Our goal is to have our staff represent a similar demographic to those we shelter and provide culturally competent services in three languages, namely Spanish, Creole and English, in addition to translation services as needed for other languages and for those who are deaf and hard of hearing. Currently, our guest demographic is made up of 69% black and 27% hispanic and about 4% white. Overall staff are 54% black and 38% hispanic, and 10% White/Other. Additionally, over 36% of our team is made up of alumni of our program. We strive to achieve our ongoing goal of diversity and representation with every hire, recognizing the special needs and particular circumstances and expertise required in each department and team wide.

Inclusion: Greater *inclusion aimed at internal change* in behaviors, policies and practices so that everyone is comfortable sharing their experiences and equipped to talk about racial, social, gender (recognizing need for sensitivity in gender-based trauma and discrimination work in the

¹ We recognize that ██████████ was established as a trauma informed, safe haven designed to address the gender specific needs of disadvantaged women and LGBTQIA+ individuals and their children experiencing homelessness, virtually all of whom are victims of historic, persistent and pervasive racism, social inequities, and gender-based violence and discrimination.

² Kerrien Suarez, Equity in the Center, ProInspire, The Bridgespan Group, July 2018, [The Role of Senior Leaders in Building a Race Equity Culture](#). Race equity culture characteristics from this article have been expanded in this summary with a view toward social/lived experiences, gender perspectives and special needs/abilities, in addition to race, in the context of our Foundation and its work.

context of a safe haven for women and LGBTQIA+ individuals) and special needs/abilities equity, diversity and inclusion. The Foundation: 1) prioritizes an environment where different lived experiences and backgrounds are valued and seen as assets to teams and the organization; 2) takes responsibility to build and strengthen a racial, social, gender (recognizing need for sensitivity in gender-based trauma and discrimination work in the context of a safe haven for women and LGBTQIA+ individuals) and special needs/abilities equity, diversity and inclusion culture, which includes a critical mass of such individuals at all levels in the organization; and 3) dis-aggregates internal staffing data to identify areas where racial, social, gender and special needs/abilities disparities exist, such as compensation, promotion and decision making responsibility, and analyzes data to find root causes of disparities. The Foundation is *evolving its culture to value all people's contributions*. A learning environment is created.

Thirty six percent of our team are alumni or current guests of our program. Twenty seven percent of our directors are alumni of our program and thirty eight percent of assistant directors are alumni. We are very proud of our team and continue to create new opportunities for alumni career growth in our program and are currently pursuing peer specialist certifications for some of our alumni team members, enhancing their professional development and strengthening their role with the Foundation. We track our team demographics regularly.

To ensure all around inclusivity, we are offering weekly workshops on American Sign Language, taught by an alumna of the program, where our guests and team members can learn the ASL alphabet and phrases.

Equity: Consistent application of a lens for race, social, gender and special needs/abilities equity, diversity and inclusion in examining how the Foundation and its programs operate. The Foundation demonstrates a willingness to review racial, social, gender (recognizing need for sensitivity in gender-based trauma and discrimination work in the context of a safe haven for women and LGBTQIA+ individuals) and special needs/abilities. The Foundation: 1) recognizes its responsibility to speak about racial, social, gender, and special needs/abilities inequities and discrimination, as well as the importance of equity, diversity and inclusion, both inside and outside the organization, with emphasis in regard to its mission to end homelessness; 2) fosters a strong racial, social, gender and special needs/abilities equity, diversity and inclusivity culture, identifying organizational power differentials, encouraging diversity and inclusivity at all levels, including leadership, and fostering a model for shared leadership amplifying the voices of leadership with lived experience; and 3) can illustrate, through long term outcome data, how its efforts are impacting racial, social, gender and special needs/abilities disparities in the community it calls home, with special emphasis in regard to its mission to end homelessness. The Foundation is accountable to addressing systemic racial, social, gender and special needs/abilities discrimination and root causes of inequity. The Foundation speaks about racism, social inequities, dominant culture, gender-based violence and discrimination, and discrimination against those with special needs/abilities both inside and outside the organization, with special emphasis in regard to its mission to end homelessness.

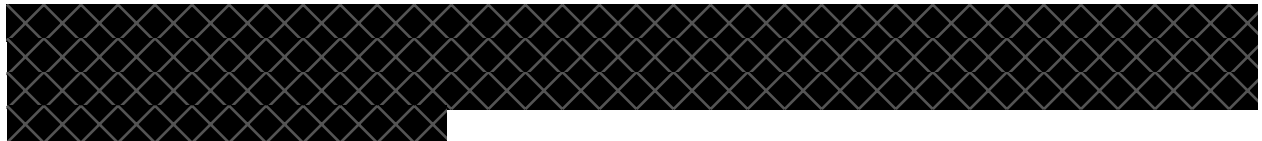
██████████ requires that all staff participate in an Inclusivity Training Annually. Team members are reminded of our standards and on how we should operate to ensure that all guests feel welcomed. With that, we encourage our team members to ask for pronouns to help make it a more personable approach for guests to feel comfortable. Through collaboration with local LGBTQIA+ organizations, ██████████ invites guest speakers to share their experiences with the team. The ██████████ Program offers a safe, supportive and nurturing environment for all LGBTQIA+ individuals and allies. With weekly groups, individual counseling, and quarterly

events, [REDACTED] advocates regarding LGBTQIA+ inside the shelter and out in the community with participation in the annual Pride parade coupled with other community and in-house events celebrating pride.

STEPS TO ADVANCE OUR DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSIVE CULTURE:

- A. Establish Equity Champions who can help guide our Strengthening Diversity, Inclusion and Equity Initiative. *9.3.20: invited Equity Champions to the first meeting; provided with books for learning – White Fragility (for those who do not identify as Black) and How to be an Anti-Racist. Agreed, upon reading, a second meeting will be convened to prepare for the first Equity Committee meeting; acknowledge the importance of an agenda or structure for the Equity Committee meeting. In anticipation of meeting, all Equity Committee members who do not identify as Black will be asked to read White Fragility. How to Be an Anti-Racist will be handed out at the first Equity Committee meeting. Annual updates to [REDACTED] Inclusivity Policy and annual training for all team members.*

This was established in August 2020 with an inaugural meeting taking place in August 2020. A follow up meeting with the Equity Committee occurred in September 2020. However, due to the pandemic, the committee meetings did not continue to occur as health and safety needs became the top priority for the continued and safe operations of the shelter. Now that things are more “normalized,” we plan on rebooting the committee and its mission.



- B. Establish an Equity Committee of senior leadership. Amplify the voices of alumni leadership in the conversation. Establish the role of the Support Team.

This was accomplished in August 2020 and has been updated to reflect changes in senior leadership.

- C. Open a continuous dialogue about our diversity, inclusion, and equity work together in this initiative. Cultivate opportunities for team members to learn about and discuss diversity, inclusion, and equity as relates to race, social/lived experiences, gender perspectives/gender-based violence and discrimination, and special needs/abilities in our work. Support team leaders in examining all four levels on which racial, social, gender, and special needs/abilities inequities operate in society: personal, interpersonal, institutional/organizational, and structural, via the following steps:

1. Learn – more about the history and context of structural, racial, social, gender and special needs/abilities inequities in our society and how they impact everyone; read about the issues to begin and further the conversation. Use research on inequities, oppression and discrimination to deepen the conversations. Establish a shared vocabulary to create a common language around race, social inequity, gender sensitivity and special needs/abilities for our work. *See by way of example the following website and*

definitions:

umanitoba.ca/admin/human_resources/equity/5804.html

2. Listen – to the lived experiences of persons in and served by our organization without placing upon them the emotional burden of justifying the validity of their experiences.
██████████ employs those with lived experience at different levels throughout the organization, just recently hiring Natural Helpers to assist clinical team members in engaging guests. A group of 6 alumni make up the Advisory Board which meets quarterly. We are in the process of having at least 3 of our alumni team members certified as Peer Specialists in the coming year and continue to create pathways for growth in our newest project - ██████████. Alumni involvement in the various levels of the Foundation allows us to listen to their feedback, learn from them and ensure that systems and policies are put in place that allow for continued diversity, inclusion and equity.
3. Reflect - on the role of leaders in advancing structural racial, social, gender, and special needs/abilities equity on all levels
 - Some points of inquiry– an example in which you were personally not conscious as a leader of perpetuating structural racial, social gender and/or special needs/abilities inequities (e.g., institutional educational attainment versus full recognition of lived experience, quality service, and passion); and an example in which you were personally conscious as a leader of ways to redress or counteract structural racial, social, gender, and/or special needs/abilities inequities (e.g., ██████████ ██████████ the core of our work is supporting and empowering women and children who have experienced racial oppression, deep social inequities, gender-based violence and special needs/abilities discrimination with dignity, respectful shelter, resource enriched, supportive services, enrichment, empowerment and love)
4. Examine - the effects of implicit bias versus valuing racial, social/lived experiences, gender and special needs/abilities in hiring and promotion, professional development, team power dynamics, and other critical program, management, funding and operations decisions
 - Review data on racial, social, gender, and special needs/abilities disparities of those served ██████████ and the make-up of the Foundation's team
Currently, we provide mental health training to alumni to aid them on how to properly identify when a guest is having a crisis. This then aids the team members with preparation for a crisis.
 - Dis-aggregate internal staffing data to identify areas where race, social, gender and special needs/abilities disparities may exist, such as compensation, education/specialized training, promotion and decision-making responsibilities, and analyze that data to find root causes of disparities and how to address them proactively; compare to the demographic data of those served ██████████

In the fall of 2022, the Foundation analyzed salaries across all programs and created baseline salaries within every department based on length of time at the Foundation and experience

- Identify inequities and outcome gaps relative to our shared goals, both as to team composition (e.g., representation, inclusion, compensation, promotions, and pathways to advancement) and programmatically (e.g., program content and outcomes as relates to all departments)
 - 5. Consider - the messages, both implicit and explicit, that leaders and leadership styles shaped by dominant culture/our organizational culture send to program participants, the team, stakeholders and our community, e.g., intentionality of L [REDACTED] [REDACTED] environment in valuing those we serve; conflict resolution process and non-violence principles; How are we listening to those we serve in all matters of operations, programming and supportive services?
 - 6. Define - goals around race, social, gender, and special needs/abilities equity, diversity, and inclusion, e.g., on all levels, including organizational goals and policies, in operations, programming, community outreach, funding, and advocacy.
 - 7. Fund – race, social, gender, and special needs/abilities diversity, inclusion, and equity initiatives so that resources, including: 1) consultants, training programs, and mentorship/coaching are available to grow staff capacity; and 2) compensation reflecting the value of all team members' lived experiences, quality service and passion. What are the costs of equity, diversity, and inclusion and what does it mean for allocation of resources? What are the benefits?
- D. Foster conditions that shift mindsets, policies, and practices toward a stronger racial, social, gender, and special needs/abilities equity, diversity, and inclusion culture, including:
- a. Development of an official “diversity, inclusion and equity policy” [REDACTED] and a road map for the future
 - b. Consider the Pillars of Stronger Foundation Practice³ as a beginning roadmap and develop policies and practices to advance racial, social, gender and special needs/abilities equity and culture, including:
 - i. Organizationally, including but not limited to:
 - 1. Merit based promotion of alumni staff to director and assistant director levels regardless of educational attainment, recognizing life degrees in structural and pervasive racism, social inequities, gender-based trauma and special needs/abilities discrimination

We have opened other employment pathways for alumni, now having them represented in our programming, education & employment, community outreach, health and wellness, and clinical

³ Association of Charitable Foundations, 2019, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion: The Pillars of Stronger Foundation Practice.

programs and departments. We continue to reflect on our current organizational structure and deepen these opportunities as much as possible, allowing alumni to grow professionally.

2. Deeper investment in professional training of staff and other relevant trainings in addition to and on-the-job professional development of staff

We are constantly investing in new training and opportunities for our alumni staff. We are currently working on getting all of our Directors to complete their Certification as Behavioral Health Technicians. The ones that have already completed are working towards the second level. Additionally, we are currently working on getting at least 5 of our employed alumni to become Certified Peer Specialists over the course of the next few years.

3. Enhanced pay equality for essential positions, e.g., front line workers need to be recognized as the professionals they are and paid accordingly; we value everyone's lived experienced and essential contribution; we are committed to a living wage and beyond

On June 5, 2022 the foundation made a large investment in our team by increasing staff salaries across the board, acknowledging the rise in cost of living along with an analysis of all salaries, helping to establish equitable wages across all programs

4. Amplifying the voices of our alumni team leaders

A new addition to our monthly newsletter, social media, and other outlets, we now share our alumni team members' stories with all of our donors and volunteers on a monthly basis. We interview them and give them the opportunity to share their stories and experiences, helping to showcase and amplify their voices and stories. This is in addition to our newest innovation program [REDACTED] with the intent to amplify the marginalized voices and stories of those we serve, offer enhanced opportunity for creative expression and raise awareness and further advocate our solutions, research and best practices. We release quarterly podcasts that are made available to the public. [REDACTED]

5. Identifying pathways for professional growth and leadership opportunities for all departments and leaders, director and assistant director team members, including:
6. Participation in department and directors' meetings
Every Tuesday, weekly we meet with all directors to go over where they are collectively as a Foundation. This is where ideas are shared for improvement or encouragement to keep it going.
7. Mentorship/coaching strategies
8. Creating clear pathways to increased responsibilities and leadership
9. Addition of new holidays and activities that reflect our equity, diversity and inclusion culture – John Lewis National Voting Holiday (for years with a national voting day) to encourage civic engagement and Martin Luther King Day. Adopted. [REDACTED] also offers Juneteenth as a recognized paid holiday.

10. Prepare and strengthen diverse and inclusive team for succession at all levels, with a culture of learning, including:

Though a succession plan is currently in place, the Foundation undergoes an annual Gap Analysis, helping to identify potential workforce gaps across all departments and facilitating a program-based succession plan across the Foundation which includes an intentional plan for maintaining diversity and inclusivity at all levels.
11. Deeper investment in on-the-job professional training of succession team and back up, under a shared leadership model
12. Strategic planning for all directors and assistant directors
13. Mentoring and coaching
- ii. Operationally, including but not limited to:
 1. Guest feedback, input and dispute resolution
 2. Restorative justice practices for resolution of grievances
 3. Commitment to alumni staffing
- iii. Programmatically, by and across all departments. Dive deeply into programmatic considerations in *every* department and *across all* departments, including by way of example:
 1. content and practices of our clinical programs, including evidence-based counseling, parenting classes and resource coordination; content of health and wellness program;
 2. content of programming – arts/activities/education/employment; operations rules and practices (e.g., [REDACTED] rules); Consider how we celebrate these and other events and holidays programmatically [REDACTED], e.g., Black History Month, International Women’s Day, Violence Against Women Act Anniversary, Pride Month, Transgender Day, Juneteenth, Indigenous Peoples Day, and many diverse, nondenominational cultural celebrations
 3. thrift program policies and procedures supporting guests;
 4. community outreach initiatives, neighborhood support and messaging
- iv. Advocacy in our community and beyond. Identify strategic goals and plans to advance enlightened social and public policies for racial, social, gender and special needs/abilities equity in the context of ending homelessness.

We continue to serve as a center for service-driven research, showcasing evidence-based best practices, innovation, deep collaboration with community providers, education and information sharing, and community engagement, furthering our mission to change attitudes and behaviors toward and increase accessibility and resources for women, youth and children in need, on both a local and national level. With the commitment of advancing the status of women, youth and children experiencing homelessness, we are extremely excited to report that our vital service driven research continues to change the lives of our beloved children and families, helping them heal, learn and grow together. With our ongoing research, policy, and public education initiatives, our groundbreaking service driven research at the shelter into the developmental, mental health and trauma-related needs of sheltered children and effective interventions to help them thrive as they transition out of homelessness,

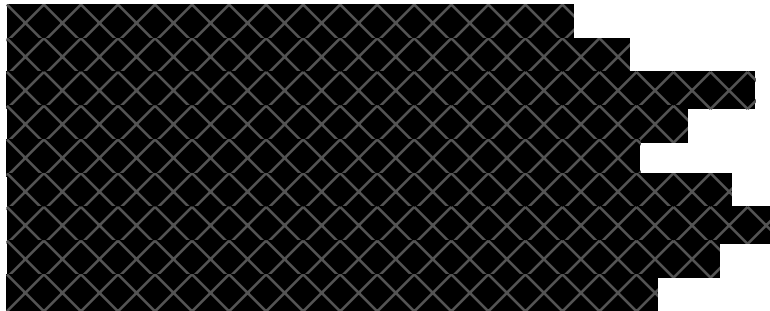
has received national attention as we lead our field toward evidence-based, best practices.



Diversity, Inclusivity and Equity Champions:



Equity, Diversity and Inclusivity Committee:




Diversity, Inclusivity and Equity Support:



Strengthening our diversity, inclusion and equity culture:

“is not a linear path. To drive deep equity, it takes focused work, intent, resources (human and financial), and time – often years. The immediate return might seem anticlimactic, appearing as a gradual build in cross-cultural knowledge and skills, and early dialogues on...[race/racism, social/lived experiences, gender perspectives/gender-based violence and discrimination, and special needs/abilities] equity. The lack of “outcomes” can be frustrating, especially when faced with the broader demands of a senior leader’s broader role.... Despite the challenges, stay the course. It is in the most trying moments that the greatest growth – what...[has been] described as “radical transformation” of consciousness – occurs personally, interpersonally, and institutionally.”

Suarez, Kerrien, 2018, [The Role of Senior Leaders in Building a Race Equity Culture](#)

May  always rest on the firm ground of emptiness.

DISCLAIMER

By viewing, accessing and/or using all or any portion of this complimentary informational database and the Materials (hereinafter defined), you agree that you have read, understood and agree to the following terms and conditions on which they are being made available to you by the National Women's Shelter Network ("NWSN"). *If you do not agree with all of the following terms and conditions, then you must not view, access, or use the Materials (hereinafter defined).*

The NWSN is providing the documents, policies, procedures, information, forms and other materials in this database (collectively, "Materials") for your information purposes only and as samples used by other contributors to the NWSN, free of charge. Neither the NWSN nor any provider in the NWSN contributing to the Materials assumes any liability for the Materials and their contents. Provision of the Materials in this database is not intended to be an approval, endorsement or recommendation of any kind on the part of the NWSN or any contributor of all or any part of the Materials. The Materials are not a substitute for professional advice. The Materials are only samples, may be changed and/or updated in the future without notification, and may not be applicable to your or any other person or organization's particular situation. Your use of the Materials is entirely at your own risk, and you should not use the Materials for any purpose without seeking the advice of an attorney licensed to practice in your jurisdiction for your particular circumstances.

Further to that end, the NWSN and all contributors of the Materials assume no responsibility for and make no representations as to the accuracy, usefulness, completeness, legal effect, or suitability of the Materials for any particular purpose. THE MATERIALS ARE PROVIDED "AS-IS" AND "AS AVAILABLE," WITH "ALL FAULTS" and THE NWSN DISCLAIMS ALL WARRANTIES OF ANY KIND, EITHER EXPRESSED OR IMPLIED, CONCERNING THE MATERIALS, INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO WARRANTIES OF MERCHANTABILITY AND FITNESS FOR A PARTICULAR PURPOSE. THE NWSN FURTHER DISCLAIMS ALL LIABILITY OR RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE CONTENTS OF THE MATERIALS OR OTHERWISE ON THIS WEB PAGE.

Neither the NWSN or any contributor to the Materials is liable for personal injury or damages of any kind arising from the provision or use of all or any part of the Materials, including, but not limited to, whether arising directly or indirectly, death, damage, destruction, personal injury, lost profits, incidental, special or consequential damages. Further, the NWSN shall not be held liable for any use or misuse of the Materials. The posting of the Materials does not imply endorsement, approval, or recommendation.

The information included in this database and the Materials may not be copied, used, disseminated or published in any manner without expressly referencing the foregoing conditions.