

Equity & Inclusion Strategic Plan for Wenatchee Valley College 2022–2024

Vision Statement | Centering the experiences and dreams of our Latinx and Indigenous students and community, Wenatchee Valley College will work to eliminate systemic injustice and create accessible, culturally and linguistically inclusive education.

Wenatchee Valley College is proud to be a diverse community college that serves an even more diverse community and we continue to strive to reflect the community and to serve them in culturally relevant ways. We are proud of the legacy of our Omak Campus to serve rural students who wouldn't otherwise have access to higher education so close to home.

WVC is a Hispanic Serving Institution and we have an impressive history of enrolling and graduating Latinx students at WVC. Our students have many intersecting identities from first generation to LGBTQIA+ to a wide array of cultures, ethnicities, abilities and backgrounds. Our campuses reside on the lands of the Colville Confederated Tribes. These are lands that American Indian and indigenous communities still occupy today and WVC acknowledges the privilege it is to use the lands. We strive to partner with the tribe and to support our tribal students and families. Especially on our Omak Campus where we enroll a larger percentage of American Indian students. We offer classes in Nespelem and we are incredibly proud of our American Indian, Indigenous Studies program on the Omak Campus.

The College works to be a beacon of learning, understanding and a place to fight against oppression and discrimination. We also recognize that we have a long journey ahead of us because we are a college built as a part of the system that has historically excluded certain groups from higher education,



such as women, people of color, those with disabilities, people living in poverty, those who identify as LGBTQIA+, and those who do not speak English as a first language. We know this work takes time and we hope this Equity and Inclusion Strategic Plan will help solidify and direct the important work of equitable access, equitable support and equitable outcomes for students at Wenatchee Valley College.

We hope to move beyond simply enrolling and graduating our diverse students at WVC, we want to also serve them and equip them to be successful in their futures. We choose to focus on strength-based approaches and changing the narrative to meet students where they are and to support them to find their own version of success. We strive to identify the cultural wealth and knowledge diverse students bring and to integrate that into our curriculum and student experience.

This type of change will only come when we approach our mission with open minds and hearts. Increasing diversity in our staff, embracing and speaking multiple languages on our campuses, and deconstructing white dominant narratives through ongoing trainings will allow us to truly live our mission as a College. Higher education should be a place that acknowledges differences, embraces change, and breaks down historic barriers. We believe in an institution where every staff member or student can show up as their true and authentic selves. Where multiple languages can be spoken in classrooms, where diverse people, experiences and stories are not only celebrated but become the fabric of who we are. We invite the community to join us in these endeavors.



WVC Equity & Inclusion Strategic Planning Process

Wenatchee Valley College, with the guidance of Education Northwest, created this strategic plan between April and July of 2022.

Committee members involved in the creation of this plan include: Erin Tofte (*Associate Dean of Campus Life, Equity and Inclusion*), Gina Graham (*Director of Tribal Relations*), Jaime Ramirez (*Department Chair Chicana Studies*), Holly Bringman (*Dean of Math & Sciences*), Meleah Butruille (*Nursing Faculty*), Maria de Jesus Alvizar (*Diversity & Equity Center Coordinator*), Livia Millard (*Multicultural Coordinator*), Kristen Hosey (*Faculty Nursing*), and Oscar Licon-Eusebio (*Outreach & Recruitment Coordinator*). The committee began by reviewing DEI strategic plans from similar institutions with a high number of Latinx or Indigenous students, including Highline College, Bellevue College, Clark College, Heritage University, Columbia Basin College, Yakima Valley College, University of Montana, University of Alaska Fairbanks, Pima Community College, and the University of Washington College of Engineering. The committee identified and prioritized key essential features of these DEI plans that were relevant and applicable to WVC. Education Northwest facilitators captured these ideas and then asked committee members to review the notes and put a star beside any idea that resonated with them. The committee members agreed upon the following essential components to achieve equitable learning environments:



- A strongly worded focus inclusive of student populations served (for example, Latinx) is important for a designated Hispanic Serving Institution
- Relevant and culturally responsive teaching and learning institutional and educational practices are essential for student learning
- A glossary of shared definitions to establish a common understanding and language across the institution is necessary to create consistent educational approaches and practices
- Include inclusive language in institution produced printed texts and titles creates an all-inclusive campus community

- Maintain and strengthen a strong relationship with the community meets the needs of students and community
- Racial equity is an endeavor worth achieving excellence to elevate and enhance student achievement, completion, and/or transfers to higher learning institutions
- System-level outcomes are important to measure alongside student level outcomes

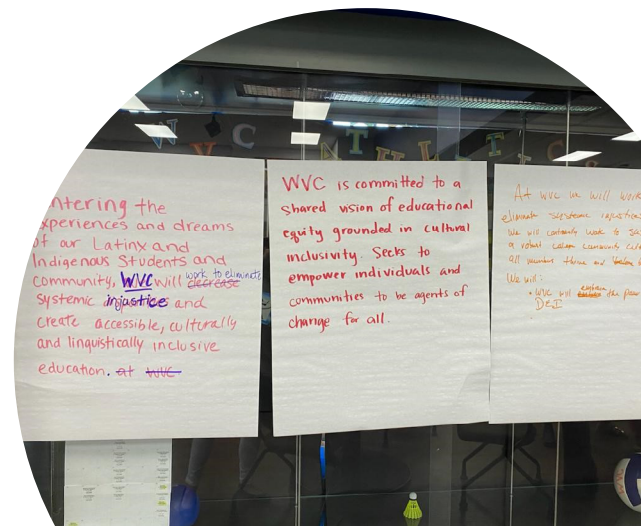


Also in meeting one, the WVC committee collaborated to develop **vision** statement for the Equity & Inclusion Strategic Plan. The vision statement agreed upon by the committee is: **Centering the experiences and dreams of our Latinx and Indigenous students and community, Wenatchee Valley College will work to eliminate systemic injustice and create accessible, culturally and linguistically inclusive education.** In meetings two and three, the committee worked in small groups to draft goal statements for four **focus areas**: students; staff members, faculty members, and administrators; community partners; and the system and institutional culture. In addition, committee members also identified three to four **key priorities** for each focus area. Committee members engaged in a process to gather feedback on each focus area and priority, working toward consensus that was agreed upon by the entire committee.

In a follow-up meeting on June 13, the committee met via Zoom in a two-hour session. The purpose of the meeting was to identify **specific action steps** for each priority. Committee members focused on action steps that could be accomplished within the two-year period covered in the strategic plan. The action steps were documented using Jamboard.

The EDNW facilitators used the Fist to Five tool for group decision making. The tool builds consensus, commitment, and investment by offering participants a range of choices to express agreement or disagreement. A vote of five indicates that person is so supportive of the item in question, that they are willing to champion the idea. A vote of four is warm approval. Three indicates a lukewarm positive response. Two indicates a lukewarm negative response. A vote of one indicates some serious problems exist. A vote of zero (a fist) indicates a person will actively work against the idea.

Throughout the process, the Education Northwest facilitators worked to ensure that all members of the committee were able to participate meaningfully and authentically. Agendas were designed to incorporate a variety of facilitation techniques to encourage committee members to process and engage. To



support participation from both WVC campuses, our first meeting was held on the Wenatchee campus, the second meeting was virtual, and the third meeting was held on the Omak campus.

The committee noted that they brought the following strengths to this process: pride that we are focusing on this work and on this path; humility; intention around listening to students (specifically with student governance); a desire to focus on equity in leadership movement and examination of current practice; current strength with diversity events, highlighting cultures throughout the college; a nursing focused DEI group; new engagement from students of color in nursing classrooms (more questions, more approaching); stronger relationships with the tribe, including buildings named after tribal members, land acknowledgements as practice, new programs; removing structural barriers (statewide approach for admission—changes that recognize lived experience); experience providing specific mentorship (not just passive mentorship).

2022-2024 Focus Areas, Strategic Priorities, Action Steps and Outcomes

Students | Students feel empowered, connected, included, and have a sense of belonging within the WVC family and are provided tools to successfully navigate our systems.

Key Priority One: *Provide holistic and flexible support services that help students identify and achieve their educational and life goals.*

Action Step 1: Develop an equitable advising model for students to identify their chosen pathway through an onboarding process inclusive of cultural values, guided career assessment, and a creation of a two-year academic plan within their first 6 months of attending WVC. Process informed by best practices implemented by CAMP, TRiO/SSS, MESA, and Running Start. *(Ed. Planning)*

Outcome: Diverse students are connected to Campus and understand how to successfully meet their goals. Improved retention and completion rates for BIPOC students also evident.

Action Step 2: Continue early alert warnings, providing early intervention to retain students of color by gathering and disaggregating data to identify institutional, course-based patterns harming students. *(Instructional Deans and faculty)*

Outcome: Assessment of efficacy of early alert/intervention and consider adjustments to system to improve student outcomes.

Key Priority Two: *Students are encouraged to be their authentic selves and utilize multiple languages and cultures within their academic journey.*

Action Step 1: Classrooms honor and encourage student utilization of linguistic and cultural knowledge in their learning. *(Faculty)*

Outcome: Culturally and linguistically affirming classrooms, identify gateway courses to be offered in dual language to remove barriers for Spanish speakers.

Action Step 2: Ensure WVC signage, public documents, and communication are dual language inclusive of Spanish and English. *(PIO and Facilities)*

Outcome: Improved access and success of bilingual students.

Key Priority Three: *Diverse students are recruited, connected, and supported by diverse staff and faculty.*

Action Step 1: Create and implement a clear and inclusive recruitment and marketing plan for historically marginalized students and families. *(Outreach and Recruitment Coordinator)*

Outcome: Final plan developed by June 2024.

Action Step 2: Continue to organize and provide diverse events fostering cultural awareness and celebration for students, staff, families, and community. *(Diversity and Equity Coordinators)*

Outcome: Increased feelings of belonging for diverse student populations on our campus'.

Key Priority Four: *Latinx and Indigenous student voices are uplifted through shared governance and mutual respect at WVC.*

Action Step 1: Student representatives trained and assigned to shared governance and advisory committees. *(Associate Dean of Campus Life)*

Outcome: Common practice to have students on all governing committees including, advisory committees, tenure committees, instruction council, and core theme councils.

Action Step 2: Establish shared definition of dominant culture narrative and work to deconstruct it in classrooms and on our campuses. *(Deans and Faculty)*

Outcome: Creation of space for the voices and lived experiences of students excluded from dominant culture.

Staff, Faculty, and Administrators | WVC staff, faculty, and administrators center DEI to create a safe and supportive environment for our diverse students and employees. We strive for diversity in our employees that is reflective of the community we serve.

Key Priority One: *WVC employees commit to prioritizing ongoing personal and professional growth in antiracism and social justice.*

Action Step 1: Create a mandatory training course in Canvas for all employees centering around professional and personal growth in antiracism and social justice. Additional training to be provided to employees with frequent student interaction surrounding culturally responsive/inclusive service. *(Human Resources and Executive Director of DEI)*

Outcome: 100% of staff, faculty and administrators will have engaged with training by June 2024.

Outcome: Increase in student satisfaction with interactions with student-facing services and faculty.

Action Step 2: Employee evaluations will implement focus on equity and inclusion practices in daily work. *(Human Resources and Executive Director of DEI)*

Outcome: Increased dialogue and accountability for centering equity in our work.

Key Priority Two: *DEI frameworks are used in shared governance to inform decision making at all levels.*

Action Step 1: Informed by existing DEI frameworks for decision making, create and implement DEI framework in WVC shared governance. *(President and Executive Director of DEI)*

Outcome: Increased frequency of equity-centered discussions during meetings and improved awareness of inclusive decision making.

Key Priority Three: WVC faculty utilize culturally responsive instructional practices to create inclusive and effective learning environments.

Action Step 1: Faculty and Course Enrichment (FACE) Coordinators design and implement faculty professional development opportunities in culturally responsive pedagogy (CRP). (FACE, Deans and Faculty)

Outcome: Faculty engaged in CRP development and implementation in courses, and actively tracking impact.

Action Step 2: Work with instructional deans and faculty to disaggregate course outcome data and identify effective approaches to improve student learning. (FACE, Deans and Faculty)

Outcome: Improved data-informed assessment of learning and instructional revision, contributing to more equitable outcomes for students.

Community Partners | Our community and partners see WVC as a valued resource for partnership, investment, and a beacon for inclusion and cultural exchange.

Key Priority One: Prioritize partnerships with local and regional DEI-focused organizations to connect and support those who have been historically excluded within North Central Washington.

Action Step 1: Create a consortium with Hispanic Serving Institutions in Washington state to share strategic practices supporting success of Latinx students. (Executive Director of DEI)

Outcome: Increased support and learning in Hispanic servingness.

Action Step 2: Establish an advisory board with DEI-focused community partners such as CAFÉ, Parque Padrinos, and Wenatchee Valley Museum/Cultural Center to collaborate with and consult WVC in our continued service to the community. (Executive Director of DEI, Director of Tribal Relations and Diversity Coordinators)

Outcome: Increased network of resources allowing for more effective needs assessment and response for students and community we serve.

Key Priority Two: Deepen, strengthen, and elevate relationships with regional indigenous communities.

Action Step 1: Continue to strengthen and prioritize partnership with the Colville Confederated Tribes to improve service to tribal members. *(President, Director Of Tribal Relations and Executive Director of DEI)*

Outcome: Increased communication about course/program offerings that serve needs of the Colville Confederated Tribes.

Action Step 2: Replicate tribal partnership model established on Omak campus with local tribal members surrounding Wenatchee Campus to better serve indigenous communities in the Wenatchee Valley. *(Executive Director of DEI)*

Outcome: Establish communication with local tribal members in Wenatchee Valley and begin to identify needs.

Key Priority Three: Build and sustain relationships with community-based organizations, K-12, employers and industry partners to facilitate Latinx and indigenous student success.

Action Step 1: Build on the work of past and current advisory committees at WVC to ensure students receive training and education aligned with the evolving needs of industry. *(Workforce Grants, Business and Industry Liaison)*

Outcome: Improved student pathways from earning a credential to gaining employment.

Action Step 2: Conduct needs assessments with school districts in our service area to improve understanding of the districts' and students' needs for transition and success. *(Executive Director of DEI, Outreach and Recruitment Coordinator)*

Outcome: Improved collaboration between WVC and K-12 district partners.

Systems and Culture | WVC systems and institutional culture will be DEI centered with the goal of normalizing inclusion and equity. WVC Board of Trustees, Cabinet, and leadership will create policies that will represent the cultural complexity of our district.

Key Priority One: *Develop DEI focused planning, decision-making, and resource allocation structures for programs and services to help students to meet their academic and personal goals.*

Action Step 1: Develop diversity, equity and inclusion framework for institutional resource prioritization and allocation. *(President, BOT, Cabinet, and Executive Director of DEI)*

Outcome: Equitable and transparent budgeting and financial decision-making centering student needs.

Action Step 2: Acknowledge institutional responsibility for student success and systemic barriers contributing to their challenges. *(Cabinet)*

Outcome: Collectively define and adopt a strengths-based, culturally affirming approach to equitable student outcomes.

Key Priority Two: *Live and practice our identity as an Indigenous and Hispanic Serving Institution.*

Action Step 1: Review and revise policies that act as barriers to a more welcoming and culturally affirming campus. *(PAC-DEI, Cabinet, and Executive Director of DEI)*

Outcome: Policy review audit and identification of practices or processes potentially harmful to students and families. Begin revision discussions as part of shared governance.

Action Step 2: Continue to explore as a college how to become a Hispanic Serving Institution as part of ongoing professional development for all employees. *(Human Resources, Cabinet, and Executive Director of DEI)*

Outcome: Establish shared language and understanding about servingness. Move from Hispanic Enrolling to Hispanic Serving.

Key Priority Three: WVC institutional culture will model diversity, equity, and inclusion and will embrace challenges through continual dialogue and transformation.

Action Step 1: Hire Executive Director of Diversity Equity and Inclusion by Fall 2022 to serve on the Cabinet. *(President)*

Outcome: Cabinet representation centering equity in decision making at the highest level of the college.

Action Step 2: Create and support a more racially diverse workforce reflective of the community we serve. *(Human Resources, Cabinet, Executive Director of DEI)*

Outcome: Implementation of DEI hiring practices such as, search equity advocates, revision of job announcements, and DEI training for all search committees.

Next Steps and Implementation of this Plan

Wenatchee Valley College will submit this draft Equity & Inclusion Strategic Plan to the State Board of Community and Technical Colleges by July 30, 2022 to meet the WA State requirements under SB 5194.

The WVC Board of Trustees will review and approve implementation of the plan (with any needed changes) in September 2022.

The plan will be reviewed in November 2022 by the President's Advisory Council on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion in conjunction with the findings from the equity audit being performed by Education Northwest. Any edits or additions needed at that time will be included and updated.

The Executive Director of DEI and the PAC-DEI and identified area experts will begin implementation of action steps starting in January 2023.

In October 2024 the plan will be reviewed and evaluated for progress in each priority area. At that time the PAC-DEI and Executive Director of DEI will make any updates or changes needed to the document and submit a new strategic plan to the Board of Trustees for approval.

Thereafter, this plan will be evaluated and updated every two years to make sure WVC is staying relevant and focused on continual improvement and growth towards a more equitable educational system at WVC to meet the vision statement of this plan.

Glossary of Terms Used in this Document

Diversity: Psychological, physical, and social differences that occur among any and all individuals; including but not limited to race, ethnicity, nationality, religion, socioeconomic status, education, marital status, language, age, gender, sexual orientation, mental or physical ability, learning styles, and the ways in which identities or characteristics intersect. Diversity can be considered a numerical representation of different types of people and it does not necessarily entail inclusion or equity.

Equity: The process by which individuals are provided access to the correct amount and types of resources, opportunity, and supports needed to achieve equal footing with others. It differs from equality, which focuses on the equal distribution of resources rather than equal outcomes.

Inclusion: The deliberate, authentic, and intentional act of including systemically excluded individuals and groups in processes, activities, decision-making, and policymaking and acknowledging the ways individuals interact within systems and institutions to achieve a sense of belonging.

Anti-racism: The act of becoming aware of the impact of internal, interpersonal, structural, institutional, and historical racism; proactively assessing behaviors, policies and practices for embedded racism; and actively opposing, dismantling, restructuring, and rebuilding an equitable system.

Culturally appropriate: The understanding of what is customary or needed given a particular culture, context, identity or belief system. Including awareness of norms, values, systems and symbols.

Culturally competent: The effort to incorporate or include different cultural beliefs and identities into the work we do. Continual journey that makes an effort to remove systems and beliefs from utilizing only dominant white culture and instead utilizes non-dominant cultural thought processes and identities as norms.

BIPOC: Black, Indigenous and People of Color. This term is used to specifically highlight the extreme experiences of slavery and erasure of black and indigenous people within the United States while also recognizing all people of color.

Chicano/a/x: A chosen identity used by those born or raised in the United States who have Mexican heritage. It is sometimes interchangeable with Mexican American. The identity has been used to express pride in a shared cultural, ethnic and community identity of Chicanismo. It also recognizes and celebrates the connection between indigenous and Spanish culture.

Cultural enrichment: The goal of the cultural enrichment is to facilitate understanding and acceptance of persons with diverse abilities, cultures, gender identities and ethnicities within WVC and

the greater community through support and education. Cultural activities strive to raise awareness and understanding of a variety of experiences and cultures. This can include cultural heritage events, museum or art showings which celebrate art from different cultural perspectives. Music and sports events from around the world and curriculum development to encourage multicultural perspectives in the classroom.

Culture: The integrated pattern of human behavior that includes thoughts, communications, actions, customs, beliefs, values, and institutions of racial, ethnic religious or social group.

Discrimination: Is the selection for unfavorable treatment of an individual or individuals on the basis of: gender, race, color or ethnic or national origin, religion, disability, sexual orientation, social class, age, marital status or family responsibilities or as a result of any conditions or requirements that do not accord with the principles of fairness and natural justice.

Gender identity: Perception of one's self as male, female, or both or neither. Generally developed in toddlerhood or early childhood and reinforced by social experience and pubertal changes. Most people develop a gender identity that matches their biological sex. For some, however, their gender identity is different from their biological or assigned sex.

Implicit bias: Thoughts and feelings are "implicit" if we are unaware of them or mistaken about their nature. We have a bias when, rather than being neutral, we have a preference for (or aversion to) a person or group of people. Thus, we use the term "implicit bias" to describe when we have attitudes towards people or associate stereotypes with them without our conscious knowledge. A fairly commonplace example of this is seen in studies that show that white people will frequently associate criminality with black people without even realizing they're doing it. Take implicit bias tests here.

<https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/takeatest.html>

Indigenous: People who originated in an area and are the pre-colonial original inhabitants of a given region. They often still have many pieces of their original culture which they continue to practice and honor. Often these groups are fighting for their autonomy and ability to govern themselves and their indigenous lands.

Institutional culture: Communication patterns, common ideas, values, traditions and standards that permeate the everyday lives of members and that are perpetuated by institutional policies, procedures, actions and leadership. The values and behaviors that contribute to the unique social and psychological environment of an organization or institution. Institutional culture is the sum total of an organization's past and current assumptions, experiences, philosophy, and values that hold it together, and is expressed in its self-image, inner workings, interactions with the outside world, and

future expectations. It is based on shared attitudes, beliefs, customs, express or implied contracts, and the written and unwritten rules that the organization develops over time and that have worked well enough to be considered valuable. It involves communication patterns, hierarchy and decision-making, who is rewarded and for what behavior.

Institutional racism: Institutional racism is that which, covertly or overtly, resides in the policies, procedures, operations and culture of public or private institutions thereby reinforcing prejudices and being reinforced by them in turn. Whereas individual racism is the expression of personal prejudice, institutional racism is the expression of a whole organization's racist practice and culture.

Latinx: Is the gender-neutral alternative to Latino, Latina and even Latin@. Used by scholars, activists and an increasing number of journalists, Latinx is quickly gaining popularity among the general public. It's part of a "linguistic revolution" that aims to move beyond gender binaries and is inclusive of the intersecting identities of Latin American descendants. In addition to men and women from all racial backgrounds, Latinx also makes room for people who are trans, queer, asexual, non-binary, gender non-conforming or gender fluid.

LGBTQ / IA / GSM / DSG / + : (*noun*) Initials used as shorthand or umbrella terms for all people who have a non-normative (or queer) gender or sexuality, there are many different initials which people prefer. LGBTQ is Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer or Questioning (sometimes people add + at the end in an effort to be more inclusive); IA is Intersex and Asexual; GSM is Gender and Sexual Minorities; DSG is Diverse Genders and Sexualities.

Oppression: The systemic devaluing, undermining, marginalizing and disadvantaging of certain social identities in contrast to the privileged norm; when some people are denied something of value, while others have ready access. Oppression can be broken up into four levels: ideological, institutional, interpersonal, and internalized.

Privilege: Involves unearned advantage that accompanies a person's perceived status and/or perceived membership in identified groups. A right that only some people have access or availability to because of their social group memberships (dominants). Because hierarchies of privilege exist, even within the same group, people who are part of the group in power (white/Caucasian people with respect to people of color, men with respect to women, heterosexual with respect to homosexuals, adults with respect to children and rich people with respect to poor people) often deny they have privilege even when evidence of differential benefit is obvious.

Race: A social construct that divides people into groups based on factors such as physical appearance, ancestry, culture, history etc; a social, historical and political classification system. Generally,

those classifications are white/European, American Indian/Alaska Native, Black/African, Asian/Pacific Islander.

Racial micro-aggressions: Racial micro-aggressions are brief and commonplace daily verbal, behavioral, or environmental indignities, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative racial slights and insults toward people of color. Perpetrators of micro-aggressions are often unaware that they engage in such communications when they interact with racial/ethnic minorities. Micro-aggressions seem to appear in forms; micro-assault, micro-insult, and micro-invalidation.

Racism: The conscious or unconscious, intentional or unintentional, covert or overt, and institutionalized enactment of racial power, grounded in racial prejudice, by an individual or group against another individual or group perceived to have “lower” racial status. Racism involves race-based prejudice plus power. The systematic mistreatment experienced by people of color is a result of institutionalized inequalities in the social structure. Racism is one consequence of a self-perpetuating imbalance in economic, political and social power. This imbalance consistently favors members of some ethnic and cultural groups at the expense of others. The consequences of this imbalance pervade all aspects of the social system and affect all facets of people’s lives.

Stereotypes: Stereotypes are generalizations or assumptions that people make about the characteristics of all members of a group, based on an inaccurate image about what people in that group are like. For example, Americans are generally friendly, generous, and tolerant, but also arrogant, impatient, and domineering. Asians are humble shrewd and alert, but reserved. Stereotyping is common and causes most for the problem in cross-cultural conflicts.

Historically marginalized communities: Non-dominant cultural or identity groups who have not had power or privilege or recognition historically in the United States. Groups who have been intentionally discriminated against with laws and systems within the United States. Especially people of color, people with disabilities, women and LGBTQIA+ communities.

Communities of color: An overarching term to identify groups of people of color often used when describing the impacts of systemic racism. Can include many different racial and ethnic groups within the United States.

Low-income communities: Areas where a large portions of the population live below the poverty line. This often disproportionately impacts the communities access to resources and systems of power.

Community organizations: Groups, programs or organizations working in the community such as non-profits to improve community health and well being in a variety of ways.