

Community Relations Commission Recommended
Oak Park Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Statement

The people of Oak Park choose this community, not just as a place to live, but as a way of life and as a place to seek shelter, refuge, and acceptance. Oak Park commits itself to equity, diversity, and inclusion because these values make us a desirable and strong community for all people. Creating a mutually respectful, multicultural, and equitable environment does not happen on its own; it must be intentional.

We believe in **equity**. By embracing equity, with an explicit but not exclusive focus on racial equity, we work to break down systems of oppression and achieve a society where race no longer determines one's outcomes, and where everyone has what they need to thrive. This is both a process and a goal. We reject racial barriers that limit and divide us, and we reject bias towards any group of people.

We believe in **diversity** because our commonalities *and* differences are both assets. Ours is a dynamic community that welcomes, respects, and encourages the contributions of all people, in all our rich variety by race, color, ethnicity, ancestry, national origin, religion, age, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, marital and/or familial status, language, mental and/or physical impairment and/or disability, military status, economic class, immigration status, foster status, body size, or any of the other characteristics that are often used to divide people. We acknowledge intersectionality which is the compounding effect of multiple overlapping forms of discrimination that many in our community experience. We affirm all people as members of the human family. Our goal is for people of widely differing backgrounds to do more than live next to one another, but to be intentional through interaction and fair treatment. We can respect our differences while fostering unity and developing a shared vision for the future.

We believe in **inclusion** because we need to go beyond numerical diversity and strive for authentic representation, empowered participation, full access, and a true sense of belonging for all people. Oak Park recognizes that a free, open, and inclusive community is achieved through full and broad participation of all community members and the ongoing commitment to active and intentional engagement across lines of difference. We believe the best decisions are made when everyone is authentically represented in open and transparent decision-making and power is shared collectively.

The Village of Oak Park commits itself to a future ensuring equity, diversity, and inclusion in all aspects of local governance and community life. We strive to make these values *aspirational* and *operational* in our everyday practices and priorities. This includes fair treatment, equal access, and full participation in all of the Village's institutions and programs, and the goal of racial equity in all Village operating policies. The Village of Oak Park will continue to support the Board's fair housing philosophy that fosters integration and unity in our community. Our intention is that such principles will be a basis for policy and decision making in Oak Park. The President and Board of Trustees of the Village of Oak Park reaffirm their dedication and commitment to these precepts.