

## 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 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 authentically bring everyone, including traditionally excluded individuals and groups, into processes, activities, and decision making. We will work proactively to approach service delivery and decision making to take into account underlying differences in opportunities, burdens, and needs, in order to equitably improve the quality of life for all. 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. Oak Park 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, political affiliation, criminal history, or any of the other characteristics that can be used to divide people. 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 consensus on a shared vision for the future, while preserving the best of the past.

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 broad participation of community members and the ongoing commitment to active engagement. We believe the best decisions are made when everyone is truly represented in open and transparent decision-making.

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, with equal and full access to all of the Village's institutions and programs. The goal is to ensure racial equity in all Village operating policies. The Village of Oak Park will continue to support its 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.