

Our Approach to Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

While leaders decide to focus on diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) work for a variety of reasons, we find there are three fundamental questions our clients ask:

1. How do we engage in an organization-wide process to evaluate and, if needed, realign our culture to support our commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion?

2. How do we nourish a staff culture that reflects our collective values with respect to DEI, and supports the mission work of the organization?

3. Given all the realities, what strategies and action plans need to be in place to foster an equitable and inclusive workplace?

To help answer these questions, we use an appreciative approach, which focuses on what is working with the lens of replication, as opposed to focusing on the problems within the culture (a more traditional deficit-based model). Our goal is to design a collaborative approach that evaluates the current strengths and challenges of the organization with an eye to aligning culture and ultimately creating actionable recommendations for a clear path forward.

Typically, our DEI work focuses on three stages:

1

High-level organizational assessment: To fully inform this work we start by engaging leadership in conversations around the culture, their desired leadership impact, and their vision for an equitable and inclusive organization. We also believe in engaging the organization, as a whole, we recommend conducting deep dives with staff to explore diversity, equity and inclusion goals. This assessment process helps us better understand the current culture, the cultural ideal core values, equity and inclusion pain points, and leadership's desired impact.

2

In-depth analysis concluding in common agreement, shared purpose, and values: Once we've conducted the initial assessment, we work to engage the entire organization in an appreciative conversation around DEI, core values (What gives vitality and life to the organization?) and culture impact actions (What actions or changes would strengthen the overall culture and make your organization more inclusive?). The summation of this stage of work is often delivered as an "organizational constitution", or common agreements based on shared purpose and values.

3

Implementing organizational strategy: The focus here is to identify clear goals and priorities focused on continuing to improve DEI practices and to ensure that the organizational constitution/values statements are lived and integrated into the organization's systems. We will support the organization in this stage by being a thought partner and providing guidance on leading practices in organizational development and change management to help the organization successfully forge a path forward.

Within this process we see our role as facilitators and guides to assist our clients with:

IDENTIFYING “change agents” and other people who need to be involved in specific change activities, such as design, testing, and problem solving, and who can then act as DEI Champions and ambassadors for cultural change.

ASSESSING all the stakeholders and defining the nature of sponsorship, involvement and communication that will be required.

IDENTIFYING the appropriate resources to address roadblocks to achieving desired future DEI state such as unconscious bias, gender bias, LGBTQ, race/cultural equity concerns, and ally engagement, etc.

PLANNING the involvement and project activities.

ENSURING that people involved and affected by the change understand the process change.

PLANNING how and when the changes will be communicated, and organizing and/or crafting the communications messages which will include a lexicon of DEI terminology and agreed upon definitions for shared understanding.

IDENTIFYING and **AGREEING** to the success indicators for embracing a diverse, equitable and inclusive environment, and ensuring they are regularly measured and reported on.

MAKING SURE those involved or affected have help and support during times of uncertainty and upheaval.

ENSURING that there is clear expression of the reasons for engaging in diversity, equity and inclusion work, and helping the leaders and staff communicate it.

As with all of our engagements, our methodology focuses on supporting an inclusive dialogue that is: positive, focused, pro-active and fluid. To this end, our project management approach supports our methodology and serves as a tool for estimating timeframes, communicating approaches and progress to stakeholders, and ensuring quality outcomes.

About Brighter Strategies

Brighter Strategies (www.brighterstrategies.com) is a boutique organizational development consulting firm that specializes in strategic planning, process improvement and leadership development for the nonprofit and public sectors.

Our mission is to help build empowered organizations through the pursuit of best practices and continuous improvement initiatives. We approach each client engagement as a strategic partnership, establishing goals, identifying key stakeholders, and getting to work quickly on an effective action plan. We believe our collaborative process is the key to building financially sustainable organizations that fulfill their social mission, without losing or compromising core values. Our process involves focusing on an organization's people, planning, and processes, which we believe lead to performance.

We offer qualified consultants with the academic credentials, real-life experience, and know how to guide clients through the processes required for analysis, action, and after-action evaluation. Our team offers deep experience in non-profit and social sector work and an understanding of the unique challenges of an organization led by a social mission.

At Brighter Strategies, we strive to engage and understand beyond what we see so we can leverage the gifts and talents that lie within each member of the human race. We believe in working with our clients to live their values by creating systems and processes that level the playing field.

