CAEECC’s Living Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Glossary

Drafted 1.31.2022 by CAEECC’s Composition, Diversity, Equity & Inclusion (CDEI) Working Group (WG)

***IMPORTANT NOTES****:*

* *This list of terms is intended to provide a shared language for Working Group (WG) Members.*
* *These definitions are not from or approved by CAEECC, and the WG may collectively create its own definition for certain terms, such as “diversity”.*
* *These terms & definitions are always evolving and often mean different things to different people.*
* *This list is by no means exhaustive.*
* *The alphabetical layout of this glossary doesn’t show the nuances and linkages between many key terms.*
* *Except as noted in footnotes, all definitions are from the University of Washington[[1]](#footnote-1)*
* *WG Members are encouraged to seek out additional resources. A commitment to DEI is a commitment to lifelong learning!*
* *[CDEI WG to discuss recommending CAEECC periodically update this document so it can continue to serve as a living resource for Members and Working Groups]*

***Key Terms***

* **Ableism:** a set of beliefs or practices that devalue and discriminate against people with physical, intellectual, or psychiatric disabilities and often rests on the assumption that disabled people need to be ‘fixed’ in one form or the other.[[2]](#footnote-2)
* **Ally:** Someone who supports a group other than one’s own (in terms of multiple identities such as race, gender, age, ethnicity, sexual orientation, religion, etc.). An ally acknowledges oppression and actively commits to reducing their own complicity, investing in strengthening their own knowledge and awareness of oppression.
* **BIPOC:** An acronym used to refer to Black, Indigenous and People of Color. It is based on the recognition of collective experiences of systemic racism. As with any other identity term, it is up to individuals to use this term as an identifier.
* **Brave space**: Being able to hold oneself accountable in a public setting shows that it is ok to be vulnerable. This vulnerability can be in the form of sharing diverse perspectives, recognizing microaggressions and naming injustices. The most productive brave spaces embrace: “controversy with civility,” “owning intentions and impacts,” “challenge by choice,” “respect” and “no attacks”.[[3]](#footnote-3)
* **Cisgender**: A term for people whose gender identity, expression or behavior aligns with those typically associated with their assigned sex at birth
* **Color** **Blind**: The belief in treating everyone “equally” by treating everyone the same; based on the presumption that differences are by definition bad or problematic, and therefore best ignored (*i.e., “I don’t see race, gender, etc.”)*.[[4]](#footnote-4)
  + **Alternate definition:** The belief that everyone should be treated “equally” without respect to societal, economic, historical, racial or other difference. No differences are seen or acknowledged; everyone is the same.[[5]](#footnote-5)
* **Cultural Appropriation:** The non-consensual/misappropriate use of cultural elements for commodification or profit purposes – including symbols, art, language, customs, etc. – often without understanding, acknowledgment or respect for its value in the context of its original culture.
* **Discrimination:** The unequal treatment of members of various groups, based on conscious or unconscious prejudice, which favors one group over others on differences of race, gender, economic class, sexual orientation, physical ability, religion, language, age, national identity, religion and other categories.
* **Diversity & Inclusion:**
  + **Diversity:** Socially, it refers to the wide range of identities. It broadly includes race, ethnicity, gender, age, national origin, religion, disability, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, education, marital status, language, veteran status, physical appearance, etc. It also involves different ideas, perspectives and values.
    - ***Note*:** The CDEI Working Group will collectively define this term as it applies to CAEECC and our WG.
  + **Inclusion:** The act of creating an environment in which any individual or group will be welcomed, respected, supported and valued as a fully participating member. An inclusive and welcoming climate embraces and respects differences.
  + **Distinction between Diversity and Inclusion**: You can have diversity without inclusion (e.g., tokenism, assimilation). You can’t have inclusion without diversity. Focusing on inclusion gets you further than just focusing on diversity.[[6]](#footnote-6)
* **Disadvantaged**: See CPUC Decision 18-05-041 “Addressing Energy Efficiency Business Plans”, section 2.5.1 “Definition of Disadvantaged Communities”.[[7]](#footnote-7)
* **Equity:** The fair treatment, access, opportunity and advancement for all people, while at the same time striving to identify and eliminate barriers that prevent the full participation of some groups. The principle of equity acknowledges that there are historically underserved and underrepresented populations and that fairness regarding these unbalanced conditions is necessary to provide equal opportunities to all groups.
* **Environmental Justice**: Embraces the principle that all people and communities have a right to equal protection and equal enforcement of environmental laws and regulations… Race and class still matter and map closely with pollution, unequal protection, and vulnerability.  Today, zip code is still the most potent predictor of an individual’s health and well-being… Reducing environmental, health, economic and racial disparities is a major priority of the Environmental Justice Movement.[[8]](#footnote-8)  Delegates to the First National People of Color Environmental Leadership Summit held on October 24-27, 1991, in Washington DC, drafted and adopted 17 principles of Environmental Justice. Since then, The Principles have served as a defining document for the growing grassroots movement for environmental justice.[[9]](#footnote-9)
* **Extractive Industry Exploitation[[10]](#footnote-10):** People who live in areas where extractive industries operate often face poverty and human rights abuses. These industries exacerbate human rights abuses in many countries by making lands uninhabitable by polluting the environment.[[11]](#footnote-11)
* **Gender Expression:** External appearance of one's gender identity, usually expressed through behavior, clothing, haircut or voice, and which may or may not conform to socially defined behaviors and characteristics typically associated with being either masculine or feminine.[[12]](#footnote-12)
* **Gender Identity:** Distinct from the term “sexual orientation,” refers to a person’s internal sense of being male, female or something else. Since gender identity is internal, one’s gender identity is not necessarily visible to others.
* **Gender Non-conforming:** An individual whose gender expression is different from societal expectations related to gender.
* **Hard-to-reach**: See CPUC Decision 18-05-041 “Addressing Energy Efficiency Business Plans”, section 2.5.1 “Definition of Hard-to-Reach Customers”.[[13]](#footnote-13) For context on how the definition has evolved from the Energy Efficiency Policy Manual to DEER Resolution to D. 18-05-041, see “HTR definitions and context” under “Key Documents” on the CAEECC Underserved Working Group webpage[[14]](#footnote-14).
* **Implicit Bias:** Negative associations expressed automatically that people unknowingly hold and that affect our understanding, actions and decisions; also known as unconscious or hidden bias.
* **Intersectionality:** A social construct that recognizes the fluid diversity of identities that a person can hold such as gender, race, class, religion, professional status, marital status, socioeconomic status, etc.
* **Justice-Impacted[[15]](#footnote-15):** include those who have been incarcerated or detained in a prison, immigration detention center, local jail, juvenile detention center, or any other carceral setting, those who have been convicted but not incarcerated, those who have been charged but not convicted, and those who have been arrested[[16]](#footnote-16)
* **Limited English Proficiency[[17]](#footnote-17):** Individuals who do not speak English as their primary language and who have a limited ability to read, speak, write, or understand English can be limited English proficient, or “LEP.” These individuals may be entitled language assistance with respect to a particular type of service, benefit, or encounter.[[18]](#footnote-18)
* **LGBTQIA+[[19]](#footnote-19):** An inclusive term for those who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, and asexual.
* **Microaggression:** The verbal, nonverbal and environmental slights, snubs, insults or actions, whether intentional or unintentional, which communicate hostile, derogatory or negative messages to target persons based solely upon discriminatory belief systems.
* **Multicultural Competency:** A process of embracing diversity and learning about people from other cultural backgrounds. The key element to becoming more culturally competent is respect for the ways that others live in and organize the world and an openness to learn from them.
* **Privilege:** Exclusive access and/or preferential access to material and immaterial resources based on the membership to a dominant social group.
* **Racial Equity** is a process of eliminating racial disparities and improving outcomes for everyone. It is the intentional and continual practice of changing policies, practices, systems, and structures by prioritizing measurable change in the lives of people of color.
* **Racial and Ethnic Identity**: An individual’s awareness and experience of being a member of a racial and ethnic group; the racial and ethnic categories that an individual chooses to describe him or herself based on such factors as biological heritage, physical appearance, cultural affiliation, early socialization, and personal experience.[[20]](#footnote-20)
  + **Note**: To read dialogue regarding which identity options to use for different ethnicities, please see these footnote links. In short, research suggests it is best to ask people their racial and ethnic identity preferences.[[21]](#footnote-21)
* **Racial Justice** is a vision and transformation of society to eliminate racial hierarchies and advance collective liberation, where Black, Indigenous, Latinx, Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians, and Pacific Islanders, in particular, have the dignity, resources, power, and self-determination to fully thrive.[[22]](#footnote-22)
  + **Distinction between Racial Equity and Racial Justice**: Racial equity is the process for moving towards the vision of racial justice. Racial equity seeks measurable milestones and outcomes that can be achieved on the road to racial justice. Racial equity is necessary, but not sufficient, for racial justice.[[23]](#footnote-23)
* **Racism, Individual Racism, and Structural Racism:**
  + **Racism:** Racism is different from racial prejudice, hatred, or discrimination. Racism involves one group having the power to carry out systematic discrimination through the institutional policies and practices of the society and by shaping the cultural beliefs and values that support those racist policies and practices.[[24]](#footnote-24)
  + **Individual Racism:** Individual racism refers to the beliefs, attitudes, and actions of individuals that support or perpetuate racism. Individual racism can be deliberate, or the individual may act to perpetuate or support racism without knowing that is what he or she is doing.[[25]](#footnote-25)
  + **Structural Racism**: A system in which public policies, institutional practices, cultural representations, and other norms work in various, often reinforcing ways to perpetuate racial group inequity. It identifies dimensions of our history and culture that have allowed privileges associated with “whiteness” and disadvantages associated with “color” to endure and adapt over time. Structural racism is not something that a few people or institutions choose to practice. Instead it has been a feature of the social, economic and political systems in which we all exist.[[26]](#footnote-26)
* **Safe Space:** Refers to an environment in which everyone feels comfortable expressing themselves and participating fully, without fear of attack, ridicule or denial of experience.
* **Sexual Orientation:** An individual’s enduring physical, romantic and/or emotional attraction to another person. Gender identity and sexual orientation are not the same. Transgender people may be straight, lesbian, gay or bisexual.
* **Social Justice:** Social justice constitutes a form of activism, based on principles of equity and inclusion that encompasses a vision of society in which the distribution of resources is equitable and all members are physically and psychologically safe and secure. Social justice involves social actors who have a sense of their own agency as well as a sense of social responsibility toward and with others.
* **Structural inequality:** Systemic disadvantage(s) of one social group compared to other groups, rooted and perpetuated through discriminatory practices (conscious or unconscious) that are reinforced through institutions, ideologies, representations, policies/laws and practices. When this kind of inequality is related to racial/ethnic discrimination, it is referred to as systemic or structural racism.
* **System of Oppression:** Conscious and unconscious, non-random and organized harassment, discrimination, exploitation, discrimination, prejudice and other forms of unequal treatment that impact different groups. Sometimes used to refer to systemic racism.
* **Tokenism:** Performative presence without meaningful participation. For example, a superficial invitation for the participation of members of a certain socially oppressed group, who are expected to speak for the whole group without giving this person a real opportunity to speak for her/himself/themselves.
* **Unconscious Bias:** see “Implicit Bias” above
* **Underserved [energy efficiency customers]:** As explored in the CAEECC Working Groups on “Underserved [customers]” and “Equity Metrics”, there is no clear CPUC definition of “underserved”.A discussion of three definitional options is presented in the Equity Metrics Working Group final report.[[27]](#footnote-27)
* **White Fragility**: Discomfort and defensiveness on the part of a white person when confronted by information about racial inequality and injustice.
* **White Supremacy:** A power system structured and maintained by persons who classify themselves as White, whether consciously or subconsciously determined; and who feel superior to those of other racial/ethnic identities.

1. University of Washington. <https://environment.uw.edu/about/diversity-equity-inclusion/tools-and-additional-resources/glossary-dei-concepts/> Accessed 12/17/2021 [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Center for Disability Rights. <https://cdrnys.org/blog/uncategorized/ableism/> Accessed 1/24/2022 [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. NC State University. [https://diversity.ncsu.edu/news/2020/04/02/what-is-a-brave-space Accessed 1/30/2022](https://diversity.ncsu.edu/news/2020/04/02/what-is-a-brave-space%20Accessed%201/30/2022). Note: this definition is a summary based on an article. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Pacific University of Oregon. <https://www.pacificu.edu/life-pacific/support-safety/office-equity-diversity-inclusion/edi-resources/glossary-terms#A> Accessed 12/17/2021 [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. University of Washington definition [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Race Forward. <https://www.raceforward.org/about/what-is-racial-equity-key-concepts> [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. CPUC D.18-05-041, pages 39-41. Available at https://www.caeecc.org/cpuc-documents [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Dr Robert Bullard. <https://drrobertbullard.com/> [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. Principles of Environmental Justice. <https://www.ejnet.org/ej/principles.html> [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. For a definition/explanation of Extractive Industry Discrimination, see Danish Institute for Human Rights: <https://www.humanrights.dk/news/strengthening-womens-position-extractive-industries> [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. Earth Rights International. <https://earthrights.org/what-we-do/extractive-industries/> [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. Human Rights Campaign. <https://www.hrc.org/resources/sexual-orientation-and-gender-identity-terminology-and-definitions> [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. CPUC D.18-05-041, pages 41-47. Available at <https://www.caeecc.org/cpuc-documents> [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. HTR definitions and context: <https://www.caeecc.org/underserved-working-group-2020> [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. Justice-Involved is sometimes used interchangeably with this term. Although Justice-impacted is specific to those impacted by the criminal justice system, it’s worth noting that justice-involved is also used by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration: <https://soarworks.samhsa.gov/topics/criminal-justice>. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. Law School Admission Council. ​​<https://www.lsac.org/data-research/research/justice-impacted-individuals-pipeline-national-exploration-law-school> [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. English Language Learner is another common term that some view as more positive and action-driven. The term is used by education justice advocates and the U.S. Dept. of Education Office for Civil Rights [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. U.S. Department of Energy's Office of Economic Impact and Diversity. <https://www.energy.gov/diversity/faqs-limited-english-proficiency-program> [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. UC Davis LGBTQIA Resource Center provides additional definitions: <https://lgbtqia.ucdavis.edu/educated/glossary> [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. Racial Equity Tools Glossary. <https://www.racialequitytools.org/glossary> [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. 1) Pew Research Center. <https://www.pewresearch.org/hispanic/2020/08/11/about-one-in-four-u-s-hispanics-have-heard-of-latinx-but-just-3-use-it/#fn-29384-5> 2) <https://www.kpbs.org/news/2021/jun/18/hispanic-latino-latinx-question-belonging/> 3) NPR. https://training.npr.org/2021/12/01/journalism-guide-terms-disability-ethnicity-gender-race/ [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. Race Forward. <https://www.raceforward.org/about/what-is-racial-equity-key-concepts> [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. Racial Equity Tools. <https://www.racialequitytools.org/glossary> [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
25. Ibid. [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
26. Aspen Institute. <https://www.aspeninstitute.org/blog-posts/structural-racism-definition/> Accessed 1/24/2022 [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
27. CAEECC Equity Metrics Working Group Final Report, pages 21-24. Available at<https://www.caeecc.org/cdei-working-group> [↑](#footnote-ref-27)