

2.5 Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion**a. Purpose:**

The purpose of this policy is to affirm the Town's commitment to building and maintaining a community and workplace culture that values diversity, ensures equity, and fosters inclusion. By formally disclosing these DEI policies, this policy provides a framework for ensuring fair treatment, equal opportunity, and the celebration of individual differences. Additionally, it works to establish accountability measures for leaders, staff, commissions, and boards regarding inclusive practices.

b. Summary:

The implementation of a DEI policy is paramount to ensuring that all members of the Town community are recognized, celebrated, and uplifted. It is paramount to the diversity, safety, and equity within the Town, and it reflects our commitment to supporting the constituents of Old Lyme as effectively and equitably as possible.

c. Definitions:

A DEI policy is a policy focused on diversity, equity, and inclusion that reflects the initiative to recognize, respect, and celebrate differences such as race, gender, disability, sexual orientation, and more.

d. Application:

Across recruitment, training, retention, delivery, constituent services, all Town departments, all board, committee, and commission meetings, and all Town sanctioned events, the Town has an ongoing commitment to treating every individual with fairness and respect. The Town of Old Lyme is committed to fostering a workplace culture that embraces and celebrates diversity, promotes equity within policy and practice, and ensures all constituents of the Town are included within the community. We believe diversity, equity, and inclusion are essential to creating a safe, diverse, and successful community. Embracing diversity and promoting equity aligns with global human rights principles, actively acknowledging our promise to promote diversity and equal rights. Town leadership, among all other staff, is accountable and responsible for upholding the principles of diversity, equity, and inclusion and promoting a culture of respect and inclusion through the Town and the Town government.

e. Our Commitment:

We are committed to embracing diversity because we firmly believe that our differences are not only what define us, but also what bring us together; they are our strength, our resources, and our bond. We are dedicated to welcoming, respecting, and celebrating those differences while recognizing that diversity enriches the workplace, drives innovation, and ensures we are engaging with the community effectively and equitably.

f. Procedure:

The Town of Old Lyme maintains a zero-tolerance policy for discrimination, harassment, and retaliation based on protected characteristics such as race, gender, ethnicity,

nationality, religious status, education level, socioeconomic status, sexuality, and more. Below are clear guidelines and procedures for reporting and addressing incidents of discrimination and harassment. We are committed to diversity in our workforce, thus we actively seek to attract and retain employees from all backgrounds and to remove bias from our personnel practices and protocols. Further, we seek ongoing diversity, equity, and inclusion training and development for all employees to raise awareness, build cultural competence, and foster inclusivity. The Town will regularly assess progress towards DEI goals and may seek feedback from employees and community members to inform us about our policies, improve our practices, and provide Town services that aim to promote inclusivity and to meet the needs of all Town residents.

g. **Disclaimer:**

The Town shall interpret and enforce this policy consistent with all Federal, State, and local anti-discrimination laws. Listed in the employee handbook are the specific statutes regarding discrimination, harassment, intimidation, or any other form of violence in the workplace.