

# Waterford.org Equity & Inclusion Statement

Waterford’s commitment to inclusive excellence is foundational to achieving our mission of universal literacy. Waterford.org is a mission-driven organization, and diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) are at the heart of who we are and what we do. These values inform our decision making, talent recruitment, program development, and engagement with the children, families, and communities we serve.

At Waterford, we define Inclusive Excellence as: the result of the cohesive, coherent and collaborative integration of diversity, inclusion and equity into our organizational pursuit of excellence. We recognize that our success is dependent on, and tied directly to, how well we value, engage and embed culturally responsive practices and inclusive intelligence into our operational strategies.

When designing curriculum, engaging with families, collaborating with partners, or recruiting new talent, Waterford.org seeks out and makes space for diverse voices and perspectives. Waterford’s advocacy for universal access to early learning is rooted in our steadfast commitment to these values and our mission to deliver excellence and education equity for all learners.

At Waterford we aim for a workforce that represents the diversity of the communities we serve. We actively seek talent that represent diverse backgrounds, perspectives, experiences, and identities. We are committed to fostering a workplace culture and organizational identity that welcomes and values the unique contributions that employees and stakeholders bring in terms of education, culture, ethnicity, race, gender identity and expression, nation of origin, age, languages spoken, veteran’s status, religion, disability, sexual orientation and beliefs. We believe that diverse representation should exist across the breadth (functions) and depth (hierarchy) of Waterford.

## An EPIC approach to Inclusive Excellence at Waterford.org

Waterford.org leaders and employees:

**EMPOWER** individuals from underrepresented groups by facilitating dialogues, being attentive to others’ cultures, and creating conditions for diversity of thinking to flourish.

**PROVIDE** programs and supports that center equity, value cultural diversity and reflect an understanding of the communities we serve.

**INVITE**, recruit and value talent and partners representing diverse cultures, identities, backgrounds, experiences, and perspectives.

**CULTIVATE** a culture of inclusive excellence at Waterford by: **(1)** Reflecting on our beliefs, behaviors, & practices through an equity lens; **(2)** Humanizing marginalized identities by mediating power imbalances based on race, culture, ethnicity, gender, gender expression, dominant language & socio-economic status; and **(3)** Engaging authentically through respect, appreciation, care, & cultural affirmation.