



Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Mission Statement

December 6, 2021

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Workgroup Members

Christina Ford	Lynn Halsey
Dale A Spektor	Michele Gruet
Danit Brahver	Myron Spektor
Elizabeth Vigna	Sarvenaz Singh
Ellen Buttolph	Toral Patel
Herb Lev	Tovah Kopan
Jamal Mahmood	Val Brahver
Kristen Donohue	Verena Mikhael (VHS student)

Deputy Mayor Christine McGrath, Councilwoman Cynthia Holland, and Director of Administration and Business Development Steve Neale facilitated the session.

DEI Workgroup Process/Key Dates

- ▶ Workgroup formed by Township Council in August 2021 for the expressed purpose of developing a mission statement for diversity, equity, and inclusion activities in the Township.
- ▶ Call for volunteers was in late August to early September.
- ▶ First meeting - September 28, 2021
 - ▶ This session was a conversation on the following topics:
 - ▶ What did we like about living in Verona and what are the challenges to living here?
 - ▶ Who are the dominant groups in our community, and what groups are non-dominant?
 - ▶ What does it mean to have a community that values diversity, equity, and inclusion?
 - ▶ What is the role that a Township should have in promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion?

DEI Workgroup Process/Key Dates

- ▶ Second meeting - October 5, 2021
 - ▶ The group was split into three groups. Each was given a different starting mission statement and they were asked to make it better.
 - ▶ At the end of the session we reviewed the three mission statements to find common themes and differences.
- ▶ Third touch point - October 15, 2021
 - ▶ A survey was distributed with a proposed mission statement. Workgroup members were asked to score the missions statement from 1-5 and provide feedback, with 5 being the highest score.
 - ▶ Members were also asked additional questions on the immediate opportunities for the Township to make advancements.

In the process of developing a mission statement, the following themes emerged

- ▶ There was consensus that Verona is a welcoming community.
- ▶ While a one sentence mission statement was initially appealing, two sentences seemed more favored as it would likely result in a stronger statement.
- ▶ Mentioning policies and programs made the statement tangible and was preferred.
- ▶ Words like “strive” helped to convey that we want the community to move in a direction.
- ▶ Positive statements were preferred over negative statements.
- ▶ Words or phrases that have become politicized (e.g. social justice) should not be used as they may have multiple meanings.

Proposed Mission Statement

Verona's vibrant community proudly welcomes all residents, business owners, employees, and visitors. Together we are working toward being a truly inclusive place where our policies, services, and programs meet the needs of all people.

This statement received an average rating of 4.2 out of 5 from workgroup members

2022 Proposed Areas of Focus

- ▶ Planned calendar of events that reflects robust cultural inclusion.
- ▶ Accessibility of our recreation programs for disabled adults and children.
- ▶ Large event review for inclusion (e.g., handicap parking; neuro-diversity events for children).
- ▶ Website and social media accessibility review and improvements.
- ▶ Audit of Township and Committee forms and policies for heteronormative terms (e.g., husband & wife vs spouse) and gender inclusivity.
- ▶ Continued training plan for employees.

Proposed Ongoing Advisory Committee

- ▶ For 2022 we are proposing a Cultural Affairs and Accessibility Advisory Committee ("CAAAC").
- ▶ The mission of the cultural affairs and accessibility advisory committee is to work together with the community, governing body, and Township administration to organize, coordinate, research and manage actions in the community; to propose solutions that ensure accessibility for all community members; and to make recommendations regarding diverse cultural, economic, and social issues within our community.
- ▶ The Committee would have the following members:
 - ▶ Council Liaison
 - ▶ Director of Administration and Economic Development or delegate
 - ▶ Director of Community Services or delegate
 - ▶ Library Director or delegate
 - ▶ BOE Superintendent or delegate
 - ▶ Six members of the community, appointed by the Council