

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Strategic Plan





Dear Cincinnati Children's Team:

Living and championing diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) is fundamental to who we are, and more importantly, who we aspire to be—a place where everyone feels welcome, safe, valued, and respected.

A unified and unwavering focus on DEI strengthens our care, research, and educational missions and enhances our culture to be a better workplace for all.

In 2021, we introduced our 5-year comprehensive strategic plan for DEI to guide our actions and measure our progress. This plan elevates our responsibilities, integrates our efforts, and embeds DEI in every aspect of our work. It gives each of us the opportunity to “own” cultural competence and accept it as our personal responsibility in alignment with our Core Value—“Respect Everyone.”

I invite you to join our Board of Trustees, the Performance Leadership Team, and me in committing to this plan, which compels us to grow in awareness of our own unconscious biases and in the ability to listen, learn, and understand each other.

This journey and commitment must be personal for each of us, and institutional as One Cincinnati Children's. Measurable, sustainable and people-centered progress will take time and consistent attention I am confident that through this work we will enrich our team, the community we are part of, and most importantly, the children we are here to serve.

Let's take these important next steps together as One Cincinnati Children's.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Steve Davis MD MMM". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Steve Davis, MD, MMM

President and CEO

Table of Contents

- Executive Summary 4
- Definitions 7
- Why a Focus on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, and Why Now 8
- Alignment with Pursuing Our Potential Together 10
- Determining Our Path 12
- Our DEI Strategic Initiatives 13
 - People 15
 - Cultural Competence 16
 - Equity & Health Excellence 17
 - Community & Neighbors 18
- Getting Started 19
- Measuring Our Progress 20



Executive Summary

Events across the country and around the world have thrust diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) to the forefront. For individuals, corporations, and organizations, and in broad systemic ways, challenging and, in some cases, tragic events have served as catalysts for change. While we at Cincinnati Children’s have engaged in our own vital introspection and discussions—and undoubtedly have our own progress to make—the need for the strategic plan presented here long predates the current environment.

		
Our Vision	Our Mission	Our Values
<p>To be the leader in improving child health.</p>	<p>Cincinnati Children’s will improve child health and transform delivery of care through fully integrated, globally recognized research, education and innovation.</p> <p>For patients from our community, the nation and the world, the care we provide will achieve the best:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Medical and quality-of-life outcomes• Patient and family experience• Value <p>today and in the future.</p>	<p>Our core values are the foundation of who we are. They are touch points for excellence and professionalism. And, they are our beacon when we question what choices to make.</p> <p>Respect everyone Treat others as you would like to be treated</p> <p>Tell the truth Be honest and transparent</p> <p>Work as a team Inspire, challenge and support colleagues, patients and families</p> <p>Make a difference Recognize that a service culture starts with me</p>

Executive Summary

Inherent in our vision of being the leader in improving child health is the inclusion of all children. As our world and demographics change, so too must our understanding of health implications, the services we provide, and those who make up our organization. This means working to address factors such as social determinants of health and wellbeing. It means acknowledging racism and inequities as public health crises. And it means incorporating this information into the way we operate—seeing the diversity, cultural competence, and equity of our organization as instrumental in improving child health (as described in Figure 1).

Partners across this incredible organization have an extensive history in DEI-related efforts—whether seeking to foster and maintain a diverse workforce, developing a culturally competent environment and skillset to care for anyone, or looking upstream to understand and address social determinants of health and wellbeing. Within all of this, though, is our opportunity: collaborating for impact. Aligning our work and changes in behavior for focused, sustained, and measurable progress.

At Cincinnati Children's, We Respect Everyone.

We are dedicated to ensuring every employee, patient, family, and visitor feels welcome and safe.

Together, we commit to:

- **Ending child health disparities**
- **Advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion**
- **Standing against racism**
- **Creating an environment free of discrimination**
- **Taking personal and institutional responsibility**

In 2020 we at Cincinnati Children's proclaimed publicly the importance of recognizing racism and other such discrimination as a public health crisis, and committed ourselves to be part of the solution for diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI).

Executive Summary

This plan presents an overarching view that connects these dots of existing and forthcoming work. It begins to establish a deeply intentional and comprehensive infrastructure around our DEI efforts that (a) reflects current and ongoing work, (b) recognizes areas of opportunity, and (c) constructs a path for our next five years. Essential to that path is the involvement, engagement, and accountability of everyone at Cincinnati Children's.

Our next steps to embedding DEI at Cincinnati Children's are organized into four interrelated categories, this plan's key Strategic Initiatives: **People**, **Cultural Competence**, **Equity & Health Excellence**, and **Community & Neighbors**. As with so much of our work, including our journey with safety and quality improvement, our DEI goals in this strategic plan are bold and will take time, persistence, and continuous learning. Just as with safety, diversity includes everyone. This is yet another journey that will require us to work as One Cincinnati Children's.

C	Compassionate Champions diversity, equity and inclusion, supporting everyone with caring, recognition and intentional development
C	Collaborative Strives to get to the best answer by working as one Cincinnati Children's
H	Honest Leads with integrity, courage, accountability, and high ethical standards
M	iMpactful Drives to improve outcomes, experience, and value for kids, families, teams and the community
C	Curious Embodies a mindset of creativity, innovation, learning, and discovery

Definitions

Some of the topics central to this plan—words such as “diversity”—can take on varied meanings to different people or in differing environments. Our progress, however, requires a shared understanding to minimize the opportunity for miscommunication or confusion. These definitions help Cincinnati Children’s proceed in our strategy with a common language around a few key topics—rooted in Our Expectations, Our Values in Action.

Topics and Definitions	
Diversity	is similarities and differences across physical, social, and psychological characteristics. It is not exclusive. <i>Diversity includes everyone.</i>
Equity	is the fair treatment, access, and opportunity for all, along with identifying and eliminating barriers that have prevented full participation in the past. <i>Equity helps everyone reach their full potential.</i>
Inclusion	is the behaviors and creation of an environment that honor individual uniqueness and foster a sense of belonging for any and everyone. <i>Inclusion must be intentional.</i>
Belonging	is when everyone feels valued and treated as a member of the larger community. <i>Belonging values each individual being their authentic self.</i>
Cultural Competence	is the ability of individuals, teams, and the organization to effectively interact and connect with all people and communities. <i>Cultural competence is a journey.</i>
Social Determinants of Health	are the conditions in the environments where people are born, live, learn, work, play, worship, and age. <i>Social determinants of health impact people’s health, wellbeing, and quality of life.</i>

Why a Focus on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, and Why Now

The advantages of a diverse and inclusive workplace have been researched and documented for years, including making organizations and teams more creative, innovative, effective, and profitable. Similarly, cultural competence and equity, particularly in relation to health, are known to be principally important in care delivery, experience, and outcomes, and have undeniable effects on research design and its findings. Organizations across the country and the world are learning that acknowledging and desiring these advantages does not equate to actionable progress. Making these advantages real requires commitment, persistence, and intention. While Cincinnati Children’s has had a deep, long-standing commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI), the components of an overarching framework, intentional strategies, and accountability for success have not always guided that work.

In addition to these advantages embedded in our institutional commitment, intentional and measurable progress relating to DEI is essential to truly achieve Cincinnati Children’s aspirations. The declared next step in our organizational journey focuses on pursuing our potential together so all kids can pursue theirs. As with our vision of being the leader in improving child health and the emphasis of “all kids,” the plan guiding this journey, *Pursuing Our Potential Together* (POPT), is intertwined and infused with DEI. Goals such as “be a visionary leader in pediatric population health,” “drive excellent and equitable health outcomes,” and “advance and elevate our culture” are directly related to and influenced by our ability to be successful in the areas of diversity, equity, inclusion, and cultural competence.

“Pursuing Our Potential Together is intertwined and infused with DEI.”



Why a Focus on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, and Why Now

If we look back to the turn of the current century, “transgender” was neither an everyday topic nor was it even a term with which the general population was readily familiar. That has changed dramatically—along with our understanding of health-related needs and disparities of people that are transgender. Since Cincinnati Children’s launched our Transgender Health Clinic in 2013, that clinic has continuously grown. As of 2020, the Clinic has provided medical and psychosocial support for nearly 2,000 individual patients and their families. Both nationally and regionally, other societal and population changes—*growth of racial/ethnic diversity, language needs, income inequality, and more*—will continue to reshape the landscape of health care. Across a similar timeline, growing research has demonstrated that the healthcare system directly impacts but a small part of peoples’ overall health, emphasizing the necessity to go outside our organization to partner with our neighbors and address upstream social and societal influences on health and wellbeing.

Cincinnati Children’s has been widely recognized as best-in-class. We are, without a doubt, a leading pediatric healthcare institution in the nation and the world. Such an achievement comes from, among other things, aspiring to be *the best at getting better*—working to understand and prepare for what is to come. As our world and the people in it shift around us, our continued success depends on our ability to recognize and address the implications of such changes both outside our walls—*in our local community, our region, across the country, and around the world*—as well as inside our organization—*for our people, our teams, and our leaders*.

In creating this strategic plan, we can create intention in our path forward both with who we are as an organization and how we will infuse equity into our efforts of improving the health of all children. These are not efforts that affect only certain people. Diversity includes everyone. The advantages we can create by achieving our DEI goals stand to benefit us all. These efforts will help us to continue to grow more innovative, effective, and efficient as teams and as an organization, and are instrumental in realizing our vision of being the leader in improving child health.

“Diversity includes everyone. The advantages we can create by achieving our DEI goals stand to benefit us all.”

Alignment with Pursuing Our Potential Together

Though not explicitly stated by name, DEI is in the very fibers of our organization. One of our Core Values, “Respect Everyone,” inherently recognizes and respects differences across people. Still, a value does not automatically equate to action. To be successful in addressing our DEI needs and to respond to the data that has been collected, the essential next step has been to determine how our DEI initiatives interrelate with and enable the strategic direction of Cincinnati Children’s outlined in *Pursuing Our Potential Together* (POPT). That is, ensuring that DEI is embedded within our work, not considered an add-on.

For each of the four areas of POPT—Care, Community, Cure, and Culture (or the 4Cs)—there are clear ways in which DEI aligns with or enables our aspirations.



Alignment with Pursuing Our Potential Together



Care

Provide hope to children and families in Cincinnati and around the world by delivering best-in-class personalized care, outcomes, experience, and value.

Personalizing the care, outcomes, and experience we provide requires that we have both the ability to understand the people with whom we interact and the cultural competency to uncover how each person may want to be treated. It means we have to meet people where they are in order to improve outcomes.



Community

Help Cincinnati's kids be the healthiest in the nation by working together with families and the community.

Data relating to the health of our community make it abundantly clear that helping Cincinnati's kids be the healthiest in the nation will require differing approaches for equitable change. Whether by neighborhood, race, socioeconomic status, or more, the extent to which we are able to be equitable and inclusive in our approach to working together with our community will have a direct impact on the ability to help address variables affecting our kids' health.



Cure

Harness the discovery power of our clinical and research teams to prevent, cure, or radically improve the course of pediatric and adolescent mental illness, and one or two additional diseases or high morbidity or mortality.

Diverse groups have historically been underrepresented in clinical and health-related research, potentially skewing the effectiveness of generalizable results and cures. As we work to harness our discovery power, striving to ensure the outcomes can help all kids and families is inherent in Cincinnati Children's vision.



Culture

Lead the way as a model employer with a vibrant culture that is a magnet for extraordinary people who live our values, advance our mission, and fulfill their dreams.

While DEI has clear connections to all the 4Cs, "Culture" is undoubtedly the most central and direct. To make any of the advancements above in Care, Community, and Cure, it must start with a healthy culture that acknowledges and sets actionable steps to address issues such as discrimination and inequity. The vibrancy of our culture depends on our ability to honor and harness our differences, leveraging them to innovate and make us Better Together.

Determining Our Path

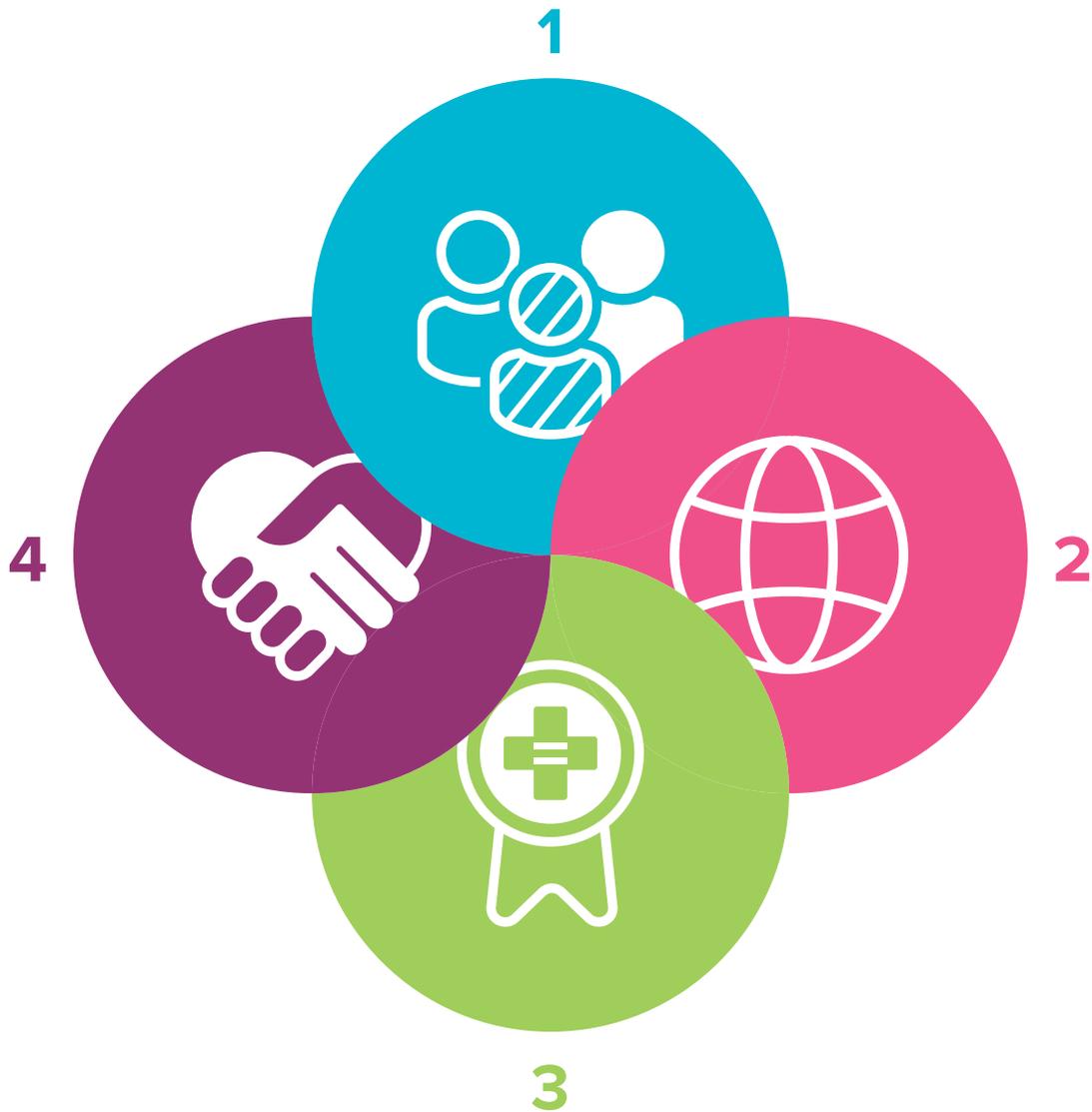
Just as enacting a plan to address these matters of DEI must involve everyone, an essential step in building our strategy has been to gain a deep understanding of the current environment—both inside and outside the organization. The process that followed—from July to December 2020—led us through multiple steps of collecting relevant data, ensuring alignment with the organization, and gaining perspectives of subject matter experts, key partners, and other primary stakeholders. Input from these partners helped to create a picture of our journey—where we have been, our current state, and our path for the coming years.

The plan that has been built looks at our next five years and includes five interrelated steps. They are steps that will build upon one another, then respectively continue as the work develops. While we—as *an organization, a region, the nation, and the world*—change, so too will Cincinnati Children’s need to adapt our plans. Still, the DEI Strategic Initiatives that have been developed provide the intentional high-level direction to move us along our journey.

Interrelated Steps in Our DEI Journey



Our DEI Strategic Initiatives



1 | People

2 | Cultural Competence

3 | Equity & Health Excellence

4 | Community & Neighbors

Our DEI Strategic Initiatives

The steps in our diversity, equity, and inclusion journey are defined within four highly interrelated Strategic Initiatives, all with strong alignment to the overall organizational goals of *Pursuing Our Potential Together*. Starting from our vision, mission, and values, these four initiatives were determined as a comprehensive frame through which we could view the progress we need to achieve inside and outside of our organization.

For each of the following DEI Strategic Initiatives, there is a description that connects it to the needed progress that has been identified. The objectives for each DEI Strategic Initiative provide a high-level direction of our journey, while subsequent operational plans will detail goals, strategies, and actions to work toward these objectives. This plan accounts for the variability of departmental needs to empower respective areas to be accountable for their own progress alongside organizational strategies.

People

Focus Areas

- Talent Acquisition
- Talent Development & Retention
- Inclusion & Belonging
- Data & Knowledge

Cultural Competence

Focus Areas

- Capabilities
- Environment & Infrastructure

Equity & Health Excellence

Focus Areas

- Health Care & Equity
- Safe & Supported Families
- Employee Equity

Community & Neighbors

Focus Areas

- Community Outreach & Partnerships
- Community Giving
- Supplier Diversity
- Multicultural Communication & Engagement

Our DEI Strategic Initiatives



People

Any success we achieve, as an organization, begins with our people. We will focus on cultivating, retaining and bringing in diverse talent, while also continuing to foster a welcoming environment where our existing employees and leaders can reach their full potential.

The Focus Areas for this initiative are: **Talent Acquisition, Talent Development & Retention, Inclusion & Belonging,** and **Data & Knowledge.**



Our DEI Strategic Initiatives



Cultural Competence

Helping all children achieve their potential requires that we learn and maintain the necessary skills to effectively interact and connect with people of all backgrounds. We will accomplish this by developing our employees' capabilities and by embedding cultural competence into our systems and environments.

The Focus Areas for this initiative are: **Capabilities** and **Environment & Infrastructure**.



Our DEI Strategic Initiatives

Equity & Health Excellence



We will create equitable outcomes that account for individual and population needs, whether those individuals/populations are our own employees or the patients, families, and communities we serve. We must work to understand these needs, potential barriers and assets so that we can co-create solutions.

The Focus Areas for this initiative are: **Health Care & Equity, Safe & Supported Families,** and **Employee Equity.**



Our DEI Strategic Initiatives



Community & Neighbors

We strive to make Cincinnati's kids the healthiest in the nation while also recognizing that our community is our workforce. It is essential that we work alongside and as part of the community, partnering to advance the health, vitality and well-being of our region.

The Focus Areas for this initiative are: **Community Outreach & Partnerships**, **Community Giving**, **Supplier Diversity**, and **Multicultural Communication & Engagement**.



Getting Started

The goals and strategies in each of the DEI Strategic Initiatives will be fully developed and implemented over a five-year period, beginning in FY21. The alignment with *Pursuing Our Potential Together* pillars and strategies will support continued advancement beyond the initial five-year planning period toward our 150th birthday.

FY21 is the foundational year, focused on approval of the strategic plan, baseline diversity and inclusion training for all employees, planning and launching assessments and reviews, gathering data, and establishing metrics. While goals and strategies will be further defined and translated into project plans, the following actions will mark the beginning of intentional movement for a stronger culture of inclusion and equity, and will be further advanced in FY22:

				
Develop search committees and recruitment training/ guidelines to improve consistency in hiring practices	●			
Assess the impact of inclusion and belonging by including questions/ statements in institutional employee surveys as an “inclusion index”	●			
Define enterprise diversity and inclusion scorecard, dashboard, and KPIs	●			
FY21 progress on leadership representation of diverse leaders	●			
Better Together foundational online training for diversity and inclusion	●	●		
Definition and launch of an enterprise Diversity Council	●	●		
Conduct a comprehensive assessment of workforce policies and practices to identify and address any systemic barriers to equity and inclusion		●	●	
Reduce health equity gaps through transformed health systems, effective community solutions and activated families		●	●	
Support CPS efforts to assure a healthy return to learning			●	●
Convene a leadership table of external partners and improve internal coordination of community-facing efforts (IC3)			●	●
Create a multicultural marketing and communication plan				●
Development of a supplier diversity strategic plan				●

Measuring Our Progress

Stating a commitment to DEI is the relatively easy part, while putting these initiatives into practice requires vigilance, intention, and accountability. Indeed, improvement and outcomes are central to the vision of Cincinnati Children's, and underlying both is the necessity for strong measurement and data-informed decisions. Our history of scientific rigor, practicing evidence-based medicine, and using data to drive quality improvement inform the Measurement Principles that will guide the tracking of our DEI progress.

There are two starting points that are essential for our measurement. One is that data transparency will be a catalyst for our success. Openly sharing quantitative and qualitative measurements of success will give us the confidence to keep forging ahead on our DEI journey. Visibility of aggregated data that respects individuals' privacy will provide key stakeholders the information they need to work across sites of care and roles, and with community partners, to create plans to achieve our goals.

The second starting point will be moving forward with data we have while simultaneously investing to make our data systems better. We are and will continue to invest resources in improving our data infrastructure to provide the level of accuracy and trust within the data systems to achieve our aspirational goals. At the same time, we will vet the data/systems we currently use in order to set initial goals and work in partnership to address the relevant gaps that our employees, patients, families, and community highlight, being mindful of and transparent with our current data limitations.

Our initial measures are based on our Measurement Principles and evidence-based guidelines and have been validated through a robust process that included leaders across levels, front-line staff, shared-services teams, patients/families, and community members. We believe achieving these initial measures will put us on a path of success, encourage new engagement and ideas for innovation between staff and patients, and set the foundation for our future best-in-class culture—furthering our vision to be the best in improving child health.

Measuring Our Progress

Measurement Principles	
Quantifiable	measures give us the ability to identify opportunities, assign resources, and set goals toward closing cultural gaps as well as the ability to monitor improvement around shared and meaningful outcomes.
Culture Forward	measures are designed to inspire the adoption and sustainment of behaviors that lead to the culture we aspire to achieve.
Transparent	measures increase trust within an accountability framework and have methods and data sources that can be documented, audited, governed, and improved when necessary.
Validated	measures increase trust by being examined for accuracy before deployment through multiple checks including but not limited to review and approval by process owners and other stakeholders.
Evidence-based	describes measures that have been tested, researched, and/or validated with the best current evidence for their appropriate application in our context and may provide a way to benchmark our performance against similar institutions, when appropriate.
Impactful	designates strategically aligned, tangible, inclusive, and cross-cutting measures, which most if not all stakeholders across the enterprise can influence at some level.
Valuable	measures are those that can be reliably accessed and used, longitudinally studied over short or long periods of time, and can be disaggregated to evaluate trends of opportunity or improvement within subpopulations of interest.



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