**AGENCY LOGO**

**Inclusive Language Policy**

**PURPOSE:** *Organization name* is committed to an inclusive, fair-minded, and respectful work environment.  All staff, interns, and volunteers have an ongoing responsibility to learn about and avoid using discriminatory language because its use is potentially damaging to others. *Organization name* strongly encourages the use of inclusive language in all organizational communication, whether written or spoken. In our diverse workplace and community, inclusive language reflects a commitment of openness toward others and respect for their life experiences.

**OBJECTIVE:** *Organization name* seeks to create and maintain an organizational culture which values respectful treatment of other staff, our clients, and our community.  *Organization name* values and prioritizes equity and diversity and an affirming and supportive working environment.  We are committed to ongoing work necessary to ensure that the language we use represents these values at all times.

**DEFINITION:** Inclusive language avoids false assumptions or stereotypes about others and works to overcome barriers between individuals and among communities in such areas as gender, race, class, age, physical differences, ethnicity, religious beliefs, sexual orientation, marital status, and disability.

**GUIDELINES:**

* Use language that includes rather than excludes.
* Use language that acknowledges, accepts, and celebrates differences among all people.
* Use language that is welcoming to everyone.
* Know which populations within your audience have fewer advantages, are marginalized and/or are objects of bias.
* Be sure your messages do not exclude—or appear to exclude—any groups.
* Use language that affirms and supports the humanity of others, while acknowledging and celebrating differences and unique contributions.
* In most cases, person-first language is preferred. (Ex. A person with a disability). Some groups don’t prefer that (Ex. Trans person). Try to use language preferred by the group. Feel free to ask!
* There may not be universal consensus around terminology. (For instance, some indigenous American groups use the term Native American while others prefer American Indian or First Nation.) Learn how distinct groups in your state prefer to self-identify.  If you are unsure, just ask.
* Describe a person or group at the appropriate level of specificity. To avoid objectification, identify a group or an individual as a member of a group only when it is relevant to your message.
* Use adjectival forms (e.g., older adults) or nouns with descriptive phrases (e.g., individuals living in poverty) rather than labels (the elderly, the poor).
* Like our society, language is always evolving. Seek continual learning about the meaning of words and how groups self-identify.

**TRAINING:** The *Training Committee* will organize training for staff and interns at various times throughout the year.  These trainings may be in person or virtual.  Staff are also encouraged to suggest trainings to the *Training Committee* should they learn of trainings that are in line with the Inclusive Language Policy Objectives.

**QUESTIONS OR CONCERNS:** If you have questions about this Policy or concerns that this Policy is not being upheld, please contact your direct supervisor or the Executive Director of *Organization name*.

**REFERENCES AND ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:**

<https://www.moravian.edu/inclusive_language#:~:text=Inclusive%20language%20avoids%20false%20assumptions,%2C%20marital%20status%2C%20and%20disability>.

<https://policies.westernsydney.edu.au/document/view.current.php?id=234>

<https://nasaa-arts.org/nasaa_research/inclusive-language-guide/>

<https://www.linguisticsociety.org/resource/guidelines-inclusive-language>

<https://www.apa.org/about/apa/equity-diversity-inclusion/language-guidelines.pdf>

<https://consciousstyleguide.com/>

**Agreement:** By signing this Agreement, I acknowledge that I have been made aware of this Policy and *Organization name*’s continued commitment to diversity and inclusion for our staff, our clients, and our community.  I understand that the language I use is a reflection of *Organization name* and I will strive to use language that is respectful of my colleagues, my clients, and my community.

Printed Name                                                                                  Title

Signature                                                     Date