

The Dwelling Place 2020 Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Plan

August 5, 2020

In 2019, the Dwelling Place Board completed an 18-month leadership training program called Excellence in Governance. This program, sponsored by NeighborWorks, offered 15 community development corporations from across the United States with the opportunity to enhance governance practices by considering potential changes in Board behaviors and culture and by strengthening ways of doing business for long-term sustainability. One component of change prioritized by the Dwelling Place Board led to the appointment of a Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Committee charged with creating a formal organizational plan for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion. To give meaning to definitions for these terms in the plan, the Dwelling Place Board participated in two facilitated meetings and formally adopted definitions for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion. Following months of analysis using surveys, focus groups and demographic research, the Committee has prepared a draft plan for the Board to consider for adoption. With Board adoption of this plan, the DEI Committee will continue its work to create an Implementation/Work Plan around each of the objectives under the three goals in this plan.

Implementing this plan will require a considerable commitment of time and financial resources from Dwelling Place since it will drive our policies and practices for recruitment and retention of board and staff as well as policies and programs for residents, our primary customers. The plan will also require continuous monitoring to determine if goals and objectives are being achieved. For all of these reasons and because of the importance the Board has assigned to this effort, the DEI Committee is asking the Board to participate in a robust conversation regarding this plan at the August 5th Board meeting, leading up to adoption of this plan.

To assist in that process, the DEI Committee has prepared a few questions we would like to pose to the Board for your consideration, in addition to any others that Board members may have.

Potential Questions for the Board to Consider

1. What is the most important feature of this plan for you and why?
2. What opportunities/dilemmas do you see for Dwelling Place in adopting and implementing this plan?
3. Are there certain assumptions in this plan that need further testing?
4. What could happen that would enable you/us to feel fully engaged and energized about this plan?
5. What ideas/suggestions does the Board have for building a greater sense of inclusivity (belonging) between Board members in the midst of the COVID 19 pandemic?
6. Similarly, what ideas/suggestions could you offer for building a greater sense of inclusivity (belonging) for staff?
7. What recommendations would the Board have to ensure that every Board member has access to the resources and support they need (equity) to fully participate in the governance functions of the Board?
8. Does this plan go far enough in addressing racial disparities that exist in housing? If not, how would you recommend we strengthen the plan in this area?