

Diversity, Inclusion and Equity Statement

Diversity, inclusion and equity are values that Local First embraces in order to lead the development of an economy grounded in local ownership that meets the basic needs of all people, builds local wealth and social capital, functions in harmony with our ecosystem, and encourages joyful community. It is our belief that such an economy cannot be fully realized if people are excluded from full and fair participation as a result of racism, poverty, discrimination, cultural ignorance, bias or other conditions of exclusion.

These values also guide our commitment to becoming a local leader in advocating for locally owned businesses as a means to eliminate conditions of exclusion and promote ownership, community wealth and economic equity among all people regardless of their background. Therefore, we are intentional in practices that are inclusive of ethnic, racial, cultural, gender, age, religious, disability, family status, sexual orientation and socio-economic diversity in the areas of hiring, membership, board governance, volunteering, contracting and vending.

Diversity, inclusion and equity values will also guide our communications, events, forums and programs to ensure the authentic presence, participation and perspectives of all communities. In addition, Local First is committed to continuous improvement in promoting sustainable diversity, inclusion and equity practices through our board recruitment, Equal Opportunity Employment Policy and other future commitments.

Through our strategic planning work, E3 Equity, Environments of Inclusion and Engagement with Diverse Communities Training and other awareness activities, we hold ourselves to the learning and leadership that will make our values become reality.

Lastly, we look to these guiding definitions of diversity, inclusion and equity as inspiration and instruction in our work to make West Michigan nationally recognized for its quality of life, diverse entrepreneurial energy, beautiful environment, and unique local culture:

- **Diversity:** The wide range of national, ethnic, racial and other backgrounds of U.S. residents and immigrants as social groupings, co-existing in American culture. The term is often used to include aspects of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation and much more (*Institute for Democratic Renewal and Project Change Anti-Racism Initiative*).
- **Equity:** Equity is just and fair inclusion into a society in which all, including all racial and ethnic groups, can participate, prosper, and reach their full potential. Equity gives all people a just and fair shot in life despite historic patterns of racial and economic exclusion (Policy Link---*All in Nation: An America that works for all*).
- **Inclusion:** Inclusion authentically brings traditionally excluded individuals and/or groups into processes, activities, and decision/policy-making (Crossroads Charlotte Individual Initiative Scorecard for Organizations)