



# EMBRACE

Embracing Equity & Inclusion.  
Celebrating Differences.




# **Certified City of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion & Belonging (DEI&B) Certification Program**






In July 2020, GMA created its first Equity and Inclusion Commission to address DE&I issues and develop a long-term plan of action centered around policy change and ongoing training.

One of the recommendations was to create a city DE&I Certification program.



**The Certified City of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging** (Certified City of DEI&B) Certification Program recognizes cities that adopt policies and practices that promote diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging within their municipal government and community.



# Diversity



**Diversity** includes all the ways in which people differ. It encompasses all the different characteristics that make one individual or group different from another. It is all-inclusive and recognizes everyone and every group as part of the whole.

A broad definition includes not only race, ethnicity, and gender but also age, national origin, religion, disability, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, education, marital status, language, and physical appearance. It also involves different ideas, perspectives, and values.

# Equity

**Equity** is the guarantee of fair treatment, advancement, opportunity, and access for all individuals while striving to identify and eliminate barriers that have prevented the full participation of some groups and ensuring that all community members have access to community opportunities to reach their full potential and to experience optimal wellbeing and quality of life.



# Inclusion



**Inclusion** involves authentically bringing traditionally excluded individuals and/or groups into processes, activities, and decision/policymaking in a way that shares power.

# Belonging

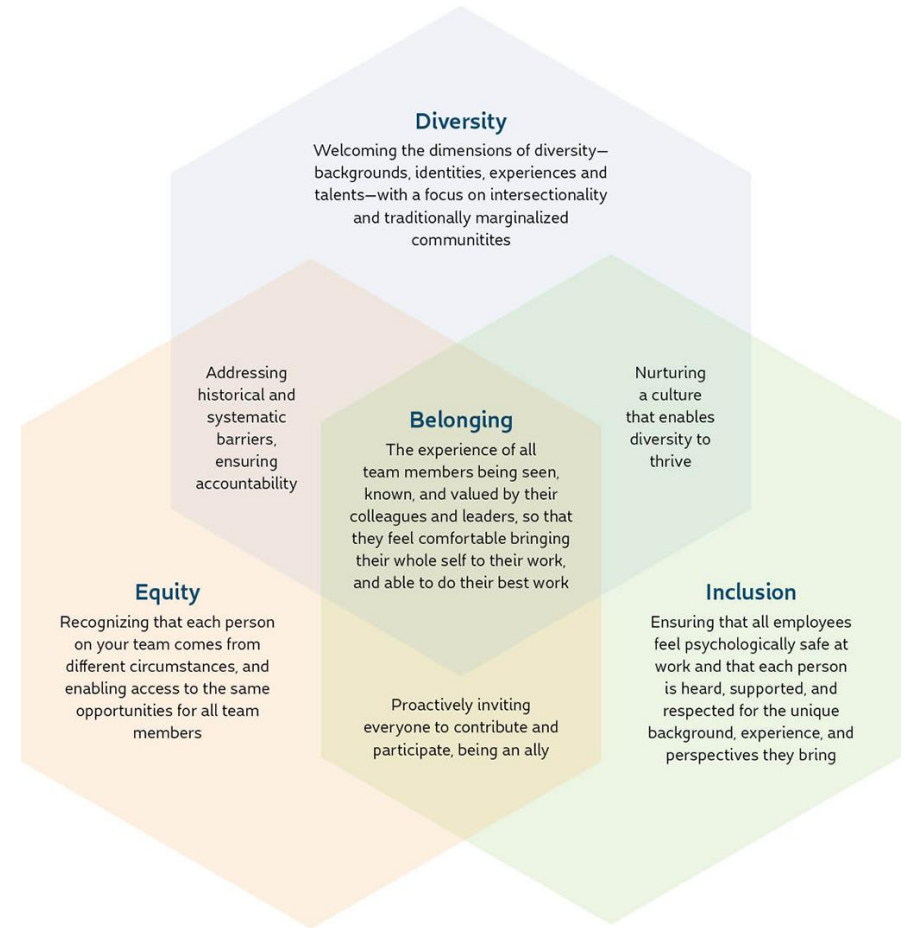
**Belonging** is where people are free to be themselves, where the environment allows them to bring their entire selves and best ideas to work or to the community.

For people to feel as though they belong, the atmosphere must be diverse and welcoming. Workplace diversity refers to the mix of diverse people in an organization, whereas workplace inclusion refers to whether people feel a sense of belonging, are heard, and have a safe environment to express themselves authentically.





*When present, diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging work together to ensure our organizations, our cities, and our communities thrive.*





## Categories for Certification:

- Workforce Housing
  - Education
  - Health & Wellbeing
  - Public Safety & Restorative Justice
  - Community & Economic Development
  - Municipal Workforce Development & Employment
  - Community Dialogue/Stakeholder Engagement (Required)
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## Four Tiers


Bronze: 2 categories

Silver: 3-4 categories

Gold: 5-6 categories

Platinum: 7 categories

*Community Dialogue &  
Stakeholder Engagement is  
required for all tiers.*



# Workforce Housing



Housing instability is a significant factor impacting economic mobility for many Americans. When sustainable housing is available to serve residents of all income levels and generations, opportunities for economic prosperity develop community wide. Local governments have a role to play by making good housing decisions that create positive outcomes for residents and communities.



# Education



Education is a key component of creating a diverse and equitable community, yet statistics point to alarming disparities and tell a story of mismatched needs. While cities in Georgia typically do not play a direct role in providing education, city leaders can play a vital partnership role by exerting meaningful influence and recommending policies that improve student outcomes, strengthen schools, and ensure that their cities actively address education challenges.



# Health and Wellbeing



Health disparities in Georgia communities lead to excess medical costs, lost productivity and a lower quality of life. While cities are not direct providers of health care, municipal leaders play an important role in understanding the needs of all members of the community and advancing policies and initiatives that address issues of inequity in residents' physical and mental health.



# Public Safety and Restorative Justice



Local government leaders face disruptive public safety challenges every day. More transparency and accountability in public safety directly impacts the community-public safety relationship and can help mitigate criminal activity and reduce recidivism. Equity, inclusion, and diversity are essential to ensuring protections and resolving justice for all are achieved and are required for productive public safety agencies and communities.



# Community and Economic Development



For families and communities to thrive, it is vital to address the differing needs of community members and ensure they have access to both employment opportunities that pay a living wage and the support services needed to effectively address barriers to employment and entrepreneurship.





# Workforce Development and Employment



Employers across the country must identify steps to center the principles of equity, diversity, and inclusiveness in their businesses and organizations. Across the state, employers including city governments are struggling to attract and retain skilled workers. For cities, this presents a significant challenge in providing high-quality services and completing critical infrastructure projects. Local leaders have a responsibility to face this challenge by establishing standards and policies to recruit, hire, and retain workers who not only fill a slot, but are the best fit for the city.



# Community Dialogue and Stakeholder Engagement



Civic engagement is essential to the democratic process, yet recent research indicates civic engagement in Georgia has declined in recent years. According to the 2019 Family Connection Partnership's Georgia Civic Health Index, civic health is linked to economic resilience; workforce development; youth development and public health outcomes; access to opportunity; community vitality; lower violent crime rates and youth delinquency; and reduced mortality. Local leaders have a duty to recognize that work responsibilities, childcare needs, disabilities, language barriers, criminal history, and health issues are among the barriers that can prevent equitable access to the democratic process.



# The Certification Process

- Before applying for certification, cities will be required to meet certain pre-application thresholds.
  - Adopt a DEI&B Resolution – *Sample resolutions will be provided.*
  - A majority of City Council members must participate in DE&I Training.
  - Application fee: \$199
- A city must apply for certification in at least two categories to receive initial certification, with Community Dialogue/Stakeholder Engagement being one of those initial categories.
- External Subject Matter Experts (SME) will review the applications and make the final recommendation to GMA's internal staff for a final reviews.

## Program Resource Guide

The Resource Guide includes the categories for certification, their measures (described with requirements listed), and compiled resources and examples for each.

It is intended to guide you through the certification process.



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### CERTIFIED CITY OF DIVERSITY, EQUITY, INCLUSION, & BELONGING *RESOURCE GUIDE*



# The Certification Process

- Once certified, the city will maintain certification for three years if it meets the following requirements:
  - A city must adopt a resolution every year affirming its commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging.
  - Additionally, a city must hold at least two community stakeholder meetings each year to listen, help identify barriers to engagement, seek input, and develop solutions.
- At the end of the initial three-year certification period, the city will need to apply for recertification. To be recertified, the city must demonstrate that it continues to work towards equity and inclusion in the categories in which it is certified. The city can also add-on additional certification categories.
  - Re-certification fee: \$99

# FAQ

## **We've already done some of the work outlined in the measures in the past; how long ago can be applicable?**

Training held within 3 years of the time applying can be applicable to fulfill a training requirement. Master plans, strategic plans, etc., adopted up to 5 years prior to time applying can be used to fulfill plan requirements in a measure.

## **Can we seek external support from third party contractors to fulfill certification requirements?**

Yes, you can seek external support to fulfill certification requirements, such as development plans, reports and assessments, consulting services, trainings, partnering for services. However, third-party contractors cannot replace city officials where actions are specified in the measures.

The Certified City of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion & Belonging (DEI&B) will launch at the 2023 Cities United Summit. The application portal will become available on or about February 1<sup>st</sup>.

Attend:

- Cities United Session: *Information Session on new programs offered through GMA* on Sunday, January 22<sup>nd</sup> at 4:15pm to learn more.



# Thank You!

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**Learn more at:**

[www.gacities.com/cityofdeib](http://www.gacities.com/cityofdeib)



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