Vision: The Office of Diversity and Inclusion envisions a diverse, inclusive workplace where everyone is engaged, valued, and treated fairly.

Diversity: represents the uniqueness of individuals, groups and communities that make up Hennepin County. It incorporates but is not limited to: race, gender, age, national origin, ethnicity, sexual orientation, disabilities, socio-economic status, educational background, geographic location, human attributes, values, beliefs, behaviors, norms, culture, and experiences. [Hennepin County Diversity Policy]

Inclusion: is understood as how people experience being connected, engaged, valued and included in the county workforce. Inclusion begins with a core belief that everyone deserves dignity and respect. Visit the D&R Campaign website for tips and information on promoting positive change.

Cognitive diversity: or diversity of thought, is about the unique set of tools that people bring to solving problems. How you make sense of the world and engage with difference is impacted by your cultural background and experiences. Diversity of thought directly correlates with cultural / identity diversity – “diversity in race, gender, ethnicity, physical ability, religion, sexual orientation and so on correlate with cognitive diversity.” (Page, S. E., 2007).

Diversity of thought means that each of us has different:

- Possible solutions to problems
- Ways to intuitively group or categorize events, outcomes and situations
- Tools to solve problems
- Views of how things are related

A cognitively diverse workforce makes an organization more effective because there are more possible views, approaches and solutions to challenges. In effect, there are more possibilities.

**Equality**: All people have the same access to legal, civil and social opportunities.

**Equity**: Equity brings fairness and inclusion into the picture; it doesn’t mean that everyone gets exactly the same access. Equity acknowledges that each person’s ability to access resources, combined with civil, social, educational, health, income and employment disparities, can create barriers to success and directly correlate to a person’s quality of life.

**Racial Equity**: Racial equity acknowledges past policies, practices and strategic investments that have created barriers to success based on race AND through current development of policies, practices, and strategic investments aims to eliminate racial disparity trends, to mitigate institutional bias in hiring and promotional practices, and to ensure that outcomes and opportunities for all people are no longer predictable by race.

---

**The Difference Between 'Equity' and 'Equality'**

Equality means everyone gets exactly the same access to the same resources - two shoes - without regard to individual differences - large or small feet, for example. Equity considers individual needs so that everyone gets the shoes that fit their needs.

*This image was adapted by OEHR from the original graphic:*