

DEFINING DIVERSITY, INCLUSION AND EQUITY

CALIFORNIA TOMORROW developed working definitions and guiding questions about key terms at the heart of the LBE initiative and introduced them as starting points for discussion within the LBE process. These definitions and questions also serve as the conceptual basis for this publication. Engaging with these definitions and questions was part of the LBE process. Mindful of the natural tension and confusion inherent in defining and working with diversity-related concepts in collective endeavors, California Tomorrow encouraged the community foundations to clarify and build consensus around their own understandings as part of their LBE work.

DIVERSITY—Diversity refers to a wide range of differences among people in our society. These dimensions include race, culture, language, class, age, gender, sexual orientation, and physical ability/disability.

- *What does increased diversity mean for an organization relative to its core mission, values, or strategic objectives?*
- *Is diversity viewed as an asset—to individual staff members personally, to the organization, to the community, and to the institutions charged with serving it? Or is diversity seen primarily as a problem or challenge? Or both?*
- *How can organizations build capacity to respond effectively to increased diversity?*

INCLUSION—Inclusion is the state of being fully accessible, reflective, and representative of the diversity in a community and in society.

- *What does it take to create a welcoming organizational environment where people of all ethnic, racial, class, gender, or sexual backgrounds are respected, valued, and engaged?*
- *How can organizations go beyond simply seeking a diverse mix of staff, trustees, or community partners to actively incorporating the multiple voices and perspectives this diversity offers?*

EQUITY—Equity means each person or group has equal access to economic, social, and educational opportunity. For members of groups that have been excluded from resources, equity may involve providing greater resources to compensate for past exclusion and discrimination.

- *Is an organization interested in and committed to becoming more equitable (or “just and fair”, from Merriam Webster Dictionary’s definition) in its internal organizational practices?*
- *Is the organization interested in addressing inequities that currently exist among groups in communities and society? If so, what aspects of inequality is the organization most interested in addressing—for example, those based on race and ethnicity or those based on culture, class, gender, sexual orientation?*

