

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Statement of Commitment

Diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) are at the heart of Spring Institute's mission of "**Building a thriving intercultural community through learning, language access, and advocacy.**" Spring Institute envisions a world in which all communities embrace the integration of newcomers and are enriched by the cultural diversity of their entire population.

Dedication to diversity means that Spring Institute strives to both serve a community composed of individuals with different national origins, languages, ethnicities, races, skin colors, cultures, age groups, religions, socio-economic backgrounds, gender identities, and sexual orientations; as well as to recruit and retain staff that reflect the diversity of the community being served. Spring Institute works to achieve inclusion by respecting, supporting, and valuing all members of its staff, board, and community served and actively including them in decision making. Spring Institute strives to achieve equity by implementing its programming, procedures, and operations with fairness and in a manner that seeks to recognize and rectify underlying inequalities and barriers faced by individuals and communities.

Spring Institute's commitment to DEI is reflected in its core values, its programming and advocacy, its staff and board recruitment, its practice of lifelong learning, and its strategic plan.

Core Values:

- Learning is a life-long process and an opportunity for re-invention, growth, transformation, change, and advancement.
- Inclusion is based on the acknowledgment, recognition and affirmation of each person's cultural diversity, capacity, talents and potential. We consistently foster inclusion among all colleagues, clients, and participants.
- Quality is at the heart of everything we do. We hold ourselves and others accountable for measurable, high-quality, timely and cost-effective outcomes.
- Responsiveness is listening to the community we serve and meeting their needs through our programs, services, and advocacy.
- Collaboration is an essential element in how we deliver our programs, services, and advocacy: in close consultation and partnership with other stakeholders.

Programming and Advocacy:

Both Spring Institute's program and advocacy efforts are informed and designed with full engagement of the newcomer community of immigrants and refugees they are designed to serve. Feedback is received through both advisory boards and through regular feedback built into programming to ensure it is meeting needs. For instance, Spring Institute's policy priorities are informed by a community Policy Advisory Committee, composed of 5-10 individuals from various linguistic and cultural backgrounds, who meet quarterly to discuss issues that impact

them, to advise the organization on priority issues, and identify upcoming advocacy opportunities. Youth programming is guided by a youth advisory board that meets monthly to identify specific activities and discuss barriers and challenges they are facing, to influence programming. We work to enhance inclusion through language accessibility by delivering key programs in the preferred languages of participants whenever possible and/or engaging interpretation and translation services.

Staff and Board Recruitment:

In order to provide effective programming that reflects the needs of the community served, Spring Institute believes it is important for both staff and board members to reflect the community served at all levels. Because many immigrants and refugees come to the United States seeking economic advancement for themselves and their families, it can be difficult to recruit individuals with immigration backgrounds to the relatively low-paying nonprofit sector, particularly for volunteer positions and for senior positions that require strong language and administrative skills. To counter this barrier in recruiting and hiring, Spring Institute employs a multifaceted strategy that includes advertising positions in places where diverse populations will see them, posting position descriptions that focus on skills needed rather than credentials that may be difficult for the immigrant population to obtain, applying for funding to mentor and train staff who may have skills but need particular expertise, and utilizing programs that can be delivered in languages other than English. Community advisory boards also serve as recruitment pools for board membership.

Lifelong Learning:

Spring Institute strongly supports ongoing professional development and learning opportunities for all staff. Spring Institute organizes training annually for all staff on topics such as intercultural communications, serving LGBTQI populations, and motivational interviewing. It also encourages all staff to identify and complete personal professional development opportunities as part of their regular work and performance reviews.

Strategic Plan:

Spring Institute adopted a new strategic plan in September 2023 through a process that included the involvement of all staff and board members. The senior staff develop metrics annually to track whether the organization is meeting its strategic planning priorities, which reflect its dedication to DEI values. The plan includes:

Strategic Vision, 2023-2027:

By 2027, Spring Institute will maintain a strong organizational foundation to support the building of a welcoming community by and for refugees and immigrants in Colorado and the surrounding region.

Community Action Areas

With Spring Institute's leadership, programs and services, our intercultural community will:

- Guide the development of accessible, flexible programs and services that meet their most pressing needs;
- Influence advocacy efforts and the direction of policies impacting the immigrant and refugee community; and
- Assume leadership roles through expanded opportunities with Spring Institute and other community-based entities.

Community Impact Areas

Spring Institute's Programs, Services and Advocacy efforts will:

- Provide intergenerational opportunities, training, and resources to help immigrants and refugees achieve their personal, educational, and employment goals;
- Advance policies that improve language access, educational access, workforce access, and healthcare access; and
- Provide high-quality interpretation and translation services that improve the ability of the welcoming community to better serve immigrants and refugees.

Priority 1: Community

Spring Institute maintains its connection to the community served through expanded efforts at intentional engagement.

- Objective 1.1: Increase program/advocacy engagement and accessibility by addressing barriers to participation including language access, timing, location and format.
- Objective 1.2: Develop a system and process for understanding programmatic impact on individuals, refugee/immigrant communities, and welcoming communities.
- Objective 1.3: Establish a centralized process for communication and feedback loop with participants and community members.

Priority 2: Program Delivery and Impact

Spring Institute develops and delivers accessible, relevant, high-impact programming.

- Objective 2.1: Ensure all programs are meeting individual and community impact goals/measures.
- Objective 2.2: Continue to advance intercultural advocacy efforts that increase inclusion and integration through access to resources (i.e. language access, education, mental health, etc.) for immigrant and refugee communities.
- Objective 2.3: Continue to cultivate relevant programmatic/service partnerships to ensure participants have access to comprehensive, vetted services.

Priority 3: Organizational Culture

Spring institute strengthens its organizational approach to fundraising, support for staff, and internal processes.

- Objective 3.1: Recruit and retain talented staff through a manageable staffing structure and sustained supports and benefits (mental health support, professional development, compensation, etc.).
- Objective 3.2: Expand diversity, equity and inclusion efforts across the organization and prioritize diverse recruitment from the community served for inclusion in organizational leadership, including board and senior management positions.
- Objective 3.3: Clarify organizational criteria to evaluate potential funding opportunities for alignment with community needs, Spring Institute’s unique value proposition (UVP), and the potential return on investment of the opportunity.
- Objective 3.4: Increase cross-program communication and understanding in order to cultivate staff collaboration and strengthen participant experience through intra-agency referrals.