

## PRINCIPLES

Principles are more fundamental than institutional policies and objectives. They inform policies, procedures, and objectives; they help us determine strategic goals, objectives, and actions. Our principles and actions are underpinned by respect for the dignity, rights, humanity and full participation of those who work at Hilltop Community Resources, Inc., or access our program services. Hilltop's EDI Strategic Plan is guided by the following principles:

Diversity = Difference and Variety

Equity = Access and Opportunity

Inclusion = Belonging and Acceptance

Humanity = Kindness, Compassion, and Empathy

Intersectionality = Areas of social diversity do not exist separately or in isolation from each other

Accessibility = Full and Meaningful Engagement

### *DIVERSITY*

For Hilltop diversity refers to difference or variety. In a broad societal EDI context, diversity refers to demographic or identity diversity, including that based on federal and state legal protections. Within Hilltop, diversity encompasses these, as well as difference or variety in perspectives, opinions, life experiences, language, skills, and learning opportunities. Hilltop supports and encourages diversity through the identification and removal of barriers and biases, and the creation of workplaces and learning environments that are free of harassment and discrimination. Hilltop also welcomes and strives to facilitate an environment and mindset that diversity brings growth, creativity, and innovation.

### *EQUITY*

For Hilltop equity is about fairness in access and opportunity to succeed. Employment equity principles, policies, and practices enable equitable access, representation, opportunities, and meaningful participation of socially diverse people—from the federally designated to other equity-seeking groups such as women, members of racial & minority groups, persons with disabilities, LGBTQ+ people, and people in lower socio-economic groups. We recognize that policies, practices, informal processes, and language created by and for particular groups of people, with a default norm in mind, produce structural barriers that limit access and inclusion for other individuals and groups. Holding equity as a guiding principle means that Hilltop will respect and value the differences of our employees and people served by our programs by actively identifying and removing barriers, including structural barriers, policies, and procedures to ensure that historically excluded groups have the same opportunity to flourish. Equity at Hilltop also means that an active approach will be taken to implement policies, procedures, structure, and a compensation philosophy that ensures fairness in access to opportunities to professional and personal success.

## *INCLUSION*

For Hilltop inclusion means that we value and cultivate an environment of belonging and acceptance. We actively seek full and meaningful engagement of historically and structurally excluded individuals and groups. At Hilltop, inclusion is about enabling all individuals, both employed or seeking program services, to enjoy the opportunities Hilltop has to offer, and to have all equityseeking groups meaningfully represented and accommodated through language, physical access, hiring and promotional opportunities, leadership, and platforms to contribute to the decision-making process. It is vital that employees and those seeking program services are able to come as their true, unique selves and find acceptance.

## *HUMANITY*

Hilltop believes in kindness, compassion, empathy, and humanity. We stand against systems, institutions, beliefs, and structures that de-humanize people. We recognize that the de-humanization of individuals and/or groups of people has led to, and will lead to, oppression, discrimination, prejudice, and hate. Every person, by virtue of being human, is entitled to certain fundamental rights regardless of race, color, ancestry, place of origin, religious beliefs, gender, gender identity and gender expression, physical disability, mental disability, marital status, family status, sexual orientation, age, socio-economic status, etc. Each person is entitled to a life of dignity, equality, well-being, and respect, free from discrimination, harassment, and bullying. Hilltop's commitment to humanity is reflected in its policies and practices, as well as the supports it makes available to the members of its community.

## *INTERSECTIONALITY*

An intersectional approach to equity, diversity, and inclusivity at Hilltop begins from the understanding that the different groups of social diversity, (race, class, gender, sexuality, disability, nationality, religion, language, age, etc.) do not exist separately or in isolation from each other. Instead, the various groups of social diversity are interwoven and affect each other. Intersectionality focuses on how multiple, interwoven sections of society shape social belonging, cultural representations, social and political institutions, as well as the material conditions of our lives in ways that are not reducible to any singular group or social category. We understand that everyone's life is shaped by intersecting social categories. Intersecting social categories play a role in exclusion and shape social, political, and material marginalization and dominance. Experiences and systems of persistent social inequality cannot be understood without an intersectional framework.

## *ACCESSIBILITY*

Accessibility refers to the degree to which physical and administrative structures at Hilltop are (re)designed to enable the full, meaningful, and equitable engagement of all employees and people accessing our program services. Accessibility includes, but is much broader than, ramped access to buildings. It also includes, for example, designing for physical, financial, sensory, social, gender expression, and language-level access. Whereas accommodation refers to making specific changes to support the full participation of an individual who has encountered barriers, an accessible campus is one that seeks pro-actively to reduce as many barriers as possible, while creating efficient and transparent processes for individuals to gain the accommodations they require and are entitled to by law.