

City of Atlanta

# Inclusive Language Guide 2.0



MAYOR'S OFFICE OF  
**Equity, Diversity  
and Inclusion**

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## About this guide

**The Mayor's Office of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (MOEDI)** welcomes you to use this Inclusive Language Guide as a resource developed to promote understanding, foster conversations around language, and create more inclusive and equitable spaces.

This guide covers a wide range of topics, including but not limited to race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, disability, and health equity. It is continually updated to reflect evolving terminology, emerging frameworks, and best practices.

Recognizing the vital importance of equity, diversity, and inclusion, this guide provides clear and concise definitions of key terms, and concepts intended to normalize inclusive language. At the City of Atlanta, we seek to avoid using words, expressions or assumptions that would stereotype, demean, or exclude people from differing identities and backgrounds.

The Mayor's Office of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion works to identify and develop systems and behavioral change solutions that advance equitable outcomes to continue Moving Atlanta Forward. We value your input and feedback as we strive to create more equitable and inclusive spaces across the City of Atlanta. Please send questions, comments, suggestions, or other items to [MOEDI@atlantaga.gov](mailto:MOEDI@atlantaga.gov).



ANDRE DICKENS  
MAYOR



## CITY OF ATLANTA

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Greetings:

As the 61<sup>st</sup> Mayor of Atlanta, I am thrilled to highlight a pivotal initiative that has helped shape our city's commitment to equity and inclusivity in all sectors. In September 2023, I signed the Inclusive Language and Action Policy, setting the stage for significant progress in how we communicate and engage with each other.

Building on this foundation, the Mayor's Office of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (MOEDI) has taken further steps this year by convening the Inclusive Language Guide Working Group, a cohort dedicated to enhancing and expanding our Inclusive Language Guide. This updated guide is a crucial resource that reinforces our commitment to fostering an environment of respect and understanding.

Our updated Inclusive Language Guide is more than a set of recommendations; it embodies our collective effort to promote language that unites rather than divides. This guide was designed to help us navigate our interactions with greater sensitivity and awareness, creating an environment where everyone feels valued, regardless of their background or identity. It serves as a beacon, guiding us toward a future where inclusivity is at the heart of all our communications.

I encourage all members of our community to embrace this guide as a fundamental tool for everyday interactions. Together, we can continue building a city where every voice is heard, every story is honored, and every person feels a deep sense of belonging.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Andre Dickens". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Mayor Andre Dickens



## MAYOR'S OFFICE OF Equity, Diversity and Inclusion

Dear City of Atlanta Team:

It is with extreme pride that I celebrate the release of the Mayor's Office of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion's Inclusive Language Guide 2.0!

In September of 2023, under the leadership of Mayor Dickens, MOEDI hosted our first Equity in Action Month. The Mayor signed the Inclusive Language Policy and Action Administrative Order, showcasing our recommitment to implementing equity across each department and operationalizing our efforts systemically to improve the lives of Atlantans. Our team has learned so much since then, and we have such gratitude for so many of you who continue to support our work. Whether attending our office's learning events, sharing opportunities for us to partner with your team, or joining our Equity Ambassador community, your support has been critical to our success. This year of learning also led to this relaunch!

The Inclusive Language Guide 2.0 is a labor of love, and is filled with helpful information and tools to help advance your EDI learning and practice! I often share that the leaders who seek to center equity, diversity and inclusion are practitioners because we recognize the opportunity to continuously grow and evolve in our work. I truly hope this guide becomes a foundational tool you come back to throughout your journey.

Inclusive language allows us to ensure every person we serve, engage, work & partner with can understand who we are & what we value. It also means people experience our commitment to creating and maintaining inclusive spaces and communities.

I implore you to use this guide to call people into community. Share what you're learning with grace and empathy. We are all on a learning journey, and must remember we arrive at this season together from several different paths and perspectives. And remember, The Inclusive Language Guide 2.0 is just that — a guide. It is not perfect. There is room for discussion and evolution. And our office always encourages a people-first perspective, which means ascribing to language the person you are engaged with has asked you to utilize while in relationship with them.

So go forth, with an orientation towards curiosity and competence, a willingness to ask questions, and the knowledge that my office is here if we may be of service.

We are all in the work of equity, diversity and inclusion together!

In joy and justice,

Candace M. Staniel

# 2024 Inclusive Language Guide Working Group

To enhance and expand this guide, the Mayor's Office of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (MOEDI) assembled a cohort of City of Atlanta personnel from various departments, along with external experts, to form the Inclusive Language Guide Working Group. This team collaborated closely with MOEDI to comprehensively revise the City's Inclusive Language Guide, incorporating an intersectional perspective into our approach to inclusive language. With deep appreciation and gratitude, we thank every member of this working group for their expertise, thoughtfulness, and commitment to making this guide more inclusive and comprehensive.

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# Mission Statement

The **Mayor's Office of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (MOEDI)** works to identify and develop systems and behavioral change solutions that advance equitable outcomes to continue Moving Atlanta Forward.

## Acknowledgments

The Mayor's Office of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion, would like to extend gratitude to the dedicated, leaders, teams, and departments listed for their contributions to the Inclusive Language Guide. Your commitment to this work is a testament to the City's collective dedication to Move Atlanta Forward.

**Andre Dickens** (he/him)  
61st Mayor of Atlanta

**Odie Donald, II** (he/him)  
Chief of Staff

**Theo Pace** (he/him)  
Deputy Chief of Staff

**Mayor's Office of Communications**

# EQUITY, DIVERSITY, and INCLUSION

*The equity, diversity, and inclusion section aims to encompass a broad spectrum of EDI terms that reflect the varied ways we experience social identities, both individually and systemically. These terms are essential for understanding and addressing the complexities of societal structures.*

- Ableism** Prejudicial thoughts and discriminatory actions based on differences in physical, mental, and/or emotional ability; usually those individuals without apparent physical or mental changes taken against people with illnesses, disabilities, or less developed skills/talents.<sup>1</sup>
- Ageism** Stereotyping and discrimination against individuals or groups on the basis of their age. Ageism can take many forms, including prejudicial attitudes, discriminatory practices, or institutional policies and systems that perpetuate stereotypical beliefs.<sup>2</sup>
- Ally** A person who recognizes and acknowledges their unearned privileges and actively takes responsibility for changing society's patterns of injustice. Allies work with and for others to end oppression and promote equality. Being an ally often requires stepping out of one's comfort zone. An ally understands their power and privilege and uses it to act for justice.<sup>3</sup>
- Health ally:** Someone who is actively supportive of those engaged in the healthcare system and focused on ensuring equitable access, inclusive services and health experiences that ensure people have the support and care needed.<sup>4</sup>
- LGBTQ+ ally:** Someone who is actively supportive of LGBTQ+ people. It encompasses straight and cisgender "allies," as well as those within the LGBTQ+ community who support each other.<sup>5</sup>
- Antisemitism** Prejudice against or hatred towards Jewish people.<sup>6</sup>
- Asset framing** A focus or effort to define people by their aspirations and contributions before exploring their deficits, as opposed to defining people by their problems or challenges. Asset framing prioritizes people-first language. Be specific about who and what you mean; avoid stigmatizing language.<sup>7</sup>
- Belonging** The feeling of being in the 'right place' – feeling an affinity, welcome, respect, a sense of home, safety, or comfort resulting from our location – in a certain place, organization, or with a group of people.<sup>8</sup>



# EQUITY, DIVERSITY and INCLUSION CONTINUED

## **Bias**

A prejudice in favor of or against a person or community. Biases foster negative attitudes against individuals and groups who come from marginalized communities.<sup>9</sup>

**Explicit/Conscious bias:** Overt prejudice that can be expressed through physical and verbal harassment or more subtle means such as exclusion.<sup>10</sup>

**Implicit/Unconscious bias:** Unintentional, automatic prejudice or unsupported judgments in favor of or against one thing, person, or group as compared to another, in a way that is harmful where the individual may be unaware of their prejudice.<sup>11</sup>

## **Bigotry**

Intolerance and prejudice that glorifies one's own group and denigrates other groups and their members.<sup>12</sup>

## **Colonialism/ Colonizing**

The invasion, dispossession, and subjugation of a people that results in long-term institutionalized inequity in which the colonizer benefits at the expense of the colonized.<sup>13</sup>

**Decolonialize:** A set of practices and beliefs that seek to undo the damaging impacts of colonialism.<sup>14</sup>

## **Culture**

A social system of meaning and customs that are developed by a group of people to assure its adaptation and survival. These groups are distinguished by a set of unspoken rules that shape values, beliefs, habits, patterns of thinking, behaviors, and styles of communication.<sup>15</sup>

**Cultural appropriation:** Theft of cultural elements for one's own use, commodification, or profit — including symbols, art, language, customs, etc. — often without understanding, acknowledgment, or respect for its value in the original culture.<sup>16</sup>

**Cultural competence:** The integration and transformation of knowledge about different cultures into specific standards, policies, and practices to increase the quality of services to produce better outcomes in various industries such as education, professional, and healthcare, etc.<sup>17</sup>

**Cultural humility:** An attitude of openness and willingness to learn from others while recognizing and respecting the complexity, diversity, and fluidity of different cultures while also acknowledging our own limited knowledge of other's lived experiences. This develops a humble and respectful approach to engaging with individuals from diverse backgrounds.<sup>18</sup>

# EQUITY, DIVERSITY and INCLUSION CONTINUED

**Cultural relativism:** The principle of regarding the beliefs, values, and practices of a culture from the viewpoint of that culture itself. It emphasizes that no culture is superior or inferior to others.<sup>19</sup>

**Cultural responsiveness:** Understanding and responding appropriately to the different aspects of culture and diversity that an individual brings to interactions. It requires valuing diversity, desiring to increase knowledge about other cultures, and striving to create spaces where diversity is integrated.<sup>20</sup>

**Cultural sensitivity:** Individual attitudes or behaviors that demonstrate awareness and respect toward the cultural differences that are apparent among people.<sup>21</sup>

## **Discrimination**

The unfair or prejudicial treatment of people and groups based on characteristics such as race, gender, age, sexual orientation, or disability.<sup>22</sup>

## **Disparity**

A difference in level or treatment, especially one that is seen as unfair. Disparities are often able to be proven numerically through data.<sup>23</sup>

## **Diversity**

All the ways in which people differ, and it encompasses all the different characteristics that make one individual or group different from another. 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.<sup>24</sup>

## **Dominant culture**

The cultural values, beliefs, practices, language, and traditions that are assumed to be the most common, accepted, and influential within a given society.<sup>25</sup>

## **Equality**

The state of being equal in status, rights, and opportunities. Equality strives to ensure that everyone has the same resources and opportunities, but it does not solve for people's unique needs and circumstances.<sup>26</sup>

## **Equity**

The state where predictability of success or failure is not correlated with identity or cultural markers such as race, gender, and sexual orientation. Equity strives to identify and eliminate barriers that have prevented the full participation of some groups, increase justice and fairness within the procedures and processes of institutions or systems, as well as in their distribution of resources.<sup>27</sup>



# EQUITY, DIVERSITY and INCLUSION CONTINUED

<b>Global citizen</b>	The umbrella term for social, political, environmental, and economic actions of globally minded individuals and communities on a worldwide scale. The term can refer to the belief that individuals are members of multiple, diverse, local and non-local networks rather than single actors affecting isolated societies. Promoting global citizenship in sustainable development will allow individuals to embrace their social responsibility to act for the benefit of all societies, not just their own. <sup>28</sup>
<b>Human rights</b>	The universal legal rights that protect individuals and groups from those behaviors that interfere with freedom and human dignity. <sup>29</sup>
<b>Inclusion</b>	The act of creating environments in which any individual or group can be and feel welcomed, respected, supported, and valued to fully participate. An inclusive and welcoming climate embraces differences and offers respect in words and actions for all people. <sup>30</sup>
<b>Intersectionality</b>	The interconnectedness of race, gender, class, ability, etc. Intersectionality describes how the presence of social identities among individuals and communities alongside oppressive systems creates overlapping systems of discrimination and disadvantage. Intersectionality also refers to the view that overlapping and interdependent systems of discrimination and inequality can more effectively be addressed together. <sup>31</sup>
<b>Macroaggression</b>	Vast, systemic forms of oppression rather than interpersonal forms of bias or discrimination. <sup>32</sup>
<b>Marginalization</b>	Social processes by which individuals or groups are intentionally or unintentionally, distanced from access to power and resources. Marginalization renders these individuals or groups as insignificant, peripheral, or less valuable/privileged when compared to dominant social groups. <sup>33</sup>
<b>Microaggression</b>	Comments or actions that subtly and often unconsciously or unintentionally expresses a prejudiced attitude toward a member of a marginalized group. Microaggressions inflicted on individuals belonging to marginalized groups could be viewed as acts of violence and harassment no matter how unintended. <sup>34</sup>
<b>Oppression</b>	The systematic subjugation of one social group by a more powerful social group for the social, economic, and political benefit of the more powerful social group. <sup>35</sup>
<b>Privilege</b>	Unearned access to resources and social power that are only readily available to some people because of their positionality within dominant, widely accepted social groups. <sup>36</sup>

# EQUITY, DIVERSITY and INCLUSION CONTINUED

- Passing** An adaptation where individuals from marginalized groups present themselves as members of a dominant group to avoid societal oppression. For example, a gay person may choose to pass as straight, or a person of lower socioeconomic status may choose to present themselves as belonging to a higher socioeconomic status.<sup>37</sup>
- Power** The ability to dominate over others, influence the behavior of others, and/or control the allocation of resources. Power can also function as a resource that can be allocated from dominant groups to non-dominant groups or as a tool for empowering oneself or the communities that they are a part of. Power manifests in various forms, including political, social, economic, and personal, and is often exercised through means such as authority, coercion, and persuasion. Power dynamics play a crucial role in relationships among, people, societies, organizations, and institutions.<sup>38</sup>
- Prejudice** A negative attitude towards another person or group formed in advance of any experience with that person or group. Prejudices can include an affective component (e.g., nervousness, anger, contempt, pity, hatred) and a cognitive component (assumptions and beliefs about groups, including stereotypes). Prejudice is typically manifested behaviorally through discriminatory behavior.<sup>39</sup>
- Religion** A personal set or institutionalized system of faith-based attitudes, beliefs, and practices which defines human beings' relation to that which they regard as holy, sacred, absolute, spiritual, divine, or worthy of especial reverence.<sup>40</sup>
- Social justice** A concept premised upon the belief that each individual and group within society is to be given equal opportunity, fairness, civil liberties, and participation in the social, educational, economic, institutional, and moral freedoms and responsibilities valued by the society.<sup>41</sup>
- Trauma** An emotional response to a terrible event like an accident, crime, or natural disaster. Reactions such as shock and denial are typical.<sup>42</sup>
- Historical trauma:** A collective complex trauma inflicted on a group of people who share a specific group identity or affiliation which manifests from the past treatment of said social identity groups.<sup>43</sup>
- Intergenerational trauma:** The transmission of trauma or its legacy, in the form of a psychological consequence of an injury or attack, poverty, and so forth, from the generation experiencing the trauma to subsequent generations.<sup>44</sup>

# RACE and ETHNICITY

*The race and ethnicity section encompasses terms used to describe different races and ethnicities, as well as terms that are contextually adjacent to the broader topic of race and ethnicity.*

- African American** A nation-specific term that is used to describe people who come from Africa or people with sub-Saharan African ancestry who reside in the United States.<sup>45</sup>
- Anti-Black** Acknowledges the specific forms of racism contingent upon or cast through the denigration, disenfranchisement, and disavowal of Black people. Anti-Blackness hones in on the particular forms of interpersonal, structural, and institutional racism that Black people face.<sup>46</sup>
- Anti-racism** The work of actively opposing racism by advocating for changes in political, economic, and social life. Anti-racism tends to be an individualized approach, established in opposition to individual racist behaviors and impacts.<sup>47</sup>
- Asian American** People who come from Asia or descend from people who live in Asia and reside in the United States. Asian Americans are the most diverse racial and ethnic group in the United States.<sup>48</sup>
- AANHPI:** An acronym for Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander. AANHPI is used as a more inclusive term as it includes Native Hawaiians.<sup>49</sup>
- AAPI:** An acronym for Asian American and Pacific Islander used to describe all people of Asian, Asian American, or Pacific Islander ancestry who trace their origins to those respective geographic regions.<sup>50</sup>
- APIDA:** An acronym for Asian, Pacific Islander, and Desi American. APIDA is used as a more inclusive acronym than AAPI as it includes Desi, a term that represents South Asian people.<sup>51</sup>
- BIPOC** An acronym for Black, Indigenous, and people of color. Pronounced “bye-pock,” this is a term specific to the United States, intended to center the experiences of Black and Indigenous groups. The use of BIPOC demonstrates solidarity among communities of color while simultaneously acknowledging the unique differences across communities of color.<sup>52</sup>
- Biracial** People who have parents of two different races.<sup>53</sup>
- Black** A racialized term that refers to people with sub-Saharan African and/or Caribbean ancestry regardless of national origin.<sup>54</sup>

# RACE and ETHNICITY CONTINUED

- Coded racism** Racism that is strategically hidden and/or deliberately concealed but designed to evoke racial fears, anxieties, and animus and/or to drive a wedge between different racial groups. Also known as “Dog-whistle racism” or “race wedge.”<sup>55</sup>
- Colorblindness** The belief that race should be ignored as a strategy for creating a more equal and inclusive society. Colorblindness perpetuates discriminatory practices by allowing people to ignore circumstances that cause racial disparities.<sup>56</sup>
- Colorism** The global practice of discriminating against people with a dark skin tone. Colorism typically happens among people within the same ethnic or racial group.<sup>57</sup>
- Critical Race Theory** A critical analysis of race and racism that examines the intersection of race, law, and power. Critical race theory recognizes that racism is more than the result of individual bias and prejudice. It is a term that is typically used within legal, academic, and government institutions.<sup>58</sup>
- Ethnicity** A social construct not rooted in biology, referring to the social characteristics people may have in common such as language, religion, regional background, traditions, and culture. Ethnicity is a broader term than race as it does not refer to one’s physical attributes.<sup>59</sup>
- Hispanic** Any person with ancestry from a country whose primary language is Spanish.<sup>60</sup>
- Latino/a/x:** Any person with ancestry in Latin America, a politically defined region usually unified by the predominance of Romance languages. This definition usually includes Portuguese-speaking Brazil and French-speaking Haiti, but excludes Spain.<sup>61</sup>
- Latinx/Latine:** Gender-neutral versions of Latino and Latina, whose -o and -a endings correspond to the masculine and feminine forms traditionally assigned to nouns and adjectives in the Spanish language.<sup>62</sup>
- Afro-Latino/a/x:** Someone who is Latin American and of African descent.<sup>63</sup>

# RACE and ETHNICITY CONTINUED

## **Land acknowledgment**

Oral or written statements used to recognize Indigenous peoples as the original stewards of the lands on which a person may live, work, or go to school. Land acknowledgment is a traditional custom that dates back centuries for many Native nations and communities. Land acknowledgments are most impactful when created in collaboration with Native communities and include recommendations for action to uphold tribal sovereignty.<sup>64</sup>

## **MENA**

People from the Middle East and North Africa.<sup>65</sup>

## **Model minority myth**

A stereotype that asserts Asian Americans are more intelligent and hardworking than other non-White groups, thus they are more deserving of their economic, social, and academic successes. The model minority myth is rooted in anti-Blackness.<sup>66</sup>

## **Multiracial**

People who have parents or ancestry of more than two races.<sup>67</sup>

## **Native/Indigenous**

A term that describes a group of people native to a specific region. It refers to people who lived in a place before colonizers occupied their native lands.<sup>68</sup>

**Afro-Indigenous:** A term that refers to peoples who have both Indigenous and African lineage.<sup>69</sup>

**Alaska Native:** People who are Indigenous to current-day Alaska including Athabascans, Inupiaqs, Yupiks, and Aleuts.<sup>70</sup>

**American Indians, Native Americans:** A member of any of the Indigenous peoples of North, Central, and South America, specifically those Indigenous to what is now the Continental United States.<sup>71</sup>

## **Pacific Islander**

Someone who is native to or an inhabitant of the Pacific Islands.<sup>72</sup>

## **People of color**

A collective term for referring to non-White racial groups.<sup>73</sup>

## **Post-racial**

A theoretical term to describe an environment free from racial preference, discrimination, and prejudice.<sup>74</sup>

## **Race**

A set of traits that are primarily physical that define an individual or group of individuals as belonging to a particular social category. Race is biological fiction, a concept with no basis in human anatomy or genetics. How racial groups are defined and how people are assigned to them varies dramatically across countries, cultures, and historical times. Although a social concept, race has a real impact on how society operates.<sup>75</sup>

# RACE and ETHNICITY CONTINUED

## **Racial equity**

Providing everyone with what they need to be successful by taking race and the impacts of racism into account. This is distinct from racial equality, which treats everyone the same. Racial equity is the condition that would be achieved if someone's racial identity no longer predicted, in a statistical sense, how they fare. When we use the term, we are thinking about racial equity as one part of racial justice, so it also includes work to address root causes of inequities, not just their manifestation. This includes the elimination of policies, practices, attitudes, and cultural messages that reinforce differential outcomes by race or that fail to eliminate them.<sup>76</sup>

## **Racial justice**

The work to uproot historically racist systems and replace them with fair, just, and equitable policies and practices. The systematic fair treatment of people of all races, resulting in equitable opportunities and outcomes for all. It goes beyond "anti-racism." It is not just the absence of discrimination and inequities, but also the presence of deliberate systems and supports to achieve and sustain racial equity through proactive and preventative measures.<sup>77</sup>

## **Racism**

Involves a racial group having the power to carry out systematic discrimination through the institutional policies and practices of the society and by shaping the cultural beliefs and values that support those racist policies and practices.<sup>78</sup>

**Systemic racism:** How institutional policies and practices create different outcomes for different racial groups. These policies and practices may never explicitly target any racial group, but their impact creates advantages for White people and oppression and disadvantage for Indigenous people, Black people, and other people of color. Systemic racism acknowledges that racism of multiple institutions and systems overlap to form a web of racism impacting marginalized people and communities. Systemic racism may also be referred to as structural or institutional racism.<sup>79</sup>

**Internalized racism:** The acceptance of negative attitudes, beliefs, ideologies, and stereotypes perpetuated by the White dominant society as being true about one's racial group.<sup>80</sup>

**Interpersonal/Individual racism:** Overt and covert forms of racism that occur among individuals.<sup>81</sup>



## RACE and ETHNICITY CONTINUED

### **Tokenism**

The practice of making superficial diversity efforts to give the appearance of being inclusive. Tokenism is accomplished by individuals or groups from privileged positions in society exploiting individuals from marginalized groups.<sup>82</sup>

### **Tribal nation**

Distinct governments comprised of Indigenous people and bands whose inherent sovereignty predates the founding of the United States and is reflected in their government-to-government relationship with the U.S. government. There are 574 federally recognized Tribal Nations in the United States.<sup>83</sup>

### **White**

A person having origins in any of the original peoples of Europe, the Middle East, or North Africa. White is defined federally this way by the United States Census, however many members of the MENA community (see definition) oppose this racial categorization.

### **White Dominant Culture (WDC)/ White Supremacy Culture (WSC)**

A set of cultural norms, practices, and expectations that attempt to function as an authority over the rest of society. The ideology that White people, and the ideas, thoughts, beliefs, and actions of White people are normative and therefore superior to Black people, Indigenous people, and other people of color and their ideas, thoughts, beliefs, and actions.<sup>85</sup>

# GENDER and SEXUALITY

*The gender and sexuality section catalogs terms that involve gender, gender identity, sexuality, and matters that are relevant to the LGBTQ+ community.*

<b>Androgynous</b>	Identifying and/or presenting as neither distinguishably masculine nor feminine. <sup>86</sup>
<b>Asexual</b>	The lack of sexual attraction or desire for other people. <sup>87</sup>
<b>Biphobia</b>	Prejudice, fear or hatred directed toward bisexual people. <sup>88</sup>
<b>Bisexual</b>	A sexual orientation characterized by romantic or sexual attraction to more than one gender. <sup>89</sup>
<b>Cisgender</b>	Used to describe a person whose gender identity aligns with the gender typically associated with the sex assigned to them at birth. <sup>90</sup>
<b>Coming out</b>	The process in which a person first acknowledges, accepts and appreciates their sexual orientation or gender identity and begins to share that with others. <sup>91</sup>
<b>Gay</b>	A person who is emotionally, romantically or sexually attracted to members of the same gender. <sup>92</sup>
<b>Gender</b>	A social construct that relies on cultural norms and behaviors to categorize men, women, and those that lie outside the gender binary. <sup>93</sup>
<b>Gender binary</b>	The inaccurate concept that gender is categorized into only two distinct forms. <sup>94</sup>
<b>Gender dysphoria</b>	Clinically significant distress that a person may have because of a mismatch between their biological sex and their gender identity. <sup>95</sup>
<b>Gender expression</b>	The external appearance of one's gender identity, usually expressed through behavior, clothing, body characteristics, or voice, and which may or may not conform to socially defined behaviors and characteristics typically associated with being either masculine or feminine. <sup>96</sup>
<b>Gender fluid</b>	A gender identity where one does not identify solely as a man, woman, or non-binary person. These individuals often move between genders and change their gender expression. <sup>97</sup>
<b>Gender identity</b>	One's innermost concept of self as man, woman, a blend of both or neither – how individuals perceive themselves and what they call themselves. One's gender identity can be the same or different from their sex assigned at birth. <sup>98</sup>
<b>Gender-neutral</b>	The absence of gender in things such as facilities, pronouns, policies, clothing, etc. <sup>99</sup>

## GENDER AND SEXUALITY CONTINUED

<b>Gender non-conforming</b>	A broad term referring to people who do not behave in a way that conforms to the traditional expectations of their gender, or whose gender expression does not fit neatly into a category. While many also identify as transgender, not all gender non-conforming people do. Gender non-conforming is like the term genderqueer. <sup>100</sup>
<b>Gender transition</b>	The process by which some people strive to more closely align their internal knowledge of gender with its outward appearance. Some people socially transition, whereby they might begin dressing, using names and pronouns and/or be socially recognized as another gender. Others undergo physical transitions in which they modify their bodies through medical interventions. <sup>101</sup>
<b>Genderqueer</b>	Genderqueer people typically reject notions of static categories of gender and embrace a fluidity of gender identity and often, though not always, sexual orientation. People who identify as “genderqueer” may see themselves as being both male and female, neither male nor female or as falling completely outside these categories. <sup>102</sup>
<b>Homophobia</b>	The fear and hatred of or discomfort with people who are attracted to members of the same sex. <sup>103</sup>
<b>Intersex</b>	An umbrella term used to describe a wide range of natural bodily variations. In some cases, these traits are visible at birth, and in others, they are not apparent until puberty. Some chromosomal variations of this type may not be physically apparent at all. <sup>104</sup>
<b>Lesbian</b>	A woman who is emotionally, romantically or sexually attracted to other women. <sup>105</sup>
<b>LGBTQ+</b>	An acronym for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer with a “+” sign to recognize the limitless sexual orientations and gender identities used by members of the community. <sup>106</sup>
<b>Living openly</b>	A state in which LGBTQ people are comfortably out about their sexual orientation or gender identity – where and when it feels appropriate to them. <sup>107</sup>
<b>Misogyny</b>	A term that describes an explicit and implicit hatred towards women. Misogyny has taken shape in multiple forms such as male privilege, patriarchy, gender discrimination, sexual harassment, belittling of women, violence against women, and sexual objectification. <sup>108</sup>

**Misogynoir:** The specific hatred, dislike, distrust, and prejudice directed toward Black women. The term encompasses the intersectionality of sexism and racism. This term was coined by Moya Bailey.<sup>109</sup>

- Non-binary** An adjective describing a person who does not identify exclusively as a man or a woman. Non-binary people may identify as being both a man and a woman, somewhere in between, or as falling completely outside these categories. While many also identify as transgender, not all non-binary people do. Non-binary also can be used as an umbrella term encompassing such identities as agender, bigender, genderqueer, or gender-fluid.<sup>110</sup>
- Outing** Exposing someone's gender identity or sexual orientation to others without their permission. Outing can have serious repercussions on employment, economic stability, personal safety, and family situations.<sup>111</sup>
- Pansexual** A sexual orientation characterized by romantic or sexual attraction of people of all genders. Pansexual individuals are attracted to individuals based on emotional, intellectual, and physical connection rather than the gender identity of a person.<sup>112</sup>
- Pronouns** Pronouns are the words we use to refer to ourselves and others and are an important part of our daily lives. In English, the most common personal pronouns are he/him/his and she/her/hers, which are typically used to refer to people who view their gender identity as masculine or feminine, respectively. They/them/theirs is another common set of pronouns that is used by many non-binary people.<sup>113</sup>
- Queer** A term people often use to express a spectrum of identities and orientations that are counter to the mainstream. Queer is often used as a catch-all to include many people, such as those who do not identify as exclusively straight and/or folks who have non-binary or gender-expansive identities. This term was previously used as a slur but also has been reclaimed by many parts of the LGBTQ+ movement.<sup>114</sup>
- Questioning** A term used to describe people who are in the process of exploring their sexual orientation or gender identity.<sup>115</sup>
- Same-gender loving** A term some prefer to use instead of lesbian, gay, or bisexual to express attraction to and love for people of the same gender identity.<sup>116</sup>

## GENDER AND SEXUALITY CONTINUED

<b>Sex</b>	A biological concept that relies on biological characteristics primarily based upon the presence of x and y chromosomes. Individuals can be male, female, or intersex. It is important to remember that sex and gender are not synonymous. <sup>117</sup>
<b>Sex assigned at birth</b>	The sex (male or female) given to a child at birth, most often based on the child's external anatomy. This is also referred to as "assigned sex at birth." <sup>118</sup>
<b>Sexism</b>	Prejudice, stereotyping, or discrimination, typically against women, based on sex. <sup>119</sup>
<b>Sexual orientation</b>	Who you are attracted to and want to have relationships with. Sexual orientations include gay, lesbian, straight, bisexual, and asexual. An individual's sexual orientation is independent of their gender identity. <sup>120</sup>
<b>Transgender</b>	An umbrella term for people whose gender identity and/or expression is different from cultural expectations based on the sex they were assigned at birth. Being transgender does not imply any specific sexual orientation. Therefore, transgender people may identify as straight, gay, lesbian, bisexual, etc. <sup>121</sup>
<b>Transitioning</b>	A term used to describe the processes where a trans person changes their gender presentation to match their gender identity. <sup>122</sup>
<b>Transphobia</b>	The fear and hatred of, or discomfort with, transgender people. <sup>123</sup>

# HEALTH EQUITY

*The health equity section includes terms relevant to the intersections of healthcare, equity, and language. It provides the language necessary to understand and discuss how these factors interplay at a fundamental level.*

- Access to care** The ability to obtain healthcare services to prevent, diagnose, treat, or manage health-impacting conditions and illnesses. Some factors to consider are proximity to healthcare facilities, health insurance coverage, and affordability of services as well as an individual's ability to seek preventive care.<sup>124</sup>
- Blaming language** Language that, usually unintentionally, appears to place blame on people, communities or populations for issues or health problems.<sup>125</sup>
- Culturally competent care** Healthcare services that are delivered with respect, sensitivity, and understanding of cultural beliefs, values, and practices of diverse populations. It involves healthcare providers actively recognizing and addressing the unique needs and perspectives of individuals from various cultural backgrounds to eliminate disparities and ensure equitable healthcare experiences for all. An example of culturally competent care is tailoring healthcare approaches to develop effective treatment plans to align with cultural context and preferences of all patients. This practice ensures that healthcare services are sensitive, inclusive, and respectful to foster trust and improve patient-provider communication.<sup>126</sup>
- Environmental health** Examines human health effects from exposures to harmful agents in the environment. The 'environment' may include the outdoors, home, workplace, or public buildings. This field incorporates aspects from many diverse fields including: (1) environmental, occupational, and food toxicology; (2) environmental and occupational medicine; (3) food safety; (4) occupational health and safety; (5) industrial hygiene; (6) public health; (7) epidemiology; (8) environmental policy and law; and (9) psychology and sociology.<sup>127</sup>
- Environmental justice:** The fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people, regardless of race, color, national origin, or income, with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies. Fair treatment means that no population bears a disproportionate share of negative environmental consequences resulting from industrial, municipal, and commercial operations or from the execution of federal, state, and local laws, regulations, and policies.<sup>128</sup>



<b>Food desert</b>	An area, typically, an urban or rural community, where there is limited or no access to affordable, nutritious, and fresh foods such as fruits, vegetables, and whole grains due to the absence of grocery stores or farmers' markets within a reasonable distance. The primary food options may consist of convenience stores or fast-food restaurants that primarily offer unhealthy and highly processed food choices. <sup>129</sup>
<b>Food insecurity</b>	The lack of consistent and reliable access to nutritious foods for an active and healthy life. It encompasses both the physical availability of the food and individuals' ability to acquire it in socially acceptable ways. <sup>130</sup>
<b>Food security</b>	A state in which all individuals have physical, social, and economic access to nutritious foods that meet their dietary needs and preferences for an active and healthy life. Food security is obtained when individuals have affordable access to nutritious foods and a stable food supply. Achieving food security is essential for promoting human development, reducing poverty, and ensuring the well-being of individuals and communities. <sup>131</sup>
<b>Gender-affirming care</b>	Any single or combination of a number of social, psychological, behavioral, or medical (including hormonal treatment or surgery) interventions designed to support and affirm an individual's gender identity. <sup>132</sup>
<b>Health disparity</b>	Unequal distribution of health outcomes among different populations, resulting from systemic and avoidable factors such as social, economic, and environmental disadvantages. Some examples of health disparities include certain racial and ethnic groups experiencing higher rates of chronic diseases and inaccessibility or unequal access to high-quality mental health care services. <sup>133</sup>
<b>Health equity</b>	The principle of ensuring that every individual has an equal opportunity to achieve optimal health outcomes regardless of their social, economic, or demographic characteristics. Health equity recognizes that everyone deserves the same level of care and support to attain their highest well-being. Some examples of health equity in action include access to healthcare services, resource allocation, and health disparities reduction. <sup>134</sup>

## **Health inequity**

Unjust systematic differences in health status or the distribution of health resources between different populations often rooted in structural inequalities, discrimination, and social determinants of health. It highlights the unjust nature of health disparities and emphasizes the need to address underlying social and structural factors to achieve equitable health outcomes for all.<sup>135</sup>

## **Health literacy/ Health fluency**

The ability of individuals to locate, understand, interpret, and apply health information to guide their decisions and behavior. Health literacy occurs when a society provides accurate health information and services that people can easily find, understand, and use to inform their decisions and actions. Additionally, definitions have updated to the term, “healthcare fluency,” which offers an equity-focused alternative to health literacy. Healthcare fluency includes literacy, but also acknowledges the importance of scientific knowledge (i.e., capacity to give true informed consent), cultural perception (i.e., community-level trust in medical system), and confidence (i.e., personal trust in medical system and ability to advocate for self in the medical encounter).<sup>136</sup>

## **Health justice**

The condition in which everyone would have an equitable opportunity to access affordable, quality care and resources to stay healthy. Achieving health justice requires finding solutions to improve social determinants of health such as poverty, education, employment, housing and health insurance.<sup>137</sup>

## **Mental health**

A state of mental well-being that enables people to cope with the stresses of life, realize their abilities, learn well and work well, and contribute to their community. It is an integral component of health and well-being that underpins our individual and collective abilities to make decisions, build relationships and shape the world we live in. Mental health is a basic human right and it is crucial to personal, community and socio-economic development.<sup>138</sup>

## **Public safety**

Ensuring the safety and well-being of the public by preventing and responding to community engagement issues, crimes, disasters, and other threats. Traditionally, it has been characterized as the absence of violence and crime in public settings. However, a more holistic understanding recognizes the intricate connections between public safety and the mental, physical, and psychological health of the community. Effective public safety strategies address not only immediate threats but also the underlying factors that contribute to unsafe environments. This includes recognizing how untreated mental health conditions can lead to behaviors that compromise safety, such as substance misuse or violent actions. Ensuring public safety thus requires a comprehensive approach that includes access to mental health care, support for those with psychological trauma, and interventions to promote physical health and well-being.<sup>139</sup>

## **Social determinants of health**

The various social, economic, and environmental factors that significantly influence individuals' overall health and well-being. Some examples of social determinants of health are quality and access to education, quality, and access to health care, economic stability, neighborhood, social and community context. Addressing social determinants of health is essential for promoting health equity and creating supportive environments that enable individuals and communities to thrive.<sup>140</sup>

**Political determinants of health:** The systematic process of structuring relationships, distributing resources, and administering power, operating simultaneously in ways that mutually reinforce or influence one another to shape opportunities that either advance health equity or exacerbate health inequities.<sup>141</sup>

## **Structural inequality**

Systematic and institutionalized disparities in opportunities, resources, and power that contribute to the unfair distribution of negative health outcomes within marginalized communities.<sup>142</sup>

**Structural barriers:** Obstacles that collectively affect a group disproportionately and perpetuate or maintain stark disparities in outcomes. Structural barriers can be policies, practices, and other norms that favor an advantaged group while systematically disadvantaging a marginalized group.<sup>143</sup>

## **Toxic stress**

Occurs when a person experiences strong, frequent and/or prolonged adversity, such as from racism, physical or emotional abuse, exposure to violence and chronic neglect. While studies show stress can have negative mental health and cardiovascular side effects on everyone, pervasive exposure to structural racism and discrimination can create additional daily stressors for Black, Hispanic, Asian, Indigenous, and other people of color.<sup>144</sup>

**Weathering:** Chronic exposure to social and economic disadvantages, including racism, leads to an accelerated decline in physical health outcomes and could partially explain racial disparities in a wide array of health conditions.<sup>145</sup>

## **Underinsured populations**

Individuals or groups that have less access to recommended care, affordable healthcare services, and receive poorer quality of care. As a result, these individuals experience more negative health outcomes than insured population groups.<sup>146</sup>

## **Vulnerable populations**

Groups of individuals that are at higher risk of experiencing adverse health outcomes or face barriers to receiving healthcare and other essential resources. Some examples of vulnerable populations include low-income individuals, unhoused individuals, immigrants and refugees, LGBTQ+ populations, and people living with disabilities.<sup>147</sup>

# ABILITY

*The ability section addresses the language we use when discussing the disability community, their needs, and the nuances of disability discourse. At the City of Atlanta, we use people-first language, which emphasizes the person before the disability, recognizing that people are not defined by their disability. However, the Disability Justice Movement also advocates for identity-first language, which places the disability before the person, viewing it as a core part of someone's identity. Despite the City's preference for people-first language, individual preferences always take precedence.*

## **Ability/disability**

Refers to the physical or mental capacity or limitation to perform one or more major life activity. This can be congenital or acquired and may be apparent or non-apparent.<sup>148</sup>

**Apparent disability:** A condition or impairment that is immediately apparent or noticeable to others. This may also be known as or referred to as a visible disability.<sup>149</sup>

**Intellectual disability:** Neurodevelopmental conditions that begin early in the developmental period, typically before age 18, that affect functioning in two areas:

1. Cognitive functioning, such as learning, problem solving and judgement.
2. Adaptive functioning, activities of daily life such as communication skills and social participation.<sup>150</sup>

**Non-apparent disability:** Disabilities that are not immediately apparent. They are typically These can include chronic illnesses or cognitive conditions that significantly impair normal activities of daily living. This may also be known as or referred to as invisible or hidden disability.<sup>151</sup>

## **Accessibility/ accessible**

Refers to a site, facility, work environment, service, program, or tool that is easy to approach, enter, operate, participate in, and/or use safely with dignity by a person living with a disability.<sup>152</sup>

## **Accessible Information and Communication Technology (ICT)**

Technology that can be used by people with a wide range of abilities and disabilities. Accessible Information and Communication Technology is usable without assistive technology and it is compatible with standard assistive technology. It incorporates the principles of universal design (e.g. mobile website or app).<sup>153</sup>

## **Accommodation**

Modifications or adjustments made for an individual with a disability to provide equal access to and participation in things such as education, employment, public facilities, and social activities.<sup>154</sup>

- Adaptive behavior** The collection of skills and behaviors that individuals use to effectively navigate and function in their daily lives. Some of these skills include conceptual, social, and motor skills.<sup>155</sup>
- Assistive technology (AT)** Any item, piece of equipment, software program, or product system that is used to increase, maintain, or improve the functional capabilities of persons with disabilities (e.g. screen reader).<sup>156</sup>
- Emotional support animal** Any animal that provides emotional support alleviating one or more symptoms or effects of a person's disability. Emotional support animals provide companionship, relieve loneliness, and sometimes help with depression, anxiety, and certain phobias, but do not have special training to perform tasks that assist people with disabilities. Emotional support animals are not limited to dogs.<sup>157</sup>
- Functional needs** The most necessary requirements which often include mobility, communication, vision, cognitive, and sensory accommodations that are necessary to create equitable spaces.<sup>158</sup>
- Access and functional needs:** Access and functional needs refers to individuals who need assistance due to any condition (temporary or permanent) that limits their ability to act. To have access and functional needs does not require that the individual have any kind of diagnosis or specific evaluation. Individuals having access and functional needs may include, but are not limited to, individuals with disabilities, seniors, and populations having limited English proficiency, limited access to transportation, and/or limited access to financial resources to prepare for, respond to, and recover from the emergency.<sup>159</sup>
- Impairment** A loss of part or all of a physical or mental ability, such as the ability to see, walk, or learn. An impairment cannot be a disability unless it limits something, and that something is one or more major life activities.<sup>160</sup>
- Physical impairment:** Any physiological disorder or condition, cosmetic disfigurement, or anatomical loss affecting one or more body systems. These impairments can be congenital or acquired and may impact various aspects of life, such as self-care and mobility.<sup>161</sup>



**Mental condition/impairment:** Disturbances in cognitive, emotional, or behavioral functioning that are associated with distress or impairment in personal, social, occupational, or other important activities. Mental impairments often influence a person's thinking, feeling, and ability to interact with others and handle daily activities.<sup>162</sup>

- Interactive Process** The employment process in which employers and employees with disabilities, who request accommodations, work together to come up with accommodations.<sup>163</sup>
- Neurodivergent** Refers to someone whose brain processes, functions, or behaviors present in a variety of ways.<sup>164</sup>
- Neurotypical** Refers to someone who has the brain functions, behaviors, and processing considered standard or typical.<sup>165</sup>
- Person with disability/  
individual with a disability** A person who has a physical or mental condition that substantially limits one or more major life activities.<sup>166</sup>
- Reasonable accommodation** Any modification or adjustment to the work environment that will enable an applicant or employee with a disability to participate in the application process, perform essential job functions, or enjoy the benefits of employment. <sup>167</sup>
- Reasonable modification** A change in a policy, practice, or procedure that is made to offer equal access and equal opportunity for a person with a disability. This term is used in Title II and Title III of the American Disabilities Act (ADA). Title II covers state and local government (public entities), while Title III covers businesses and nonprofit organizations open to the public (public accommodations).<sup>168</sup>
- Service animal** A dog that is individually trained to do work or perform tasks for a person with a disability. A service animal can be any breed of dog.<sup>169</sup>
- Temporarily able-bodied (TAB)** Refers to the idea that most of us will face disability at some point in our lives; whether it comes sooner or later varies depending upon one's circumstances. This term came out of the Disability Justice Movement.<sup>170</sup>
- Universal design** The design and composition of an environment so that it can be accessed, understood, and used to the greatest extent possible by all people regardless of their age, size, ability, or disability.<sup>171</sup>

# SOCIAL ECONOMICS

*The social economics section outlines the social and economic factors that influence individuals and communities. This section aims to provide clear, concise explanations for how these factors interact and affect various aspects of individual's lives and society as a whole.*

**Area Median Income (AMI) / Median Family Income (MFI)** Generally synonymous with Median Family Income (MFI), is a statistical estimate calculated annually by the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). It represents the midpoint of family incomes in a specific area, meaning half the families earn above this amount and half earn below. The housing industry prefers to use AMI, as it reflects regional workforce and income changes. HUD bases the MFI calculation on data from the US Census Bureau, Office of Management and Budget (OMB), and Consumer Price Index (CPI), releasing the estimates each spring for areas like the Atlanta metro. Policymakers and funders use percentages of AMI to determine the affordability of subsidized housing, helping to answer the question, “affordable for whom?”<sup>172</sup>

**Classism** Prejudicial thoughts and discriminatory actions based on differences in socioeconomic status and income, usually referred to as class. Most particularly refers to the hierarchical striation of people by class.<sup>173</sup>

**Cost-burdened** When an individual or family pays more than 30% of their income on housing. If a family pays more than 50% or half of their income towards housing, they are considered *extremely* cost-burdened.<sup>174</sup>

**Elitism** The belief or notion that individuals who form an elite group, those perceived as having an intrinsic quality, high intellect, wealth, power, notability, special skills, education or experience—are more likely to be constructive to society, and therefore deserve influence or authority greater than that of others.<sup>175</sup>

**Guaranteed Income (GI)/ Universal Basic Income (UBI)** Direct, recurring cash payments without restrictions or conditions – redistributes wealth to people who need it most and who've historically been impacted by systemic barriers to wealth building. GI provides direct cash support to those below a certain income level and lifts all of our communities, building a resilient, just America. It's similar to universal basic income (UBI) and is intended to supplement, not replace, the existing social safety net. GI is based on trust and respect for recipients and a commitment to preserving their dignity and freedom of choice. It can help to: Build a consistent, predictable floor; End poverty; Reduce social inequalities; and Promote gender and racial equity.<sup>176</sup>

Everyone deserves an income floor through a guaranteed income.

## **Historically underserved populations/communities**

Groups that have limited or no access to resources or that are otherwise disenfranchised. These groups may include people who are socioeconomically disadvantaged; people with limited English proficiency; geographically isolated or educationally disenfranchised people; people of color as well as those of ethnic and national origin minorities; women and children; individuals with disabilities and others with access and functional needs; and seniors. Synonymous terms may include Historically low-income Historically Under-invested, and/or Historically Under-resourced.<sup>177</sup>

## **Housing affordability**

A standard that compares housing costs to a percentage of income. The concept started as a rule of thumb and is now part of federal, state, and local housing practice. Housing is deemed affordable when a family is spending no more than 30% of their income on housing costs. Research shows that high-quality affordable housing drives positive outcomes for people's health and wealth.<sup>178</sup>

## **Housing instability**

Encompasses a number of challenges, such as having trouble paying rent, overcrowding, moving frequently, or spending the bulk of household income on housing. Households are considered to be cost-burdened if they spend more than 30 percent of their income on housing and severely cost burdened if they spend more than 50 percent of their income on housing.<sup>179</sup>

**Energy burdened:** The percentage of household income that goes toward energy costs (electricity, home heating, and transportation). It stands to reason that the less money you make, the greater your energy burden will be.<sup>180</sup>

## **Income**

Generally refers to the amount of money, property and other transfers of value received over a set period of time in exchange for services or products.<sup>181</sup>

**Income inequality:** A measure of how unevenly income is distributed among a population. It can be considered a major dimension of social stratification and class. Income includes wages, salaries, interest, stock dividends, rent, and profits but excludes wealth or the value of homes, stocks, and other possessions.<sup>182</sup>

**Income limits and fair market rents:** Standards used to determine eligibility and to set subsidized rents for a variety of housing programs including public housing, voucher and tax credit programs, and housing for seniors and people with disabilities. These standards are set by the federal government based on the Median Family Income.<sup>183</sup>

**Low income:** A term used to describe individuals, families, and communities whose income is at or below a certain percentage of the poverty line—the parameters for the poverty line change depending on federal and state guidelines. Often referenced when a number of community members in that area have remained in a similar financial state for multiple generations.<sup>184</sup>

## **Living wage**

The minimum income necessary for a worker to meet their basic needs and support themselves and/or their family. It is calculated as the hourly rate that an individual in a household must earn while working full-time, or 2,080 hours per year, to afford a decent standard of living. This includes essential elements such as food, water, housing, education, healthcare, transportation, clothing, and provision for unexpected events.<sup>185</sup>

## **Poverty line**

The minimum level of income deemed adequate in a particular country. The poverty line is usually calculated by estimating the total cost of one year's worth of necessities for the average adult. Can also be referred to as the poverty threshold, poverty limit, poverty line, or breadline.<sup>186</sup>

## **Socioeconomic status**

The combination of a person's economic and social standing in relationship to others. The economic and social factors that make up socioeconomic status include things such as education, income, occupation, access to resources, etc.<sup>187</sup>

## **Unhoused**

Describes an individual or family who lacks a fixed, regular, and/or adequate nighttime residence, such as those living in emergency shelters, transitional housing, or places not meant for habitation.<sup>188</sup>

## **Wealth**

An accumulation of valuable economic resources that can be measured in terms of either real goods or money value.<sup>189</sup>

**High net worth individual (HNWI):** Someone with liquid assets of at least \$1 million. Liquid assets include cash, stocks, and bonds but exclude real estate holdings and other non-liquid investments. This classification is frequently used by wealth management firms to identify and tailor services for affluent clients.<sup>190</sup>

**Low wealth:** Income and wealth are both key indicators of financial security for a family or an individual. Income is the sum of earnings from a job or a self-owned business, interest on savings and investments, payments from social programs and many other sources. It is usually calculated on an annual or monthly basis. Wealth, or net worth, is the value of assets owned by a family or an individual (such as a home or a savings account) minus outstanding debt (such as a mortgage or student loan). It refers to an amount that has been accumulated over a lifetime or more (since it may be passed across generations). This accumulated wealth is a source of retirement income, protects against short-term economic shocks and provides security for future generations.<sup>191</sup>

**Racial wealth gap:** The difference in assets owned by different racial or ethnic groups, this gap results from a range of economic factors that affect the overall economic well-being of these different groups. The term reflects disparities in access to opportunities, means of support, and resources.<sup>192</sup>

**Wealth gap:** The disparity in net worth between different population groups, highlighting how wealth is unevenly distributed. This gap often occurs along lines of race, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status. The wealth gap is distinct from income inequality, as it encompasses the accumulation of assets over time, including properties, investments, and savings, rather than just earnings from employment.<sup>193</sup>

# IMMIGRATION and INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

*The immigrant and international affairs section provides a language for the complexities of immigration, citizenship, and the relationship between people, borders, and government.*

<b>Amnesty</b>	The granting of formal legal status to those who live in a country undocumented and are therefore subject to deportation <sup>194</sup>
<b>Asylum</b>	<p>The protection granted by a nation to someone who has left their native country as a political refugee.<sup>195</sup></p> <p><b>Asylum seeker/asylee:</b> A person who has left their country and is seeking protection from persecution and serious human rights violations in another country, but who hasn't yet been legally recognized as a refugee and is waiting to receive a decision on their asylum claim. Seeking asylum is a human right. This means everyone should be allowed to enter another country to seek asylum.<sup>196</sup></p>
<b>Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA)</b>	An administrative relief that protects eligible immigrants who came to the United States when they were children from deportation. DACA gives undocumented immigrants protection from deportation and a work permit. <sup>197</sup>
<b>Deportation</b>	The forced removal of an immigrant from the country they immigrated to typically because of a "crime." However, immigrants are more harshly criminalized thus deportation is weaponized. Deportation is a threat to human rights including the right to family unity, the right to seek asylum from persecution, the right to humane treatment in detention, the right to due process, and the rights of children. <sup>198</sup>
<b>English as a second language (ESOL/ESL)</b>	Learning English as a new resident of an English-speaking country, or to a program that helps students with limited English proficiency receive basic instruction in English. <sup>199</sup>
<b>Immigrant</b>	A person living in a country other than that of their birth. <sup>200</sup>
<b>Language access</b>	The ability to communicate effectively and access information, services, and opportunities in one's preferred language. It's an important aspect of accessibility for limited English or non-English speakers. <sup>201</sup>
<b>Migrant</b>	A person who moves away from their place of usual residence, whether within a country or across an international border, temporarily or permanently, and for a variety of reasons. <sup>202</sup>

# IMMIGRATION and INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS CONTINUED

<b>Nationality</b>	As an ethnic group, the status of belonging to a particular nation whether by birth or naturalization. <sup>203</sup>
<b>Naturalization</b>	The process in which someone obtains citizenship in a country other than their original county of birth or nationality. <sup>204</sup>
<b>New arrival</b>	Used to describe anyone who is an international migrant for any reason in a country different from their own. <sup>205</sup>
<b>Refugee</b>	A person forced to flee their own country and seek safety in another country. They are unable to return to their own country because of feared persecution as a result of who they are, what they believe in or say, or because of armed conflict, violence, natural disaster or serious public disorder. Refugees have a right to international protection. <sup>206</sup>
<b>Sanctuary city</b>	A legal term that describes a city or municipality that adopts a policy to limit cooperation with federal immigration enforcement authorities whereas local law enforcement agencies may not actively seek out or detain undocumented immigrants. <sup>207</sup>
<b>Welcoming city</b>	A city/community that has infrastructure in place to support immigrant participation, inclusion, and equity. Additionally, the local government and community-based organizations regularly seek feedback from immigrant residents to understand the challenges and priorities of immigrant residents. <sup>208</sup>
<b>Xenophobia</b>	Fear or dislike of people from different countries based on an individual's perception. <sup>209</sup>



# MESSAGING GUIDE

This is a guide that outlines messaging dos and don'ts to encourage inclusive, respectful, and effective communication. Be mindful that this messaging guide is a set of recommendations for how we should communicate with each other. While this guide provides valuable insights on how to communicate respectfully, it is crucial to refer to individuals based on each person's chosen way of being referred to.

## RACE and ETHNICITY

DO	DON'T
<p>DO capitalize races because they are proper nouns. e.g., Black NOT black.</p>	<p>DON'T use lowercase when referencing races. Additionally, do not use hyphens when referring to races. e.g., Use African Americans NOT African-Americans, Black NOT black, White NOT white.</p>
<p><i>This section is intentionally left blank.</i></p>	<p>DON'T use racial slurs in any context.</p>
<p><i>This section is intentionally left blank.</i></p>	<p>DON'T use race as a noun. Race should always be used as an adjective to describe someone. e.g. Black people NOT Blacks</p>
<p>DO use terms such as marginalized people, people of color, or BIPOC. When possible, be specific, and refrain from using the POC or BIPOC acronyms in business professional settings.</p>	<p>DON'T use the term Brown when referring to Indigenous, Asian American, Pacific Islander, Desi, and Latino/a/x people unless they prefer to be referenced as such. While Brown is often used colloquially among non-Black and non-White racial groups, the interpretations of what racial groups are considered Brown vary widely. The term Brown can also be seen as offensive.</p>
<p>DO use Latin(o/a/x) to be the most inclusive when you are unsure how to identify a person or a group of people who are part of that community..</p>	<p>DON'T use Latinx on its own unless you know all members of that group identify as non-binary.</p>

**RACE and ETHNICITY** *continued*

<b>DO</b>	<b>DON'T</b>
DO use the term enslaved people	DON'T use the term slaves
DO use the terms Native American, Indigenous, or American Indian. If known, refer to the person's tribe (e.g., "She is Cherokee"). Although Indian is used as a political/legal term in the United States federal government, it can be considered offensive to some members of the Native community.	<i>This section is intentionally left blank.</i>
DO use the term Native Nation and/or the formal name of the tribe (e.g., Muscogee (Creek) Nation). Tribal governments are sovereign entities just like city, state, and federal governments in the United States and should be treated as such.	DON'T assume all Native Nations are the same. There are more than 600 Tribal Nations in the United States, each with unique cultures, languages, practices, and governments.
<p>DO take a color-conscious approach when solving for racism, exclusion, and other forms of inequities. Uplift the experiences of Black, Indigenous, and other people of color when approaching solutions towards equity.</p> <p>DO strive to prioritize anti-racism when finding solutions to inequities as it is a direct counter to racial inequities.</p>	DON'T take a "colorblind" approach when solving for racism, exclusion, and other forms of inequities. Colorblindness has negative impacts on Black, Indigenous, and other people of color and their communities. Refusing to acknowledge race and how it shapes society, allows for racism to persist.

# MESSAGING GUIDE CONTINUED

## GENDER and SEXUALITY

DO	DON'T
<p>DO use gender-neutral language e.g. The student can tour their top three college choices NOT The student can tour his/her top three college choices Folks NOT ladies and gentlemen</p>	<p>DON'T use gendered language and innuendoes. e.g. Artificial NOT man-made, workforce NOT manpower</p>
<p>DO use “they/them/their” when referring to a group of people. e.g. Every employee should have their badge with them at all times</p>	<p>DON'T use masculine pronouns as a generic default when referring to everyone. e.g. Every employee should have their badge with them at all times NOT Every employee should have his badge with him at all times.</p>
<p>DO use the gender-neutral form of job titles and positions. e.g. firefighter NOT fireman, server NOT waitress, police officer not policemen, councilmember NOT councilman</p>	<p><i>This section is intentionally left blank.</i></p>
<p>DO use inclusive terms when referring to the LGBTQ+ community. Although many terms previously considered offensive to the LGBTQ+ community have been reclaimed, unless you are a part of that community, refrain from using them.</p>	<p>DON'T use phrases such as transexual, homosexual, down-low, etc. These phrases can be seen as offensive.</p>
<p>DO use the phrase “sex assigned at birth” when referring to someone’s sex. This phrase acknowledges that one’s assignment of a biological sex may or may not align with what is going on with a person’s body, how they feel, or how they identify.</p>	<p>DON'T use the phrases biologically male, biologically female, genetically male, genetically female, born a man, born a woman.  DON'T assume based on someone’s physical appearance (e.g., clothing, hairstyles, adornments, etc.) that you can determine their gender identity.</p>

**GENDER and SEXUALITY** *continued*

<b>DO</b>	<b>DON'T</b>
<p>DO be mindful when sharing pronouns. If you are unsure about someone's pronouns, it may be helpful to introduce yourself, including your pronouns. Then, follow up by asking an individual what pronouns do they prefer to go by.</p> <p>e.g. My name is Jane Doe, I use she/her pronouns, and I am the Director of Communications. What's your name and what pronouns do you prefer?</p>	<p>DON'T assume someone's gender or gender pronouns.</p> <p>DON'T assume someone's sexual orientation.</p> <p>DON'T ask someone why they use a specific set of pronouns. Instead, you may ask what their pronouns are.</p> <p>DON'T use pronouns mockingly.</p>
<p><i>This section is intentionally left blank.</i></p>	<p>DON'T assume the current status of someone's gender identity or sexual orientation at any given time even if you were previously familiar as these are not static identities.</p>
<p>DO allow someone to reveal their gender identity and sexual orientation to others when they deem it appropriate.</p>	<p>DON'T share information about someone's gender identity or sexual orientation before they have shared that information about themselves or you have been given their consent to share their gender identity or sexual orientation with others.</p>

# MESSAGING GUIDE CONTINUED

## HEALTH EQUITY

DO	DON'T
<p>DO use terms such as people/persons with alcohol use disorder.</p>	<p>DON'T use the terms alcoholics or alcohol abusers</p>
<p>DO use terms such as people/persons who are at increased/higher risk for [condition].</p>	<p>DON'T use the terms high-risk people or high-risk population.</p>
<p>DO acknowledge the broader issues of societal barriers and systems that contribute to health disparities in historically underserved communities. e.g. Due to long-standing discrimination and lack of access to quality healthcare, many Black people have disproportionately high blood pressure.</p>	<p>DON'T use blaming language. Avoid attributing health disparities solely to individual behavior or genetics without considering social determinants of health. e.g. Black people should eat healthier because they have high blood pressure.</p>

## ABILITY

DO	DON'T
<p>DO say “has” when referring to a person with a disability.</p> <p>e.g.: “This person ‘has’ cerebral palsy.” NOT “This person ‘suffers’ from cerebral palsy.”</p>	<p>DON'T say a person is “afflicted with” or “suffers from” a disability. Additionally, a disability isn't something to “overcome.”</p>
<p><i>This section is intentionally left blank.</i></p>	<p>DON'T use ableist innuendos when describing something or someone.</p> <p>e.g., Do not use phrases such as “fall on deaf ears,” “turn a blind eye,” etc.</p>
<p>DO use the term senior(s) when referring to people over the age of 62. You may also see the phrase older adults being used.</p>	<p><i>This section is intentionally left blank.</i></p>
<p>DO refer to people who use wheelchairs as “wheelchair users.”</p>	<p>DON'T say people are ‘confined to a wheelchair’ or ‘wheelchair bound’. Wheelchairs enable mobility – they don't confine people.</p>
<p>DO say “accessible toilet” or “accessible parking space.”</p>	<p>DON'T say “disabled” or “handicapped toilet” or “disabled” or “handicapped parking space.”</p> <p>Toilets and parking spaces for people with disabilities are not themselves disabled.</p>
<p>DO say “person who is little,” “person of short stature,” or “little person.”</p>	<p>DON'T say “dwarf” or “midget.”</p>
<p>DO say “people without disabilities,” “able-bodied,” “person who is able to walk,” “person who can see,” etc.</p>	<p>DON'T say “normal,” “healthy,” or “whole” person.</p>
<p>DO say “person with spinal cord injury,” “person with paraplegia,” or “person who is paralyzed.”</p>	<p>DON'T say “paraplegic,” “quadriplegic” or “lame.”</p>

# MESSAGING GUIDE CONTINUED

## SOCIOECONOMIC

DO	DON'T
<p>DO use the term unhoused when referring to someone who lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence.</p>	<p>DON'T use the term homeless when referring to someone who lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence</p>
<p>DO use under-served, under-invested, under-resourced to describe communities</p>	<p>DON'T use low-income or underrepresented to describe communities that do not have a close proximity to sustainable income or wealth.</p> <p>Using these terms shifts our focus away from the leaders, the institutions, and the systems in power, and puts the onus on the socially marginalized person. In order to talk about these communities and the issues they face, we must recognize that their distance from sustainable income and wealth is a symptom of the problem – not the problem itself.</p>
<p>DO use the terms vacant, abandoned and/or deteriorated property to describe an uninhabitable, unsafe and unlivable property in a distressed area.</p>	<p>DON'T use the term blight, unless referring to a legal term as referenced in the Georgia Code.</p>



## IMMIGRATION and INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

DO	DON'T
DO focus on the person, not their immigration status.	<i>This section is intentionally left blank.</i>
DO use the term immigrant when referring to someone who resides in a country separate from their birth country. If you are trying to speak specifically to the citizenship status of an individual in a purposeful way, undocumented is acceptable.	DON'T use the term expat, expatriate, alien, illegal immigrant, or illegal to describe immigrants. These terms can be seen as offensive and xenophobic.
DO use illegal only to describe an action, not a person. DO use the term undocumented immigrant.	DON'T use terms like illegal immigrant, alien, illegals, or illegal worker.
DO familiarize yourself with the range of categories describing a person's citizenship and immigration status.	<i>This section is intentionally left blank.</i>
<i>This section is intentionally left blank.</i>	DON'T specify a person's immigration status unless it is relevant to the story AND approved by the source.
DO use terms that are legally accurate and avoid racially and politically charged labels.	<i>This section is intentionally left blank.</i>

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City of Atlanta  
**Inclusive  
Language  
Guide 2.0**



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   ATLEquity

