## What is Diversity?

Diversity is a broad concept that can be difficult to understand and quantify.

It means "differing from one another; unlike."

While there is no single definition of diversity, it often encompasses inclusion of people of all ages, abilities, races, ethnicities, gender, sexual orientation, religion, perspectives, experiences, and even socio-economic backgrounds.

It is a commitment to accepting and valuing the variety of characteristics that make people unique in an environment that encourages and celebrates individual and collective success. It requires practice, active participation, and diligence.

These are only some of the traits of diversity. It is an ideal that is both a noun (what it is) and a verb (what you do with it).

## How does Diversity differ from EEO and Affirmative Action?

| Diversity | EEO | Affirmative Action |
|---|---|---|
| Inclusive of all groups | Eliminates discrimination in human resource policies and practices | Targets outreach to underutilized groups |
| Maximizes the potential of all employees | Provides equal access opportunity | Measures good faith efforts for minorities and women |
| Broader than ethnicity, race, and gender | No one is excluded from participation | Helps to prevent discrimination |
| Not legally mandated | Legally mandated | Legally mandated |
| Grounded in individuality | Grounded in assimilation | Grounded in assimilation |
| Change the system or operation | Change the mix of people | Change the mix of people |
| Equality | Preference | Preference |

| Focuses on all elements of diversity | Focuses on race, gender, and ethnicity | Focuses on race, gender, and ethnicity |
|---|---|---|
| Qualitative | Quantitative | Quantitative |
| Opportunity-Focused | Problem-Focused | Problem-Focused |
| Proactive | Reactive | Reactive |
| Business necessity given workforce trends | Mitigates and minimizes legal risk | Measures good faith progress affirmative action progress for minorities and women |

**Sources:**

1. Texas Department of Criminal Justice Human Resources Division. (Updated 8/14/07).
2. Staff Equity and Diversity Services, University of California, Berkeley, 1999 (updated 2006).
3. NASA's Goddard Space Flight Center, Diversity Council Business Case for Diversity.

## Dimensions of Diversity

### Diversity includes more dimensions than just ethnicity, race, and gender