UNIT-BASED TEAM
HEALTH EQUITY TOOLKIT

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Diversity is our strength.

A diverse and inclusive workforce reflects our communities and helps make Kaiser Permanente a better place to work and receive care.

As part of the 2021 KP-Alliance National Agreement, Kaiser Permanente and the Alliance of Health Care Unions jointly commit to address issues of equity, inclusion and diversity. In this historic agreement, both parties agree to improve health equity for patients and workers by embedding inclusive practices into training, hiring, promotions and unit-based team projects.

→ This toolkit is for members of unit-based teams and those who support their work across the organization.

USE THIS TOOLKIT TO:

support, inspire and guide your work on unit-based team projects that foster equity, inclusion and diversity for each other, our patients and the communities we serve

learn why equity, inclusion and diversity matter

deepen your understanding of the commitment by Kaiser Permanente and the Alliance of Health Care Unions to build a more inclusive, just and fair future together

discover opportunities for self-discovery and awareness

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Why Equity, Inclusion and Diversity Matter

Achieving our mission can only be accomplished by fully including, supporting and engaging diverse backgrounds and different ways of thinking, all focused on the health and well-being of our workforce, so workers are able to do their best for the people we serve.

12.4 M MEMBERS

- 2.8%
- 0.4%
- 15.6%
- 0.9%
- 10.8%
- 24.5%
- 45.0%

216,560 WORKFORCE HEALTH PLAN & HOSPITALS

- 7.9%
- 0.4%
- 28.3%
- 2.3%
- 12.5%
- 18.1%
- 30.5%

Legend:
- American Indian and Alaska Native
- Asian
- Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
- Black or African American
- Hispanic or Latino
- White
- Two or more races
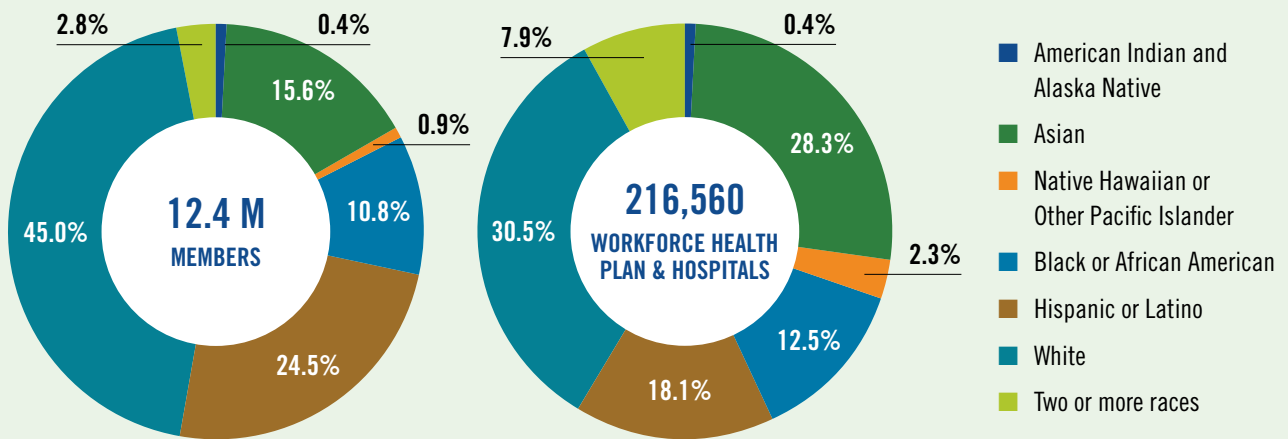
KP health plan members represent more than 260 ethnicities speaking more than 100 languages. The KP workforce, most of whom are also members, reflects the diversity of our membership, with more than 69% being people of color.

> " We stand committed to racial justice, equity, and inclusion for all. Through our shared responsibility, we will build a more equitable future for every life we touch: our workers, patients, members, and the diverse communities we serve. "

—KAISER PERMANENTE AND THE ALLIANCE OF HEALTH CARE UNIONS

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Words Matter

Get up to speed with these key terms and phrases.

Belonging is the feeling of security and support when there is a sense of acceptance, inclusion and identity for a member of a certain group.

Bias happens when humans use mental shortcuts to process the reality around us. It occurs automatically, without our conscious intent, and below our cognitive awareness.

Diversity is the wide range of differences and similarities that exist among people and which make each of us unique. Diversity extends beyond race and ethnicity. It encompasses our gender, sexual orientation, religion, and other aspects of who we are and how we live.

Equality is evenly distributed access to resources and opportunity necessary for a safe and healthy life; uniform distribution of access to ensure fairness.

Equity is the ideal of fairness and justice. Our Equity Principles serve as guidelines for how we treat one another, reflecting our mission. (KP Intranet)

Health equity means everyone can reach their best health and thrive, free of any biases and systemic barriers. Below is another way to look at equity, which is not the same as equality.

Health disparities adversely affect groups of people who have systematically experienced greater obstacles to health based on their racial or ethnic group; religion; socioeconomic status; gender; age; mental health; cognitive, sensory or physical disability; sexual orientation or gender identity; geographic location; or other characteristics historically linked to discrimination or exclusion.

Inclusion fuels well-being and is the full engagement of every individual's diversity of backgrounds, perspectives and different ways of thinking. Inclusive and psychologically safe work environments are necessary so our workforce can be at its best for patients and members.

EQUALITY

EQUITY

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What is an Equity Lens?

Looking at the world through an Equity Lens is like putting on glasses: it helps us see things from new or different perspectives. It empowers us to be open and curious, and to ask questions that can lead to the full inclusion and participation of, and a sense of belonging by, all employees, members and patients.

With this lens, we can better recognize and address systemic inequalities, and foster just and equitable workplaces and communities.

One way to do this is using an Equity Lens when creating unit-based team projects. By actively considering the needs and experiences of all workers, clinicians and members, we can offer more inclusive and supportive care for everyone.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

Use these questions to apply an Equity Lens to your next unit-based team project. For more thought-provoking questions, see the SMARTIE goals worksheet on pages 14–15.

» How can I put Equity Principles into action?

» As a team, what problem are we trying to solve and why?

» Ask about inclusion. Who is at the table?

» Who or what is informing our thinking on this issue?

» Are we approaching this in partnership?

» What data do we need to support this work?

» Are the communities impacted clearly stated in our project?

» How will they benefit?

» How will our test of change address the root cause of inequity?

» How can we share this work?

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Get Ready, Set, Go!

Apply the Equity Lens to your everyday work. Here's how to get started:

» Take part in the activities here and on the following page to learn how to think and behave more inclusively, and recognize and eliminate systemic racism in our actions, policies and processes. These inclusive behaviors are core to the culture we need to successfully achieve our mission and create a work environment where everyone feels they matter, they are valued and they are treated fairly.

» Actively participate in your unit-based team. If you're a frontline worker, speak up to share your ideas and concerns. If you're a manager, actively listen and encourage feedback. Use huddles, meetings and rounding conversations as forums for employee voices to be heard.

» Engage in well-being activities that respect and support the diverse needs, preferences and identities of your team members.

» Help foster an inclusive environment by working collaboratively and using an interdisciplinary approach to do the following:

› provide a wider range of perspectives and experiences, which can lead to better understanding between patients and providers, and thus better outcomes

› deliver care in multiple languages

› improve our knowledge about racial and gender biases

› innovate to address social determinants

› focus on patient-centered care, service, and quality

EXPLORE MORE

Further your learning by taking the following educational courses:

» Belong@KP — a journey to foster inclusion and social justice in everything we do. We must do more to overcome bias and racism in our workplaces and our communities. (KP Intranet)

» ILEaD for Everyone — a self-paced 45-minute training providing tangible behaviors and tools to help individuals become more inclusive and make lasting change throughout the organization. (KP Intranet)

» Mitigating Bias in Care Delivery — 3 20-minute online module courses designed to give you the tools to manage your unconscious biases in patient care. (KP Intranet)

» Providing Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate Services 2022 — understand how to serve everyone with dignity, respect and the level of comfort that meets their needs. (KP Intranet)

» Harvard Implicit Association Test — improve your knowledge about racial and gender biases.

Pro Tip: Develop a unit-based team project that encourages everyone to take these educational courses.

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MAKE CONNECTIONS AND GET INSPIRED

Let's Connect

At your next UBT meeting or huddle, use one of these team activities to start the conversation about equity, inclusion and diversity.

- » Belong@KP (KP Intranet)
- » EID Word Match
- » Word Scramble: Each Member an Individual
- » The Story of My Life
- » Intersectionallity

⊘ EXPLORE MORE

Inclusion activities. Use these simple guided activities to get to know your colleagues better and to create a more inclusive environment at Kaiser Permanente. (KP Intranet)

Find Inspiration

Use the stories here to find inspiration about unit-based team projects focused on inclusion, diversity and equity.

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA	
Improving health outcomes for Latino patients with diabetes	
Why it matters	» Latinos are among those at higher risk of diabetes, a serious chronic disease. » The Rancho San Diego unit-based team increased the number of Latino patients, ages 65–75, with blood sugar levels under control.
Here's what they did	» Provided patients with glucose monitors so the team could track patients' blood sugar levels and adjust their medications. » Standardized the steps needed to download and share data from the glucose monitors. » Improved team communication by consistently managing and sharing data from the glucose monitors.
Results	» Improved the Quality Composite Score for patients with controlled diabetes by 125% over 10 months.
What can your team do to monitor and track outcomes for patients at higher risk of chronic diseases? Read the full story. →	

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MID-ATLANTIC STATES

Providing prenatal breastfeeding education to Black moms

Why it matters	» Breastfeeding offers health benefits for babies and mothers, but Black women are less likely to nurse their children than women of other racial and ethnic groups, and face more barriers to breastfeeding resources. » The regional Newborn Care Center wanted to better understand and address the breastfeeding challenges faced by their African American patients.
Here's what they did	» Surveyed 45 Black moms as part of a "voice of the customer" project. » Doubled the number of prenatal breastfeeding classes in response to survey results. » Partnered with ob-gyn nurses to encourage African American women to enroll in the classes.
Results	» 12% increase in Black mothers taking prenatal breastfeeding classes over 1 year.

What can your team do to identify and address barriers to care for vulnerable groups of patients? [Read the full story. →](#)

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NORTHWEST	
Personalizing care by collecting patient demographic data	
Why it matters	» Collecting sensitive, personal information from patients can tell you a lot about their health risks and needs, and help improve the quality of care for all Kaiser Permanente patients. » The Addiction Medicine team in Salem, Oregon, began asking patients about their sexual orientation and gender identity to better understand their health challenges and needs.
Here's what they did	» Asked new patients about their sexual orientation, gender identity and preferred pronouns. » Trained staff on how to complete SOGI (Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity) profile updates for all new patients. » Entered SOGI information into members' confidential health records to inform subsequent interactions with care providers. » Worked with other teams specializing in mental health and addiction medicine to spread successful practices.
Results	» 450 patient profiles completed in 2022, up from 0 the previous year.
What can your team do to deliver more personalized care and better understand the unique challenges and needs of our patients? Read the full story. →	

Hank: Equity For All. See equity in action in this issue of *Hank,* with inspiring actions taken by unit-based teams from across the organization.

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ALL REGIONS

UBT health and safety champions: Leading workforce wellness

Why it matters	» Building a culture of health, well-being and psychological safety can help everyone feel included and safe sharing their identity, ideas and concerns. » Employees who feel included are engaged, productive and committed to Kaiser Permanente's success.
Here's what they did	» Unit-based team health and safety champions are volunteers who serve as peer resources for their teams. They share health and safety tips, activities and practices that can be integrated into the team's daily work.
Results	» Unit-based teams that complete well-being projects experience lower rates of injury and absenteeism, and better Culture of Health scores.

What can your team do to create a safe, healthy and inclusive workplace? Explore the main portal for UBT health and safety champions for handouts, tips, and videos. Take me there. →

SMARTIE Goal Worksheet

Get your UBT project off to a successful start.

Goals are a concrete way to drive results, but without an explicit equity and inclusion component, goals won't produce better outcomes for historically excluded communities, address disparities or support belonging. Introducing SMARTIE goals! SMARTIE stands for:

SPECIFIC	Be clear about what you want to improve. Define your scope of work.
MEASURABLE	How will you track improvements? If you don't have baseline numbers, the first thing you need to do is establish them. Be sure to record your baseline and target numbers.
ATTAINABLE	What is your current performance? Do you really think you can attain the goal in the time frame stated? Be ambitious, but make the goal achievable.
REALISTIC	Is this something the team can directly affect? Does it have a bearing on the main work of the department?
TIME-BOUND	Be sure to include when the improvement will be made by.

By incorporating equity and inclusion into your SMART goals, you can makesure your team's commitment to racial equity and inclusion is anchored by tangible and actionable steps.

INCLUSIVE	How are team members putting the Equity Principles into action? Who is the team collaborating with? Who is missing? Are the people most impacted meaningfully included in discussions and decisions? (KP Intranet)
EQUITABLE	What are the systemic barriers experienced by people in your workplace or by people you serve? What policies or practices contribute to those barriers? What successful practices can the team adopt and share?

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SMARTIE Goal Example

SPECIFIC, MEASURABLE and TIME-BOUND	We will increase our Real Time Feedback rating at our MOB/department from 3.8 stars to 4.2 stars by the end of this year.
ATTAINABLE and REALISTIC	We will achieve our goal by identifying and acting upon improvement opportunities from "voice of the customer" surveys from members and patients.
INCLUSIVE and EQUITABLE	We can incorporate equity and inclusion into our goal by: » ensuring we get direct input from members who reflect the demographic make-up of our MOB/department membership » offering the survey across different languages, times of day and modalities » including all team members in the design of solutions so that changes are understood, agreed upon and don't unfairly impact certain team members

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START WRITING YOUR SMARTIE GOAL

Use this template to write your team goal.

Time-Bound: Our team goal between _____ (start date) and _____ (end date) is to achieve this **Specific** and **Attainable** outcome:

We will know success when we see it using these **Measurable** standards:

A **Realistic** plan to achieve this goal includes these tactics/activities (consider time, resources, capacity):

	By (date):
	By (date):
	By (date):

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START WRITING YOUR SMARTIE GOALS

Before you start your project, answer the following questions about **Equity and Inclusion**.

Write your answers in the space below:

» What are we thinking of doing and why? Identify personal and organizational value and priorities.

» What do we know about current disparities/inequities among affected populations? What factors may be producing and perpetuating racial inequities? How did the inequities arise?

» How will we engage these communities? What is our plan or process?

» How can we adapt our existing processes/workflows to be inclusive and equitable for affected populations?

Sources: The Management Center, Kaiser Permanente National Equity, Inclusion, and Diversity, and The Nonprofit Association of Oregon

EXPLORE MORE

» Data Collection Planning Tool. Use this tool to determine what your team will measure, how they will measure it and who will collect the data.

» Plan-Do-Study-Act Rapid Improvement Model Template. Use this template to refresh your team's use of the RIM process and PDSA project mapping.

» 3 RIM Questions for Success. Ask these 3 questions to stay on track for your project goals.

» Equity-Centered Design Checklist. Use this checklist to prompt discussion when you want to apply an equity lens to your work at KP. (KP Intranet)

Use UBT Tracker

Once your team has a project idea, record your progress and collect data using UBT Tracker. Follow these 3 easy tips to accurately describe your project, identify tests of change and share results with other teams.

1. **Set aside time** during your regular UBT meetings to input your project. Then ensure you make updating UBT Tracker a part of your meeting agenda.

2. **Enter accurate descriptions and other RIM information** to show progress on your SMART goals and processes. Don't forget to describe your findings so other teams can replicate your results.

3. **Update. Update. Update!** Keep your team's projects in UBT Tracker up to date. Stay on top of the information in Project Details and Test of Change, and don't forget to enter the date of your update.

Pro Tip: Make sure all your team members are listed. Are you working with a physician or dentist? Add them, too. Don't forget you're all in a UBT!

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SHARE AND ADOPT SUCCESSFUL PRACTICES

Use these tips to sustain and spread effective unit-based team practices.

How Teams Can Spread Successes

» Shout from the rooftops. Share your success at strategically chosen meetings, UBT summits or social channels such as Viva Engage (formerly Yammer).

» Say specifically that you welcome having others copy your successful practices.

» Boil down and spell out the factors that helped your project be successful, so that other teams can focus on those.

» Choose a project that has a clear health equity, inclusion and diversity goal, such as lowering blood pressure in the African American community, increasing team awareness of unconscious bias by taking Belong@KP, or using cultural competency in dietary plans. (KP Intranet)

» Be a pollinator. Are you in a role where you get to interact with lots of different departments, facilities or regions? Be the person who brings ideas to others.

» Nominate your team or another team for the R.J. Erickson Award! Each fall, the R.J. Erickson Awards recognize individuals and groups for outstanding contributions to equity, inclusion and diversity at Kaiser Permanente. At the annual National Equity, Inclusion, and Diversity conference, the winners are presented their awards and thanked for their contributions. (KP Intranet)

How Leaders Can Bolster Successful Practices

» Be sure your facility or region has a structure and process related to spread.

» Measure the impact of attempts at spreading success. Does the same process have a different result in a different setting?

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LEARN MORE

Advance your understanding of equity, inclusion and diversity with the following resources:

ALLIANCE OF HEALTH CARE UNIONS

» **Take action** with our collection of racial and social justice resources, tips, and tools.

HEALTHY WORKFORCE

» **Mental Health and Wellness.** Kaiser Permanente believes mental health is essential to total health. We offer programs, services, and resources to help employees get the support they need. (KP Intranet)

LABOR MANAGEMENT PARTNERSHIP

» **Glossary: The Building Blocks of Partnership.** Browse this glossary to understand key concepts and terms related to the Labor Management Partnership.

» **Performance Improvement Glossary.** Review key performance improvement terms and concepts to help your team plan and implement a project.

» **Team-Tested Practices.** Get inspired by other teams.

» **UBT Tracker.** Use this web-based tool to collect and report data about your unit-based team project.

NATIONAL EQUITY, INCLUSION, AND DIVERSITY

» **Belong@KP.** Take this journey to foster inclusion and social justice in everything we do. (KP Intranet)

» **Diverse Observances Calendar.** Plan your meetings, events and even deadlines with these dates in mind to help foster an inclusive and compassionate environment. (KP Intranet)

» **EID Central.** Dive into this A-Z list of resources from National Equity, Inclusion, and Diversity. (KP Intranet)

» **Equitable Care Health Outcomes.** Looking for a project? Raise your awareness by knowing the health disparities data for your region. (KP Intranet)

» **Equitable Care Toolkit.** Download this toolkit to develop initiatives and projects, and/or redesign care paths for the advancement of equitable care. (KP Intranet)

» **Health Equity Portal.** Check out this repository of internal and external resources to advance equitable care. (KP Intranet)

» **NEID Glossary.** Review this list of terms sourced from National Equity, Inclusion, and Diversity trainings and communications, as well as inquiries to NEID. (KP Intranet)

» **Why Racial Equity Matters.** Learn more about disrupting bias and eliminating discrimination to provide equitable care and outcomes for all.

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