



Diversity, Equity, Inclusion & Accessibility Newsletter

September 2026 Edition

https://bnhra.org/Diversity_and_Inclusion



Building Every Day

Inclusion in the workplace is about more than simply having a diverse team—it's about creating an environment where people feel seen, heard, respected, and valued for what they bring to the table. When employees feel like they truly belong, they are more likely to contribute ideas, speak up, collaborate with others, and bring their authentic selves to work. Inclusion is built through everyday actions: the way we communicate, make decisions, recognize contributions, invite different perspectives, and create opportunities for everyone to succeed.

This month, we're taking a closer look at what inclusion really looks like in the workplace—and why it matters. From creating a culture of belonging to recognizing unconscious habits that may unintentionally leave people out, small changes can have a meaningful impact. **Inclusion isn't a once-a-year initiative; it's something we build every day, one conversation, one decision, and one person at a time.** Let's explore how we can make the workplace a place where everyone has not only a seat at the table, but a voice at it, too.

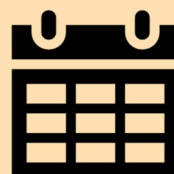
Culture in the "Little" Things

Inclusion isn't about making everyone think, work, or communicate the same way—it's about creating enough space for differences to exist and be valued. Every workplace is made up of people with different personalities, experiences, communication styles, and ways of solving problems. A truly inclusive culture doesn't ask people to blend in; it recognizes that those differences can make a team stronger. Sometimes the most valuable idea in the room comes from the person who sees the problem from a completely different angle.

One of the easiest ways to build inclusion is to become more intentional about the moments that can easily be overlooked. Ask someone what they think before making a decision. Give credit to the person who contributed the idea. Make sure the new employee isn't eating lunch alone. Notice who is consistently being talked over in meetings. These may seem like small actions, but workplace culture is created through thousands of small moments. **Inclusion happens when people don't just feel like they work here—they feel like they belong here.**

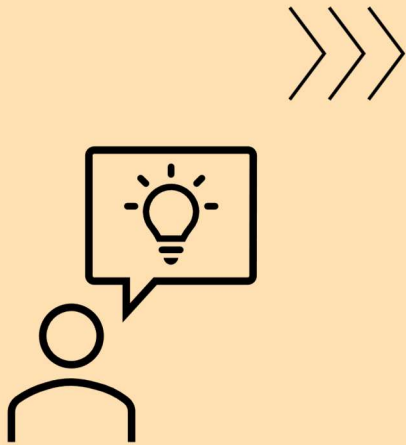
**September 28, 2026-
September 30, 2026 SHRM
New York State Conference**

**October 22, 2026 Equity in
Action Awards**



Diversity is a mix
and inclusion is
making the mix
work.

-Andres Tapia



Every Moment Matters

Inclusion doesn't always come in the form of a major initiative or company-wide program. Often, it shows up in the little things we do every day. Who gets invited into the conversation? Whose ideas are acknowledged? Are quieter employees given opportunities to contribute? Do we make assumptions about what people need, or do we take the time to ask? These everyday moments can shape whether someone feels like they are truly part of the team—or simply present in the room.

Creating an inclusive workplace isn't solely the responsibility of HR or organizational leaders. Managers, supervisors, and employees all influence the culture around them. Something as simple as making space for another person's perspective, giving credit where it belongs,

checking an assumption, or inviting someone into a conversation can make a difference. Inclusion becomes much more powerful when it moves from being a company value written on paper to something people actively practice.

Take a look around your workplace and ask yourself: **"Who might be missing from this conversation?"** Maybe it's someone who tends to stay quiet in meetings, a remote employee who isn't part of the hallway conversations, or a team member whose perspective hasn't been considered. Inclusion starts with curiosity. The next time you're making a decision, planning a meeting, or solving a problem, pause and ask whose voice could add something valuable. Sometimes, making room for one more perspective can change the entire conversation.

DEIA Spotlight – Alexis Jacobs

This month we are proud to spotlight Alexis Jacobs, Director of Staff Enrichment & Organizational Culture with Neighborhood Legal Services, Inc!

In the words of Alexis:

I encourage allyship by helping people see DEIB as part of everyday culture, not a separate initiative. I focus on creating space for people to learn from each other, inviting different perspectives, and asking how our daily choices shape the culture we share. I try to make that work feel doable. You don't have to be perfect or have all the right words. It's more about being willing to listen, learn, and act when there's an opportunity to support someone. That's also why, for us, belonging matters. We want people to not only be at the table, but to genuinely feel like they have a place here.

At NLS, we try to create a culture where employees have real opportunities to share their perspectives and help shape the employee experience. For me, being heard is about more than being asked for input. It's about knowing your perspective is respected and can lead to thoughtful reflection or change. I think inclusion becomes most meaningful when employees can see themselves as part of the culture, not simply participants in it.



Don't Forget! Equity In Action Awards!

It is with great excitement we announce the Equity In Action Leadership Forum and DEIA Awards!

Join us in celebrating the leaders in our community who truly embody and champion DEIA in their workplaces. Hear from our respected panelists what DEIA truly means, and forward our mission of creating meaningful pathways for all in WNY!

Register to attend today!

<https://bnhra.starchapter.com/meetinginfo.php?id=500>

Register Today!