Policies alone are not enough to build an inclusive workplace, and inclusion shouldn’t be a box-ticking exercise. At its most basic level, it is about ensuring that no one feels left out because of their age, ability, gender identity, ethnicity, religion or beliefs, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, or other factors such as social background. Ultimately an inclusive working environment allows people to be themselves and shine at work. *Here are some simple steps to ensuring a safe and welcoming placement site for students:*

1. **Examine your Mission and Vision Statements**
   1. Does it accurately reflect your desire to serve people of all abilities? Is it clear, concise, and welcoming?
   2. Invite feedback on your statements from different groups (staff, board, volunteers, clients, etc.).
   3. Examples:
   * *Inspiring and enabling all young people to realize their full potential as productive, responsible, and caring citizens.* (Boys & Girls Clubs of America)
   * *We are dedicated to improving the quality of human life and to helping all people realize their fullest potential.* (YMCA)
   * *(Core Value) We are inclusive, welcoming children, youth and adults regardless of race, religion, socioeconomic status, disability, sexual orientation or other aspect of diversity.* (Camp Fire USA)
2. **Build a Culture of Commitment to Diversity and Inclusion Among All Employees and constituents**
   1. For inclusion to become invested in your program, all agency members must understand what accessibility and diversity mean in terms of facilities, programs, identity and attitudes.
   2. Creating a culture of diversity starts with **you**! Adopt a critical lens to view personal biases. Ask yourself why do I believe this bias to be true? Where did I develop this bias? How can I change it?
   3. Be patient and determined with yourself and others -- reconstructing inherent biases takes time and thought.
3. **Evaluate Your Facilities and Program Offerings for Inclusion**
   1. Does your agency have an Inclusivity Pledge, a “Cultural Manifesto”\*, Core Values and/or statements included in your program materials and position descriptions? Review these with individuals at the outset of joining your organization, and later, as needed. Review or develop procedures for addressing emergent events.
   2. Check for accessible transit areas and/or post signs to provide support for people needing assistance.
   3. Build inclusivity questions into staff evaluations and activities such as strategic planning.
   4. Conduct periodic reviews with staff to gauge and plan further effectiveness for ways to exhibit inclusivity goals.
   5. Analyze your employee hiring or volunteer/intern intake process. The article [here](https://learn.joinhandshake.com/employers/3-hiring-practices-that-disadvantage-black-students/) shares tips on how to address systemic challenges by modifying your qualified student search criteria.
4. **Actively Work to Become an Ally**
   1. Allyship is gained from active personal efforts to support marginalized individuals. Everyone can take a moment to reflect on obstacles or challenges faced by marginalized people.
   2. Ally trainings, such as learning about Microaggressions and Bias in the Hiring Process, are available -- research local opportunities and share them with your staff and volunteers.
5. **Commit to Ongoing Training**
   1. Diversity and inclusion practices are constantly expanding and evolving. Committing to inclusivity requires you, your staff and volunteers to actively engage in conversations and trainings to better collaborate with and support all people.
   2. Find ways to involve employees and volunteers from all backgrounds in trainings.

\*For more on culture shift and Cultural Manifestos, check out **Seven Articles to Improve Your Workplace Culture** from the Stanford Social Innovation Review:[**https://ssir.org/articles/entry/7\_ssir\_articles\_on\_organizational\_culture#**](https://ssir.org/articles/entry/7_ssir_articles_on_organizational_culture)

