

## Culture and Belonging Policy

Policy Name	WEF Culture and Belonging Policy
Policy Category	Legal
Policy Number	1997-001
Policy Origination and Review Dates	October 1997; May 2015; May 2021; October 2024, June 2026
Requirements	Not required to comply with federal or state statutes
Review Cycle	5 years
Legal Review Needed	Yes

### A. General Policy Statement

WEF is committed to creating a culture where individuals from all backgrounds, identities, or experiences, feel valued, respected, and empowered to contribute to WEF's success and achievement of its mission, vision, and goals. This policy outlines WEF's commitment to fostering a culture that embraces and celebrates differences, advances equity, creates a sense of belonging, and provides opportunities for the growth and development of WEF members and staff. As intended, this policy ensures the advancement of intentional and progressive steps in regard to culture and belonging, with acknowledgement that success within any one element is dependent upon the success of the others. At WEF, these elements are defined as follows:

- **Culture:** The general customs, practices, and beliefs of a particular group of people, including their attitudes and behaviors towards each other that helps to shape a common identity. At WEF, there is recognition that creating a positive organizational culture requires consistent reflection and commensurate action for all that we do.
- **Belonging:** The emotional and physical attributes of being happy or comfortable within a place or situation and having a positive relationship with the other members of the group because they welcome and accept you. At WEF, belonging is the result of cultivating a welcoming and inclusive culture.
- **Equity:** An understanding that individuals and communities are situated differently, and taking action so that resources and outcomes are distributed in a just and fair manner. Within WEF, we strive to create a culture and practice where everyone can realize their full contribution and potential, and no one is disadvantaged because of their group identity or other socially determined circumstances.
- To ensure accountability in achieving an inclusive culture and sense of belonging and related outcomes for WEF members, volunteers, and staff, we are committed to developing strategies, short term milestones, and long-term goals to:

- Attract and Retain a Membership, Volunteer Base, and WEF Employee Workforce that provides equal opportunities and removes barriers to participation
- Provide Opportunities for Volunteer and Member Contributions and Growth
- Proactively Examine and Address Inequity, and Reduce Unintended Harm within WEF Systems, Practices and Processes at all Organizational Levels
- Promote and Practice Inclusive Communication and Behavior
- Measure and Communicate our Progress Regarding Culture and Belonging

WEF will, at all levels of the organization, provide culture and belonging-related education and training; implement use of culture and belonging-related decision making tools; utilize best practices; and implement WEF continuous improvement efforts for culture and belonging that incorporate data collection and metrics.

## **B. Culture and Belonging Leadership Roles Within WEF Governance and Administrative Bodies**

### **1. Board of Trustees:**

- Set overall strategic direction, vision, and expectations for culture and belonging.
- Monitor and assess implementation and progress of culture and belonging efforts through measurement and reporting.
- Role model inclusive and inviting behavior and proactively communicate the value of culture and belonging within WEF, the greater water industry, and other related industries.
- Create any committees/volunteer led groups and approve organizational policies and Board procedures to support culture and belonging, approving revisions as needed.
- Consistently communicate WEF's commitment and pathway to achieving an inclusive culture and sense of belonging.

### **2. House of Delegates:**

- Provide input and feedback on culture and belonging-related policies, practices, and procedures within the HOD and Member Associations.
- Role model inclusive and inviting behavior and proactively communicate the value of culture and belonging within WEF, Member Associations, and the larger water industry.
- Advocate and co-sponsor culture and belonging initiatives within their respective constituencies.
- Establish and encourage delegate participation in the HOD Culture and Belonging Committee.
- Support and/or participate in creating environments where:
  - WEF conference and event attendees, including exhibitors, are treated with mutual respect and dignity.
  - HOD members and all staff who interact with the HOD experience inclusiveness,

are welcomed, and treated with respect.

### 3. **Community Leadership Council:**

- Provide input and feedback on the development and implementation of culture and belonging-related policies, practices, and procedures.
- Support and monitor implementation of culture and belonging strategies for all CLC-supported or sponsored volunteer communities, accelerators, task forces, or advisory panels.
- Role model inclusive and inviting behavior and proactively communicate the value of culture and belonging within WEF and the larger water industry.
- Encourage participation from all communities in the CLC Culture and Belonging Council.
- Support and/or participate in creating environments where:
  - WEF conference and event attendees, including exhibitors, are treated with mutual respect and dignity.
  - CLC volunteers and all staff who interact with the CLC experience inclusiveness, are welcomed, and treated with respect.

### 4. **WEF Staff Leadership**

- Provide input and feedback on practices that promote culture and belonging.
- Support development and oversee implementation of a culture and belonging framework throughout WEF (*along with supporting tools, practices, processes, and resources*) that align with the Board's strategic direction, vision and measurement/reporting expectations on progress and performance for culture and belonging.
- Role model inclusive and inviting behavior and proactively communicate the value of culture and belonging within WEF, the larger water industry, and other related industries to address, promote, and embed culture and belonging considerations.
- Sponsor culture and belonging related activities, learning and training opportunities, celebrations, volunteer and staff work groups, and related efforts.

### C. **Supporting WEF Policies**

- [Code of Conduct - Events](#)
- [Code of Conduct - Members](#)
- [Member Discipline Policy](#)
- [Non-Discrimination and Harassment](#)