

Civil Rights Terms

Affirmative Action - a set of proactive measures that are used to counteract the effects of past and present discrimination, either intended or unintended, in employment and program delivery. The law specifically identifies historically underrepresented groups including Native Americans, Blacks, Hispanics, Women, Asians, Vietnam-era and special disabled veterans, and people with disabilities.

Age discrimination – a claim of discrimination based on age by an individual who is a least 40 years of age at the time of the alleged discriminatory act.

All Reasonable Effort – Cooperative Extension makes all reasonable efforts to reach women and people of racial and ethnic minority groups with special outreach activities to inform them about our educational programs. A variety of intentional methods are used to best reach protected audiences with Extension opportunities and programs. Some examples include personal contacts, mailings, sharing materials at a location that is often visited by members of the potential audience, identifying partners with whom the potential audience might have an existing relationship. “All reasonable efforts” are multiple attempts, both failed and successful, to engage the potential audience in programming.

Disability – means a person:

- Who has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities; or,
- Who has a history or record of such impairment; or
- Who is regarded as having such an impairment.

In addition, an individual may not be discriminated against due to *association with* a person who has, has a record of, or is regarded as having a disability.

Discrimination – any act or failure to act, impermissibly based in whole or in part on a person’s race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, physical or mental handicap, and/or reprisal that adversely affects privileges, benefits, working conditions, results in disparate treatment, or has a disparate impact on employees or applicants.

Diversity - the differences among people with respect to age, class, gender, physical and mental ability, race, national origin, spiritual practices, and other many other human differences.

Equal Opportunity - a situation in which people have the same opportunities in life as other people, without being treated in an unfair way because of any personal characteristics such as race, age, gender, religion, etc.

Limited English Proficiency (LEP) – refers to individuals who do not speak English as their primary language and who have a limited ability to read, speak, write, or understand English. These individuals may be entitled to language assistance with respect to a particular type of service, benefit, or encounter.

Parity – when the proportion of program participants by race, ethnicity and gender reflects that of the potential audience for a given geographical location.

Potential audience – Persons or groups within your defined geographic area who might be interested in or benefit from educational programming. Potential audience is estimated by using a combination of demographic data and the Extension educator’s knowledge and information about the population of the

county or geographic area. It can be as simple as estimating the population of your county, based on census data.

Protected class – in federal anti-discrimination law, a protected class is a characteristic of a person which cannot be targeted for discrimination. Examples include: race, color, religion or creed, national origin or ancestry, sex, age, physical or mental disability, veteran status, genetic information, citizenship.

Protected groups/audiences – based on Title VI of the Civil Rights Law of 1964, it is illegal to discriminate or deny access on the basis of race, color, gender/sex, creed, disability, religion, national origin, ancestry, age, sexual orientation, pregnancy, marital or parental status, arrest or conviction record or veteran status.

Race and Ethnicity

Race – is a group identity historically related to a local geographic or global human population traditionally distinguished as a group by genetically transmitted physical characteristics. Race is believed to be a social construct without biological merit. In the U.S., it was designed to maintain slavery.

Ethnicity – a group identity assigned to specific groups of people who share a common linguistic, religious and/or cultural heritage. In some cases, there is also a shared racial or national identity. All people are of an ethnic heritage. Ethnicity is not synonymous with “race.” For example, a black Frenchman might consider his ethnicity as French.

Race categories used in the 2010 Census:

American Indian or Alaska Native refers to a person having origins in any of the original peoples of North and South America (including Central America) and who maintains tribal affiliation or community attachment.

Asian refers to a person having origins in any of the original peoples of the Far East, Southeast Asia, or the Indian subcontinent including, for example, Cambodia, China, India, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Pakistan, the Philippine Islands, Thailand, and Vietnam.

Black or African American refers to a person having origins in any of the Black racial groups of Africa.

Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander refers to a person having origins in any of the original peoples of Hawaii, Guam, Samoa, or other Pacific Islands.

White refers to a person having origins in any of the original peoples of Europe, the Middle East, or North Africa.

Some Other Race includes all other responses not included in the race categories described above. Respondents reporting entries such as multiracial, mixed, interracial, or a Hispanic or Latino group (for example, Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, or Spanish) in response to the race question are included in this category.

“Hispanic or Latino” refers to a person of Cuban, Mexican, Puerto Rican, South or Central American, or other Spanish culture or origin regardless of race.

Public notification - A series of communication methods used to advise the public, particularly minorities, the underrepresented and underserved, and the disabled, of all UW-Extension program benefits and the protection against discrimination. It also notifies participants of the procedures for filing a program discrimination complaint.

Reasonable accommodation - is any change to a job, the work environment, or the way things are usually done that allows an individual with a disability to apply for a job, perform job functions, or enjoy equal access to benefits available to other individuals in the workplace. For program participants, accommodation means adjustments including reasonable modifications to rules, policies, or practices; environmental adjustments such as removal of architectural, communication or transportation barriers; or auxiliary aids and services.

Sexual Harassment – is any unwelcome sexual advance, request for sexual favor, reference to gender or sexual orientation, or other physical or verbal conduct of a sexual nature when: a) submission to or rejection of such conduct is used either explicitly or implicitly as a basis for any decision affecting terms or conditions of an individual’s employment, participation in any program or activity, or status in an academic course; or b) such conduct has the effect of unreasonable interfering with an individual’s work performance or educational experience, or creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive environment for working, learning or living on campus and has no legitimate relationship to the subject matter of the work or educational program.

Under-represented groups – are those whose participation rates are not yet at parity. The group that individuals are placed in is not based on scientific definitions or categories. People are placed in a group for civil rights reporting purposes, based on the group to which they appear to belong to, identify with, or are regarded to belong to.

Underserved audiences – any group of individuals with educational needs, often hampered by barriers, which has resulted in most of the audience not historically seeking or receiving Extension and research-related assistance and resources.

Underserved due to barriers – audiences which are underserved due to barriers that restrict or handicap their participation in Extension and research program offerings. Historically, the most common barrier has been one’s race or ethnicity. Other common potential obstacles include one’s gender, age, language, education level, income, physical or mental disability, the geographic location of one’s residence, access to transportation and to technology, one’s sexual orientation, religion or cultural values.

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