



## **Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, Justice**

### ***Position Statement***

updated February 2, 2023

The events of recent years have had a profound effect on parks and recreation. Parks and open spaces have become critical assets for communities. More and more, people are using parks, playgrounds and the outdoors to reap health and social benefits. In addition, the Black Lives Matter movement and the need to acknowledge and support our differences has increased every community's focus on equity and inclusion.

Unfortunately, research shows that many underserved groups and communities face higher health and economic disparities and may not live near quality parks, modern facilities, and open spaces. This has placed greater demand on park and recreation professionals to ensure that our parks and programs remain accessible, inclusive, and culturally relevant.

Nationally, under-represented communities comprise just 22 percent of park and recreation users—well below the 80 percent rate for Caucasians. In addition, the American Academy of Pediatrics, notes that children from these communities have high incidences of health concerns, chronic diseases, and poor nutrition. Meanwhile, we know that access to parks and open green spaces can help increase health, community and longevity. There is a real need to tap into and program for our underserved communities.

PRPS issues this call to create more equitable access to high-quality parks, programs, and services where everyone can experience the social, mental, and physical health benefits that park and recreation agencies provide. We need to consider and include all to ensure that all voices are represented. Great parks and agencies creates social cohesion, community engagement and better health. These are important and worthy goals for our time.

[Download the PRPS Diversity Equity Inclusion Justice \(DEIJ\) Toolkit for Park and Recreation Organizations.](#)