

# CREATING AN INCLUSION STATEMENT

The goal for each program or league should be to become an organization where diversity and inclusion are a fundamental part of the values and culture. Bringing together varied life experiences and perspectives adds significant value to your community and reinforces the concept of inclusivity. Nearly all successful organizations have an inclusion statement or philosophy that establishes the platform for their values and identity. This guide will help you develop your inclusion statement by providing general information and steps to writing a statement that is both impactful and practical. If you already have an inclusion statement, you can use this guide to review and revise it, if necessary.

## CREATING AN INCLUSION STATEMENT ALLOWS YOU TO:

- Create a public mechanism to share best practices throughout your league or program
- Ensure that parents and staff are aware of the statement and the goals of the organization
- Send a welcoming message to families of all backgrounds
- Create an accountability standard for all coaches and league participants
- Make parents aware of inclusion as an important public policy in your community
- Create a forum for better understanding and appreciation of individual differences

## WHAT SHOULD YOU INCLUDE IN YOUR STATEMENT?

Inclusion statements can and should serve a real purpose. There are three key elements found in effective statements: Value, plausibility, and accountability. In a couple of short sentences, you should publically share your league's promise and commitment to inclusion and the commitment to live up to those promises. It is important that your inclusion statement be short and as specific and relevant as possible so that everyone can quickly commit it to memory and repeat it to others.

A clear inclusion statement is a great way for coaches and volunteers to measure the quality of their work as leaders and hold themselves accountable. "Is what I'm doing inclusive of every participant and every family despite race, orientation, ability or talent level?" If yes-- keep going, but if not—it might be time to change course. This is a very simple decision to make when you are engaged and on board with a resourceful inclusion statement.

Here is the USA Lacrosse Inclusion Statement, plus some additional examples of statements that drive recognized national organizations:



- “USA Lacrosse seeks to foster a national lacrosse community that encourages understanding, appreciation and acceptance of all within its membership, volunteer base, and staff. Further, USA Lacrosse believes that broad representation and participation add significant value to the lacrosse experience of each of us, and that these valued experiences are enhanced by embracing underrepresented and underserved communities.” - Official USA Lacrosse Inclusion Statement
- “We respect, value and celebrate the unique attributes, characteristics and perspectives that make each person who they are. We also believe that bringing diverse individuals together allows us to collectively and more effectively address the issues that face our communities. It is our aim, therefore, that our partners, strategies and investments reflect these core values.” – The United Way Inclusion Statement
- “PGA REACH seeks to create a culture of inclusiveness by communicating and demonstrating that golf is an affordable and accessible game for all abilities, ages, and backgrounds.” – Professional Golfers Association Reach Program Inclusion Statement
- As a core value, the NCAA believes in and is committed to diversity, inclusion and gender equity among its student-athletes, coaches and administrators. We seek to establish and maintain an inclusive culture that fosters equitable participation for student-athletes and career opportunities for coaches and administrators from diverse backgrounds. Diversity and inclusion improve the learning environment for all student-athletes and enhance excellence within the Association. – NCAA Inclusion Statement

## **OTHER TIPS**

### **Keep It Short and Sweet**

Remember, this is a statement, not an essay. Try to sum up your statement in two or three sentences. A concise statement is more memorable and effective, so less is more.

### **Test It**

Distribute the inclusion statement to your program leaders and ask them for their feedback. Create and stick to a timeline to measure your effectiveness and create policies and procedures to enforce your strategies. You must follow up your inclusion statement with action, not just words. By doing this your coaches and volunteers will be more invested in it because they helped form and uphold your league’s policy.

### **Revisit It Often**

Too often, an inclusion statement is written and then forgotten about. Your statement ought to be an important representation of your league’s culture. Continuously placing focus on inclusion is not always an easy process. It will take time and effort, but it’s a significant component of any successful organization and should be woven into the fabric of the daily operations of your league. Your league should create and fully embrace an inclusive philosophy for your organization. Make sure to publicize your inclusion statement and communicate your philosophy to all staff, parents, and players.