The Changing Face of Dentistry —
Meeting the Challenge

A Diversity and Inclusion Toolkit for State and Local Dental Societies

Toolkit Overview

The toolkit can help societies:

- Facilitate conversations about diversity and inclusion
- Evaluate leadership diversity and pathways for inclusion
- Foster more welcoming and inclusive environments
- Discuss membership diversity success and action
- Implement systems of sustainability

Welcome to the State and Local Dental Society Diversity and Inclusion Toolkit

Dear State and Local Dental Societies,

The ADA Diversity and Inclusion Committee and supporting staff have laid a foundation for diversity and inclusion progress through the 2020–2025 Diversity and Inclusion Plan. The plan outlines three goals: increasing member diversity, creating a welcoming and inclusive environment, and build diversity and inclusion capacity, grow membership diversity and support the advancement of the health of the public.

Although the ADA has made progress toward these goals, more work is needed. As the demographics of dentistry change, our organizations must fully embrace diversity and inclusion in order to be competitive, and ready to support all dentists now and in the future.

We invite you to take the journey of advancing diversity and inclusion alongside the ADA. In this toolkit you'll discover ideas to compliment your dental society's diversity and inclusion efforts. The ADA applauds all of you who are committed to diversity and inclusion, whether just embarking on the journey or already making strides. And let's remember: "A journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step." – Lao Tzu

Where is Your Dental Society on its Diversity and Inclusion Journey?
The Diversity and Inclusion Continuum

1. Unacquainted – Diversity and Inclusion efforts are not on the radar of the dental society. Discussions on the value that diversity and inclusion bring to the society have not taken place.

2. Realization – There is an understanding of the importance of diversity and inclusion and the dental society is fostering conversations about how to better create a welcoming and inclusive environment for all dentists.

3. Intentional – The dental society and its leadership have made a formal commitment to diversity and inclusion and structural efforts are in place to advance efforts.

4. Commitment – Long-term, broad-reaching diversity and inclusion strategic measures are in place and align with the dental society's overall goals and objectives.

5. Culture of Belonging – All layers of diversity and inclusion are considered and supported, and systemic processes for maintaining inclusion are fully woven into the dental society's culture and operations.

Resources will continue to be developed and shared as we move forward together. Your feedback is encouraged so that we can continually improve the resources we offer. Contact a member of the ADA Client Services Outreach Team with your feedback or for assistance with your diversity and inclusion efforts. You may also reach us at diversity@ada.org.

ADA Client Services

Fostering Member Growth · Delivering Key Information and Services · Building Community

8 Key Action Steps that Your Dental Society Can Take to Help Advance Diversity and Inclusion.

- [Set the Stage for Diversity and Inclusion](#)

- [Gain Buy-in for Diversity and Inclusion: The Business Case](#)

- [Start the Conversation about Diversity and Inclusion](#)

- [Increase Leadership Diversity](#)

- [Build Member Diversity](#)

- [Foster a Welcoming and Inclusive Environment](#)

- [Take Action for Diversity and Inclusion Success](#)

- [Sustain Diversity and Inclusion](#)

Set the Stage for Diversity and Inclusion

The research is clear; the strongest associations are the ones that reflect the demographics of the country (diversity), united by a common focus and the ones that incorporate many different perspectives and experiences while fostering a sense of belonging (inclusion).

You'll hear different definitions about what diversity is and what inclusion is about. The key takeaway is that diversity is about who is in the room, while inclusion is about making sure everyone in the room has a sense of belonging. These are very key distinctions that should be kept in the forefront with any diversity and inclusion initiative. And because these distinctions are so important, the ADA's Diversity and Inclusion Committee changed its name from the Diversity Committee to the Diversity and Inclusion Committee in 2013 to demonstrate its recognition and commitment to not only diversity, but to inclusion as well.

Diversity versus Inclusion

Diversity – A group comprised of different people with different experiences. These differences include, for example, race, color, religion, gender, national origin, sexual orientation, age, disability, veteran status or citizenship. However, "diversity" does not address how different people function, work or determine value.

Inclusion – Enables us to strive to have all people represented and included and make everyone feel a sense of belonging, not only for their abilities, but also for their unique qualities and perspectives.

ADA's Definition for Diversity

Resolution 85H–2019. Resolved, that the ADA defines diversity through many dimensions, including, but not limited to race, ethnicity, national origin, gender identity, age, physical abilities/ qualities, sexual orientation, religious and ideological beliefs, professional practice choices and personal lifestyle preferences.

ADA's Diversity & Inclusion Policy

The ADA is committed to a culture of diversity and inclusion to foster a safe and equitable environment for its membership. In this environment, representation matters and every member is provided intentional opportunities to make meaningful contributions. Diverse viewpoints and needs are heard, valued and respected.

The ADA embraces diversity and inclusion to drive innovation and growth, ensure a relevant and sustainable organization and deliver purposeful value to members, prospective members, and stakeholders.

The ADA's commitment to diversity and inclusion will further advance the dental profession, improve the oral health of the public, and achieve optimal health for all.

Gain Buy-In for Diversity and Inclusion: The Business Case

The racial, ethnic, and gender diversity of the dental profession is expected to grow, as greater numbers of people of diverse backgrounds enter dentistry and older, predominately white dentists, retire. Also, while solo practice is the dominant form of delivery in dentistry, the number of dentists in solo practices is decreasing, while the number of dentists in group practice and other non-traditional practice settings is increasing. Dentist affiliation with DSOs is increasing. According to the ADA Health Policy Institute, in 2019 10.4% of U.S. dentists, including 20.4% of dentists ages 21-34, were affiliated with a DSO. This is an increase from 7.4% and 16.3% in 2017 respectively. In 2017, dentists working in DSOs lagged about 9% behind the ADA's market share. A cultural shift toward inclusion of dentists who practice in DSO settings will ensure a sense of belonging and greater retention among this group.

Unfortunately, **the growing diversity of the profession is not reflected in the membership of the American Dental Association** and its state and local counterparts. Key demographic groups, including women and racially and ethnically diverse dentists continue to lag the overall ADA membership market share. And, the growth of non-traditional practice settings presents unique membership value challenges. As the dental workforce becomes more diverse, ADA's market share of dentists may decline as these demographic groups make up a higher proportion of the profession.

While efforts to increase membership diversity are important, inclusion must be an explicit part of the ADA's culture at the national, state and local levels. An **intentional focus on inclusion** will ensure that efforts to diversify the membership are sustained within a culture and climate where everyone feels welcomed and valued.

A lack of inclusion is currently reflected in the disparity that exists between membership diversity and leadership diversity at the national, state and local levels of the ADA. The pool of emerging leaders within the ADA should reflect the changing demographics of dentistry in order for the Association to ensure its **relevance and sustainability**. As the makeup of the United States and the demographics of dentistry continue to change, this disparity will become increasingly apparent without successful D&I efforts throughout all levels of the ADA.

The ADA's **context and organizational perspective** for diversity and inclusion is representative of the dental profession being less diverse than the U.S. population, ADA membership being less diverse than the dental profession and ADA leadership being less diverse than ADA membership.

As the **face of dentistry changes** a culture of inclusion will reinforce ADA's leadership role within organized dentistry and ensure that the membership fabric of the ADA remains strong.

Not taking action to enhance diversity and inclusion across all levels of the ADA will result in missed opportunities to shape the industry and demonstrate the relevance of the Association to dentists. This would have a significant negative impact on ADA's standing credibility and ability to advocate that would fundamentally change the stature and influence of the Association as a leader in oral health. Consequently, a failure to act would also have dire consequences for state and local dental societies.

Moving Forward

In order to accomplish the ADA mission, a continued commitment to diversity and inclusion is critical. Although [diversity and inclusion progress](#) has been made, more work is needed for ADA's governance, programs and policies to advance diversity in the dental profession and nation's population. Moving forward, ADA's strong appreciation for both diversity and inclusion, coupled with its intentional focus on implementing its [2020-2025 ADA Diversity and Inclusion Plan](#), positions it for success with new and expanded priorities.

Start the Conversation about Diversity and Inclusion

The Landscape

The dental workforce is **becoming more diverse.**

Overall ADA membership market share **does not reflect** the racial, ethnic, and gender diversity of the dental profession.

A disparity exists between membership diversity and leadership diversity across all levels of the ADA.

Ten Discussion Questions to Spark Strategic Conversations within your Dental Society about Diversity and Inclusion
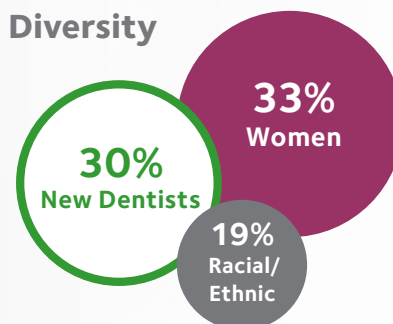
1. How does your dental society **define diversity and inclusion**?

2. **Why does diversity and inclusion matter** to your dental society?

3. What are the ways in which our practices, traditions, and overall environment create unexpected barriers to inclusion?

4. How can your dental society foster an **open discussion about the changing demographics of dentistry** and how it may impact the relevance of your society's services, programs, and mission?

5. How might enhancing diversity and inclusion efforts **increase your dental society's ability to serve its mission and sustain its relevance**?

6. What are the **potential points of contention or resistance** from your dental society's decision-makers related to diversity and inclusion?

7. How can your leadership **demonstrate its commitment to advancing diversity and inclusion** within your dental society?

8. What is the **level of member diversity** represented in your dental society?

   a. What growth opportunities exist within your overall market share, specifically as it relates to racial, ethnic, and gender diversity?

9. What is the **level of leadership diversity** represented in your dental society?

   a. If your leadership is not diverse, how can your dental society make sure the perspectives of dentists from underrepresented identities are reflected in its decision-making?

      i. How can your dental society benefit from having a diversity and inclusion committee?

      ii. What opportunities exist to increase diverse representation on your dental society's councils and committees?

   b. If your leadership is not racially, ethnically, and gender diverse, what pathways to leadership can be leveraged?

      i. What are the alternative options for diverse dentists to get involved if a formal leadership position is not available?

10. What next steps can your dental society take to **enhance diversity and inclusion** in order to maintain its position as a relevant and representative leader for future generations of dentists?
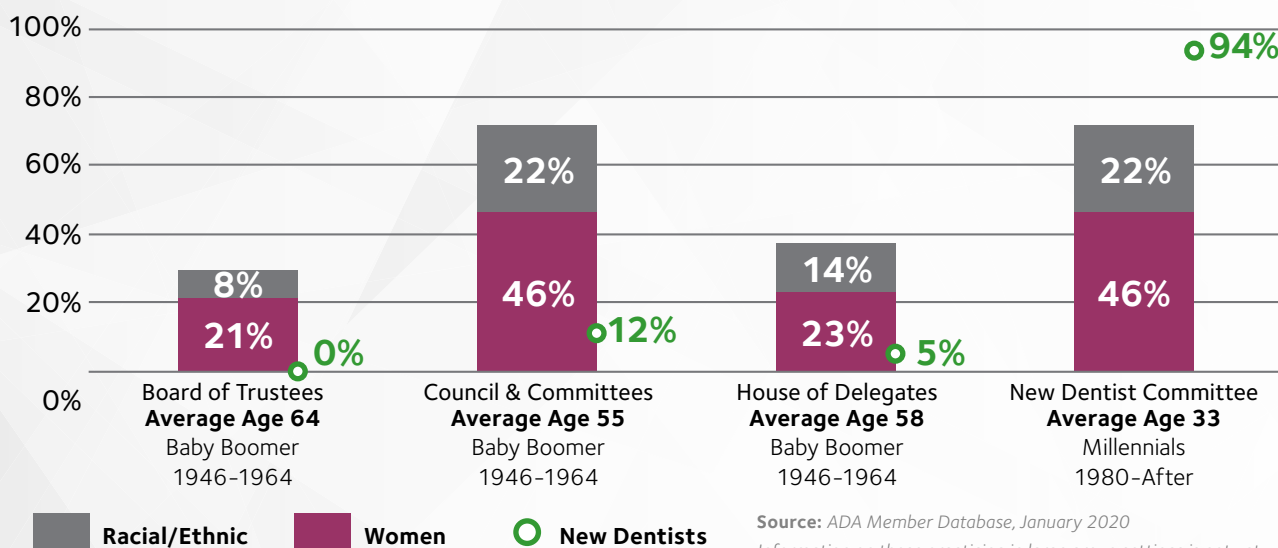
Increase Leadership Diversity

Best practice leadership standards across a variety of industries, including corporate, healthcare and association industries, **suggest that an organization's leadership and governance composition should reflect the varied constituents it serves**. Research shows that organizations who have leadership from diverse backgrounds, offering a wide array of perspectives, position themselves as more credible and relevant and are more likely to attract customers or members from broader demographics.

Currently the ADA's leadership diversity is not reflective of its member composition at the national level and also at many state and local levels.

ADA's Member Diversity

30% New Dentists

33% Women

19% Racial/Ethnic

ADA Leadership: Are We Ready for the Changing Face of Dentistry?

94%

	Board of Trustees **Average Age 64** Baby Boomer 1946–1964	Council & Committees **Average Age 55** Baby Boomer 1946–1964	House of Delegates **Average Age 58** Baby Boomer 1946–1964	New Dentist Committee **Average Age 33** Millennials 1980–After
Racial/Ethnic	8%	22%	14%	22%
Women	21%	46%	23%	46%
New Dentists	0%	12%	5%	94%

Legend: ■ Racial/Ethnic ■ Women ○ New Dentists

Source: *ADA Member Database, January 2020*

Information on those practicing in large group settings is not yet robust enough to include in our leadership diversity comparisons.

Know Your Leadership

Understanding the composition of leadership is the first step to building leadership diversity. Access ADA's **Best Practice Standards for Leadership Composition Guide (ADA House of Delegates)** to see an analysis of House of Delegate representation by state. In addition, download the **Leadership Composition Analysis Template** to conduct a comprehensive analysis of your dental society's leadership.
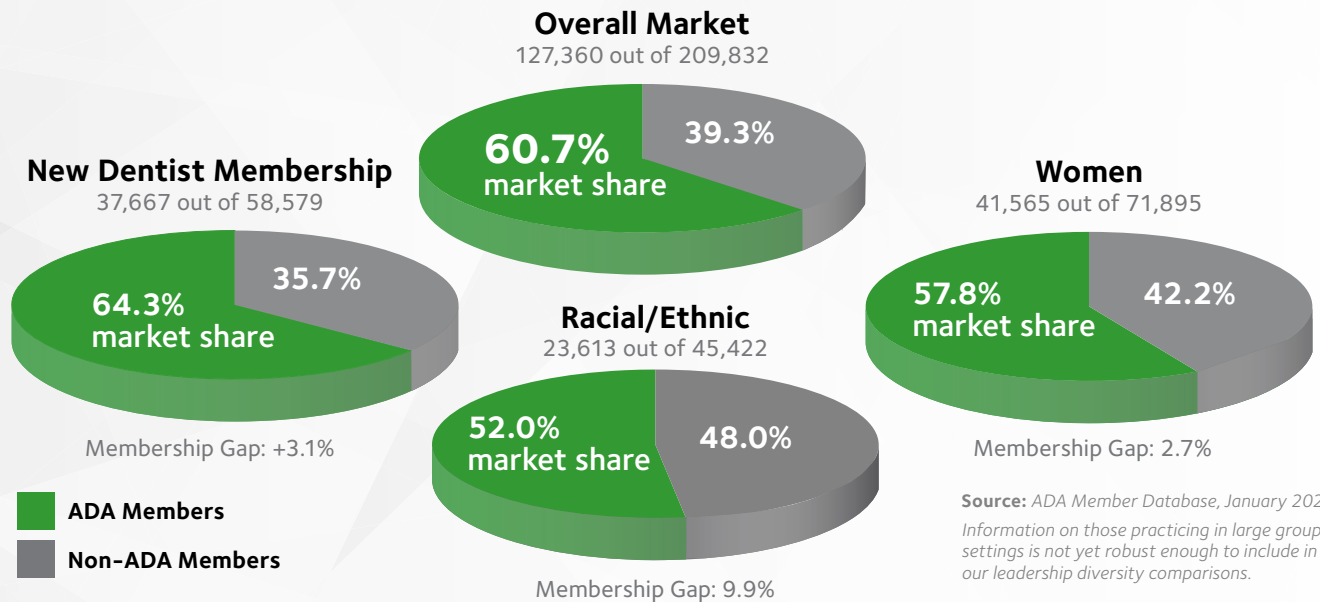
5 Strategies for Increasing Leadership Diversity

1. Build competencies related to diversity and inclusion into your leadership requirements.
2. Engage leaders from racially, ethnically and gender diverse dental organizations for leadership positions.
3. Cultivate a diverse pool of leadership candidates throughout leadership development programs.
4. Nurture potential and emerging leaders through targeted mentoring programs for underrepresented communities
5. Consider **current participants and alumni** from the American Dental Association's **Institute for Diversity in Leadership**.

Build Member Diversity

Currently, ADA membership diversity is not reflective of membership at the national level and also at many state and local levels. As the dental workforce becomes more racially, ethnically, and gender diverse, ADA's market share of dentists may decline. The decreased likelihood of women and dentists of color to maintain ADA membership compared with white men, may reduce ADA's market share going forward as these demographic groups make up a higher proportion of the profession.

ADA Membership: Are We Ready for the Changing Face of Dentistry?

Overall Market
127,360 out of 209,832

60.7% market share   **39.3%**

New Dentist Membership
37,667 out of 58,579

64.3% market share   **35.7%**

Membership Gap: +3.1%

Women
41,565 out of 71,895

57.8% market share   **42.2%**

Membership Gap: 2.7%

Racial/Ethnic
23,613 out of 45,422

52.0% market share   **48.0%**

Membership Gap: 9.9%

- 🟩 ADA Members
- ⬜ Non-ADA Members

Source: *ADA Member Database, January 2020*
Information on those practicing in large group settings is not yet robust enough to include in our leadership diversity comparisons.

Know Your Membership

Understanding the composition of your membership is the first step to building member diversity. Access ADA's **State Membership Diversity Tracker** to see an analysis of membership diversity by state. In addition, download the **Membership Composition Analysis Template** to conduct a comprehensive analysis of your dental society's membership.

7 Strategies for Increasing Membership Diversity

1. Each year, dental schools becoming increasingly racially, ethnically, and gender diverse. Start early with outreach to dental students.

2. Identify your target membership segment(s).

3. Send surveys to respective membership segments to find out what you do well, what they would like to see you do, as well as what they value from membership.

4. List out insights and perspectives from each segment along with the related membership value findings.

5. Re-examine your programming and communications to make sure that the needs of each segment are covered regularly.

6. If there is a membership gap, develop communications and events that align with the respective group's needs, interests and concerns.

7. Leverage **State and Local Diversity and Inclusion Activities and Events** from other dental societies.

Foster a Welcoming and Inclusive Environment

Working to make your dental society welcoming and inclusive is a critical component for diversifying your dental society. Building membership and leadership diversity without addressing any barriers to inclusion within the climate of the dental society can do more harm than good. It is not uncommon to recruit members from underrepresented identities, only to see them not return after the first or second event because they did not feel heard. Could part of the problem be a symptom of an organizational culture that does not feel welcoming or inclusive to new members or leaders, especially those who have identities that are different from the majority? The dental society gets one opportunity to make a first impression, this first encounter is extremely important and sets the tone for the relationship that follows.

> **"I've learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel."**
>
> — Maya Angelou

What Is a Welcoming and Inclusive Dental Society?

An inclusive dental society has an "organizational environment that allows people with multiple back-grounds, mindsets, and ways of thinking to work effectively together". In such an environment, voices are respected and heard, diverse viewpoints, perspectives, and approaches are valued, unconscious biases, are addressed and everyone is encouraged to make a unique and meaningful contribution.

In an inclusive organization, current leaders and members actively recruit and welcome newcomers. They are willing to change themselves and the culture of their organization to make room for new people, perspectives, ideas, and ways of working together.

Use the **Welcoming and Inclusion Lens** to gain insight into how you can create a more inclusive environment. A more in-depth lens tool will be available in October.

Take Action for Diversity and Inclusion Success

Diversity and Inclusion Planning Checklist

Once you have decided to take the journey towards inclusiveness, it is important to engage in planning. Diversity and Inclusion efforts often fail because of a lack of proper planning and preparation at the outset. To jumpstart your diversity and inclusion work, consider these five initial action items:

☐ **Assess Your Organizations' Welcoming and Inclusive Climate**

Understand your current state by assessing your welcoming and inclusive climate. The findings will give you a sense of how your organization is perceived among members and non-members. Make sure the your survey pool is reflective of the gender, racial, and ethnic diversity of your organization and community. The **Diversity and Inclusion Welcoming and Inclusive Survey** can be used as a template or it can be customized specifically for your dental society.

☐ **Audit Your Dental Society's Current Activities**

A framework for assessment is critical to success with diversity and inclusion. Assessment also helps determine next steps. What diversity and inclusion activities do you currently have in place? What diversity and inclusion activities could be implemented for greater success? Conducting this type of audit can help you as you move forward with a new or broader plan of action. The **Diversity and Inclusion Success Factors** can be used as an assessment starting point.

☐ **Align and Leverage Leadership**

It is not enough for one or two people to think advancing diversity and inclusion is important; the majority of your executive committee, board, staff and committee structure must be convinced of the value of this endeavor. Why? Because such an effort touches every aspect of your organization and will influence all that you do. A myriad of research suggests that a primary factor in successfully advancing diversity and inclusion is support from leadership. Start by having conversations about diversity and inclusion with organizational leaders to help make the business case for advancing diversity and inclusion. The **Start the Conversation about Diversity and Inclusion** questions can be used as a discussion starter.

☐ **Determine a Structure to Carry Out Diversity and Inclusion Initiatives**

Decide if you need a formal Committee or if a group or individual can be leveraged to enhance your diversity and inclusion efforts. If you determine that a committee or similar governing body is needed, refer to **Starting & Maintaining a Diversity and Inclusion Committee or Task Force** to identify next steps.

☐ **Draw up an Action Plan**

Sift through the various opportunities identified by your team and determine some reasonable short- and long-term goals. Based on your goals and resources, draft an action plan that defines specific objectives, strategies, timelines, budgets and responsible parties — and then hold those parties to it. The **Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan Template** can be used as an outline.

Sustain Diversity and Inclusion

Advancing diversity & inclusion is an ongoing journey that takes sustained commitment. Too often organizations engage in one and done efforts around diversity and inclusion. It isn't enough to hold a training session once every few years. Efforts around inclusion need to be sustainable and not crossed off a list after a weeklong communication initiative or a one-hour team building event. Being inclusive is an ongoing process.

Sustain diversity and inclusion efforts through personal, collective and shared power.

Personal Power

Use your personal power to sustain diversity and inclusion.

As an individual, you can impact the sustainably of diversity and inclusion through an intentional focus on your personal role in fostering a diverse, welcoming and inclusive environment.

- Speak up for diversity and inclusion.
- Be engaged in diversity and inclusion efforts.
- Build diverse teams where everyone feels a sense of belonging.
- Be aware of your unconscious bias.
- Be an inclusive leader.

Take these free tests from Harvard University and Catalyst to learn and discover more about yourself.

- [Unconscious Bias Implicit Association Tests](#)
- [Inclusive Leader Quiz](#)

Collective Power

Use your dental society's collective power to sustain diversity and inclusion efforts.

As a group, your dental society can impact the sustainably of diversity and inclusion through intentional creation of systems, policies, practices, communications and collaborations that support a diverse, welcoming and inclusive environment.

Shared Power

Share insights and perspective to sustain diversity and inclusion.

Peer-to-Peer sharing of successes and challenges can help societies, throughout the ADA system, enhance their efforts. To help foster success across the tripartite, please share your diversity and inclusion thoughts, activities or ideas with key stakeholders within your state, a member of the [Client Services Outreach Team](#) or via email at diversity@ada.org.

UNDERSTAND THE DIFFERENCE

Diversity
Identities

Inclusion
Practices
Communications
Collaborations

Equity
Systems
Polices

Toolkit Resources

- [Diversity and Inclusion Progress](#)

- [2020-2025 ADA Diversity and inclusion Plan](#)

- [Best Practice Standards for Leadership Composition Guide (ADA House of Delegates)](#)

- [Leadership Composition Analysis Template](#)

- [ADA Institute for Diversity in Leadership](#)

- [Current Participants and Alumni (Institute for Diversity in Leadership)](#)

- [State Membership Diversity Tracker](#)

- [Membership Composition Analysis Template](#)

- [State and Local Diversity and Inclusion Activities & Events](#)

- [Diversity and Inclusion Welcoming and Inclusive Survey](#)

- [Diversity and Inclusion Success Factors](#)

- [Start the Conversation about Diversity and Inclusion](#)

- [Starting and Maintaining a Diversity and Inclusion Committee](#)

- [Sample Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan](#)

- [Project Implicit (Harvard): Hidden Biases Test](#)

- [Inclusive Leader Quiz: Are You an Inclusive Leader?](#)

These resources are housed electronically in the Membership Contact and Connections area, under Diversity and Inclusion, on ADA Connect (**connect.ADA.org**). Hard copy versions can be requested through Susie Galvan at **galvans@ada.org**.