

VMC Foundation Cultural Humility Policy

1. Rationale for Adopting a Cultural Humility Policy

The term “cultural humility” can be considered a clarifying replacement of the commonly-used term “cultural competency”. The VMC Foundation believes that a greater understanding of diversity, equity and inclusion is a journey rather than a destination. Efforts to better understand issues around race, racism, gender, identity, white privilege and power dynamics cannot realistically end at a place where one has become “competent”; it is a life-long process best undertaken when one admits imperfection, bias, and ignorance—and remains humble and ready to learn, discover and change.

The work of the VMC Foundation directly supports an incredibly diverse patient population in Santa Clara County. A Cultural Humility Policy can benefit the VMC Foundation in a variety of ways, including:

- Culturally aware staff members are more successful at working with and building trust within multicultural communities.
- Increasing cultural humility among the board, organizational leadership, staff, and volunteers can help employees and clients feel more comfortable and secure in the workplace.
- Nonprofits with inclusive practices are often more successful at attracting and retaining high-quality talent.
- Nonprofit organizations work more successfully with partner organizations when they have strengths internally in cultural humility.
- Ultimately, greater attention to inclusion and cultural humility will result in our organization being more effective in our work because we will benefit from and utilize a wide range of talent, input, and engagement in achieving our mission.

2. Shared Understanding

The board and staff of the VMC Foundation shall practice active cultural humility, which starts with a common understanding of the following:

- Acknowledging that we interpret events through the lens of a particular culture — the norms for thinking, feeling, and behaving that are shared by a specific group of people.
- Remembering that people from another race, gender, culture et al, may have completely different interpretations of a given situation.
- Recognizing the natural tendency to see our culturally-based interpretations as “right” even though they represent one set of options among many.

- Valuing the act of seeking out alternative interpretations as we interact with people, make decisions, and solve problems.
- Cultural competence at the organizational level requires organizations to consciously design structures and settings to meet the needs of diverse stakeholders.

3. Our Commitment to Cultural Humility

The VMC Foundation puts Cultural Humility into practice in the following ways:

- **Explicit respect for diversity and equity.** The organization's published policies state clear consequences for discriminatory behaviors. Written procedures describe inclusive practices. The Code of Ethics affirms respect for cultures represented in stakeholder communities.
- **Intentional hiring practices.** Job descriptions mention cultural competence as a desired skill. The organization's leaders and hiring managers receive training on methods to manage biases, integrate diversity into the style and the structure of the interview process, and develop structured and inclusive interview questions. A standard statement of inclusion is incorporated into every job posting:

At the Valley Medical Center Foundation, we value diversity in experiences and perspectives. This diversity is vital to advancing innovation, critical thinking, solving complex problems, and creating an inclusive community. Because we seek a workforce with a wide range of perspectives and experiences, we encourage diverse candidates to apply, including people of color, women, veterans, and individuals with disabilities. We welcome applicants who will help us advance our commitment to an inclusive workplace and who desire to join a staff that is engaged in addressing issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion.

- **Deliberate development of cultural humility among staff members.** The organization will update its Cultural Humility Plan each year, outlining ongoing staff training to establish and grow skills and competencies in cultural inclusion, especially as relevant to our daily work.
- **Visible evidence of inclusion.** Community stakeholders will find themselves reflected in positive images and stories throughout the organization's range of PR and marketing materials. Supplies purchased for health programs (ex. Reach Out and Read books) will be offered in the most common native languages among program participants. Offices and meeting areas display artwork, posters, and signs with positive images of stakeholder cultures.
- **Pathway to inclusive leadership.** The organization's top levels of leadership actively embrace the variety of viewpoints that members of different races and cultures bring to the table. The board will review and adopt guidelines for the nomination of new members in order to ensure diversification of backgrounds, perspectives, and experiences.