

## MCOA Statement of Diversity, Equity & Inclusion

The Maine Council on Aging recognizes and celebrates the rich diversity and extensive experience of older people in Maine. As an advocacy and policy organization dedicated to ensuring that we can all live healthy, engaged, and secure lives as we age, we acknowledge that older people who experience systemic bias and economic injustice during their lives because of their race, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, ability, age, and national origin often have fewer resources and limited choices and opportunities later in life than those who do not. We strive to understand how systemic and institutional bias have impacted older Mainers and integrate what we learn into all aspects of our work. To this end, we commit to:

1. **Center Equity:** We will center equity as a core value of our work, taking steps to deepen our understanding of systemic barriers and working with partners across Maine to identify ways to dismantle these barriers and increase equitable opportunities for all.
2. **Advocate for Equitable Policies:** We will advocate for policies and practices that address and rectify historical and ongoing inequities faced by older people. In doing this, we commit to listening to those who are impacted and engaging them in crafting the policies and practices we advocate for.
3. **Inclusive Practices:** We will seek out and incorporate diverse perspectives and experiences into our work.
4. **Education and Awareness:** We will engage in education and awareness about the specific challenges faced by older people who experience systemic bias, elevating their voices in our advocacy efforts.
5. **Continuous Improvement:** We will regularly assess our practices and policies to ensure that they align with our commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion, and we will strive for continuous improvement to better advocate for the needs of all older adults.