



# Our Commitment to Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion



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HIV has always disproportionately affected people who are disempowered, stigmatized, criminalized or targeted by systemic racism and discrimination. The links between structural and social factors and people's health have been further revealed—and, indeed, exacerbated—by the COVID-19 pandemic. AVAC's vision of a world without AIDS and with global health equity means taking a stand against systemic injustices and ensuring that we continue to grow and evolve as allies and partners in the movement.

AVAC commits to redoubling its work of advocating for equity, diversity and social justice as we continue to seek solutions to HIV, related public health crises and current and future pandemics. Furthermore, a commitment to equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) within the organization allows AVAC to attract and retain the diverse, creative and committed team of staff and partners needed to fulfil our mandate. AVAC's 2022-2026 Strategic Plan highlights EDI and Equitable Partnerships among the critical enablers of success.

## **1 Equity, diversity and inclusion are key enablers of AVAC's work.**

Neo-colonialism, racism, misogyny, homo/transphobia, discrimination and other forms of systemic oppression of populations are undeniable realities of the global health space within which AVAC works. These historic and persistent injustices continue to drive the HIV epidemic and other health challenges in communities. AVAC will continue to promote greater attention to these issues that impede the field's ability to manage the HIV epidemic and/or ensure equitable access to health services. This focus will be evident in our people (Board, leadership and staff) and throughout our programs and partnerships.

## **2 A diverse team of AVAC staff and AVAC's Board of Directors will bring the creativity and productivity needed to reach the targets set out in AVAC's 2022-2026 Strategic Plan.**

We commit to enriching our staff, senior leadership and Board with the diversity of cultures, lived experience, skills and perspectives that are critical to achieving AVAC's mission. Our policies, processes and practices will reflect this commitment, and we will dedicate resources to offer equitable access to appropriate training and professional development opportunities for all team members. We will strengthen our management, recruitment, feedback mechanisms and performance review processes to improve EDI outcomes that help the organization achieve its goals. We will maintain a standing, staff-led AVAC EDI Leadership Council and a Board-appointed EDI committee, which will work together with AVAC senior leadership to guide institutional EDI efforts.

### **3 AVAC commits to working with our partners both in the US and globally to dismantle power imbalances that may impede progress toward our shared goals.**

AVAC's work is anchored in the strength of equitable partnerships to drive change. As a US-based organization focused on HIV prevention and global health equity, we will interrogate the privilege and access to resources and opportunities that AVAC has historically held. We will learn and adapt our behavior to welcome and integrate a diversity of cultures, experiences and viewpoints in order to bring richness and impact to our work. In solidarity with a global network of partners, AVAC will fight with renewed vigor to reform global health infrastructures that perpetuate health inequities.

### **4 AVAC will measure and learn from our EDI journey.**

We hold ourselves accountable to our commitment to EDI goals, using specific indicators in performance reviews and organizational plans. We will continue to seek out regular feedback from staff and partners and use it to improve our EDI performance, reporting progress regularly and in a transparent fashion.

#### **AVAC'S 2022-2026 STRATEGIC PLAN**

includes these guiding values for all of AVAC's work:

- We promote equity, solidarity and inclusion by working directly with affected communities and breaking down complex concepts and barriers to information and services.
- We put people and communities at the center of the work we do, integrating sexual health, harm reduction and HIV prevention.
- We ensure that products and programs are ethically designed and delivered to advance rights-based and equitable access to comprehensive, user-centered quality care.
- We cultivate balanced partnerships grounded in respect and transparency through bi-directional learning, capacity-building and priority setting.
- We are accountable to the individuals and organizations influencing how research and rollout are conducted and to the communities that most need access to products, services and programs.