What is an Equity Lens? It is a set of questions we ask ourselves when we plan, develop, or evaluate a program, policy, or decision.

Why should we use an Equity Lens? It can help us to identify potential impacts on institutionally underserved and marginalized individuals and groups as well as identify and potentially eliminate barriers. An Equity Lens *can help create a positive, respectful, and inclusive environment* within our branches.

When should we use an Equity Lens? You can use an Equity Lens when you are planning programs for your branch, engaging in outreach in the community, writing articles for your newsletter, or designing content for your website/social media.

What should we ask ourselves?
When planning a program, the branch leaders might ask the following questions:

- **Purpose/Assumptions:** What are we trying to do? What is the program/issue? What assumptions are we making?
  - What is our goal for this program?
  - Who are we assuming will be interested in attending?

- **Inclusion/Representation**: Who is included in the process? Who is not? How are we intentionally engaging multiple perspectives? How have barriers been addressed?
  - What barriers to attending might there be? (Is the venue accessible? Have we addressed child care needs? Do we need an interpreter or closed captions? Is the time one when most people can attend? Is the event too expensive? Are there any holidays we need to avoid? Would a virtual meeting allow greater attendance?)
  - How will we ensure all attendees feel welcomed and valued?

- **Impact**: What outcomes do we hope to create? What are potential unintended outcomes? How can we address them? How might our decisions increase, decrease, or ignore equity?

- **Communication:** How will we ensure communication takes place in an inclusive and culturally sensitive manner? Are we showing multiple viewpoints? Will others see themselves in our communications?

- **Evaluation/Feedback**: How will we know if we have accomplished our goal? How can we collect varied feedback about our actions? What have we learned for the next time?

- **Other considerations:**
  - Do our websites show members of color and of varied ages and abilities? Do we use language that is inclusive and welcoming? Have we included a way for a non-member to get in touch with the branch? Do we specify that events are open to the public?

Something to Keep in Mind

As your branch uses an Equity Lens to plan events, members should be encouraged to raise DEI concerns and discuss and work through issues when they arise, giving everyone a chance to be heard.

We build branch membership in part through our reputation in the community. The best way to maintain a reputation for mutual respect and inclusivity, is to demonstrate it.