

DEFINING OUR CULTURE

NIWL VALUES



Respect All People
We intentionally weave equity principles through the fabric of our work to create an inclusive environment for individuals and communities.



Innovate
We foster a culture of continuous growth and learning to build sustainable capacity.



Deliver with Integrity
We hold ourselves accountable, relying on evidence to produce quality work that partners can trust.



Collaborate
We work together to produce the best results for the individual and communities we serve.

RESPECT ALL PEOPLE

At the end of the last calendar year, the National Institute for Work and Learning held a series of reflection sessions with its staff. We asked project and portfolio managers what makes them tick; what principles or values they bring to their work; and how these play out in their every day. We captured four cardinal values that form the basis of NIWL's culture and describe them here.

NIWL may have technical knowledge and experience that helps our clients tackle their challenges, but we also know we can't replace local connections, cultural knowledge, and lived experience. NIWL staff members recognize the gifts our team members, clients, partners, and participants, bring to each project, and we do our best to craft solutions that **elevate and integrate diverse voices**.

"Intentional humility is something this organization does well."

-David Williams, NIWL Workforce Development Specialist

The individuals and communities we serve include those that may be impacted by poverty, displaced from education or the workforce, involved with the justice system, or experience systemic and institutional inequities. NIWL strives to ensure that program participants feel seen and heard in program planning and implementation.

Our prison **reentry programs** provide services to those returning from incarceration, giving them educational and learning opportunities that lead to productive lives. We design our programs around their needs and have formed an advisory council made up of young adults that co-creates our programs through shared responsibility.

NIWL's reentry program also works in diverse settings: rural areas, inner cities, and with

"People who have been incarcerated are (seen as) least and last. Our participants deserve more than just the bare basics....We put people with lived experience in leadership positions."

-Heidi Cooper Comenetz, NIWL Technical

a Native Hawaiian community. We have intentionally partnered with communities that have not typically been served by federal funding. In deference to local knowledge and conditions, we encourage each location to deliver customized services for their community, believing that innovation and customization is a better way to support our partners.