VIRGINIA CENTER FOR
INCLUSIVE
COMMUNITIES

VIRGINIA INCLUSION SUMMIT 2025
LEARNING LAB – MAKING THE CASE FOR BELONGING
CASE STUDIES

Directions: You'll work in small groups to 'make your case' for how belonging can address a specific real-world challenge. Imagine you're presenting to senior leadership, a board of directors, or a policymaking body. Your job is to convince them that belonging is essential to solving the problem you've been assigned.

Scenario 1: A regional nonprofit has seen a 20% drop in employee engagement scores over two years. Staff cite lack of voice in decision-making and feeling undervalued. Leadership has been trying to boost morale with monthly socials, but scores haven't improved.

> *(Sample response: When employees feel valued and have a genuine voice in decision-making, engagement naturally increases. Research shows belonging drives trust, collaboration, and discretionary effort far more effectively than surface-level perks. By creating opportunities for shared input and recognition, this nonprofit can address the root causes of disengagement. Building belonging here means moving beyond socials to meaningful inclusion in the organization's direction.)*

Scenario 2: A mid-size tech company is losing employees within the first year, especially among staff from underrepresented groups. Exit interviews mention a lack of career growth and "not fitting in" with the dominant culture.

Scenario 3: A school district reports rising stress and burnout among educators and support staff. Teachers feel isolated, unsupported by leadership, and unable to speak openly about workload concerns without fear of judgment.

Scenario 4: A healthcare system is falling short of patient satisfaction goals. Internal surveys show employees feel siloed, disconnected from the organization's mission, and unsure how their roles contribute to success.

Scenario 5: A public agency is adjusting to new state laws that limit diversity, equity, and inclusion language in training and recruitment materials. Leaders want to continue fostering belonging without violating legal guidelines.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What is the main belonging-related challenge in this scenario?
- Which tools, concepts, or data from the Rule section apply here (e.g., Why Belonging Matters?, Included Matrix, Characteristics of Belonging, Drivers/Barriers lists, and Belonging Barometer)?
- How could you use them to address the challenge?
- What specific actions would you recommend addressing this challenge? Consider culture, structures, processes, and measurement in your recommendations.