Curated Collection of Online Image Repositories Considering Diversity

This collection is a starting point for those looking to have diverse representation of individuals in their media. In being inclusive, make sure not to cross over into tokenism. As you make your selections:

- **DO** choose images that are appropriate for your story or topic.
- **DO** choose images to encourage broad representation and foster belonging.
- **DO** choose images knowing they have the power to disrupt norms and misinformed beliefs of "who belongs where".
- **DO** choose images that are authentic. Your own activities and human networks often provide opportunities to capture true snapshots of diversity!

- *AVOID* using diverse images only when you are talking about topics related to appearance, such as race or physical, visually discernable disabilities.
- *AVOID* choosing images that perpetuate stereotypes.
- *AVOID* the "appearance" lie, selling the image of diversity when the climate – for instance in an organization – is far from diverse and, often, not inclusive.
- *AVOID* trying to be "all inclusive", creating what ends up seeming to be a performative effort such as including as much diversity as you can in a flyer or slide show.

A Note on the Collection

This collection was last verified on the date in this document's footer. It is important that you read the licensing and guidelines at the originating source to confirm permissions. To learn more about using others' works, see Johns Hopkins Sheridan Libraries copyright basics.

The resource titles are shared here as they are presented on their linked websites.

Free or Nearly-Free Resources

This is a list of online sources that hold images falling within the public domain (works not protected by copyright law), Creative Commons licensing, or other similar copyright notices that provide permissions to download, use, and share the photos. While a donation is sometimes suggested, this section's items allow images to be downloaded at no cost.

Age Positive Image Library – These photos, shared under CCO 1.0 from the Centre for Ageing Better, represents people over 50. The repository can be searched by keyword or topic. Learn more in their user guide.

AllGo Plus-Size Stock Photos – Attribution is requested, but the images showing plus-size models are free to use without restriction. Photos feature body-positivity in everyday settings of office, home, and swim.

Americans with Disabilities – Home Safety Best Practices – This U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) site features a small collection of photos of individuals with visible impairments and disabilities interacting in a home environment. All photos are royalty free and available for download.

CIRA Indigenous Stock Images – The small collection, hosted by the Canadian Internet Registration Authority (CIRA), includes authentic photos, created in Indigenous-owned locations and communities in Canada by an Indigenous photographer. The FAQ requests attribution, but the images are free to download and use.

Disabled and Here Collection – This collection, whose images are licensed under CC BY 4.0, showcases photos of disabled BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, people of color). You can browse by category (community, social justice, nature, …) or keyword tags (chronic illness, meeting, rollator, …). The site is maintained by Affect.

Disability:IN Inclusive Stock Photography – A small collection of individuals with visible physical disabilities in professional, business environments. The images are shared under CC BY-ND 4.0.

The Gender Spectrum Collection – This stock photo library includes trans and non-binary models "beyond the clichés" in images licensed under CC BY-NC-ND 4.0. Categories include lifestyle, relationships, technology, work, health, and outdoors. Please refer to their guidelines that provide important information regarding trans and any gender representation.

Illustrate Change – This database is focused on medical illustrations, most featuring dark skin tones. You can search by keyword or filter by category such as eye disease or oncology. The images are protected by copyright but are free to use for educational and training purposes. Make sure to read about the organizations supporting this collection.

Images of Empowerment – This photograph collection celebrates real women from countries all across the globe. Categories beyond the country of origin include work and reproductive health. All photos are shared under CC BY-NC 4.0.

Microsoft Premium Creative Content (i.e. Microsoft 365's Stock Images) – This expanding collection of royalty-free stock imagery can be searched by keyword, including physical characteristics. The images can only be used within Microsoft Office or SharePoint applications. Per the terms of their licensing, you can modify the images as well as export the edited file containing the images (i.e. the entire PowerPoint or Word document) to a different file format such as a PDF. But **you cannot copy, save and use one of their images in a different content editor,** such as Adobe or Canva products.

Nappy.co – The Nappy collection features stock photos of Black and Brown people in a broad range of categories including activism, nutrition, work, nature and more. While their license states the photos shared on the website are licensed under CC0, there is also a fee-based alternative.

The Noun Project Photo Collection – This large collection includes both premium and free images. The free images have varying license restrictions, but many of the photos fall under CC BY-NC-ND 2.0. (The site also offers icons for download.) The repository is searchable by keyword and tags, but is also sorted by "At the Office", "Medical", and "Friends" categories. Some tag examples include "60 69 years", "bipoc", "woc", and "disability".

Pexels – This is a large database of free photos *and videos* licensed for non-commercial use, allowing derivatives, with a very broad license that encourages creativity. The media is searchable by keywords and each result is tagged which, when you find one image, helps you to find "more like this." There are also collections including "National Disability Independence Day", "Stay Healthy", "Fathers & Sons", and "Festivals of the World".

Queer in Tech – This is a small collection of photos licensed under CC BY 3.0 on Flickr. Read the story behind the collection in this blog post.

Unsplash – The photos in this large collection are both premium (fee-based) and free, but you can filter all search results by license. The free images fall within the Unsplash license that stipulates the visuals can be used for both commercial and non-commercial purposes. Categories include types of images and classifications such as animals and travel. However, the entire collection is searchable by keyword. When you find a photo, click on an image tag to find related photos. These tags are wide-ranging such as: "Sign Language", "Religion", "BLM", "Hijab", "Old age", and "Scandinavian".

WOCinTech (Women of Color in Tech) – This is a large collection of photos, licensed under CC BY 3.0 on Flickr, showcasing women of color in business environments. Read the full description on the WOCinTech blog post.

Fee-Based Resources

There are plenty of fee-based stock photo providers where you can search thousands of images. This is just a *small* sampling of some that were selected for their diversity and often comparatively low cost for the lowest resolution images.

Black Illustrations – This resource includes high resolution digital images that are *not* photographs. Most come as image packs that you can download with categories like yoga, STEM, fathers, Black history, activism, wildlife, education, and disability.

Body Liberation Stock Photos – Illustrations and photos of body positive images, mostly of plus-size female-presenting individuals, are available for purchase. Navigate to the bottom of the home page to filter by tags (keywords) or go straight to the categories page to find a wide variety of images.

Disability Images – This collection of photos, illustrations, and images can be searched by keyword or browsed by category. Some of the categories are ataxia, cerebral palsy, headache, hidden disabilities, prosthesis, and seniors.

Lean In – This photo collection (hosted on Getty Images and iStock by Getty Images) feature "women and girls, families of all kinds, and men as caretakers as well as earners." Like all Getty images, you can browse by keyword and category. Results can be filtered by age and ethnicity.

Photoability – This stock photo site allows downloads of individuals with visually-discernable disabilities in different sports and travel settings.

pocstock – This site features stock photos, illustrations, and videos of people of color. There are categories you can browse ranging from "Healthy Living" to "Black don't Crack". You can also search by keywords and filter by race, ethnicity, and gender identification.

Society Pix (Gesellschaftsbilder by Sozialhelden, i.e. Images of Society with a New Perspective) – This impressive collection features photos categorized by disabilities (assistive devices, down syndrome, visual impairment, and more), LGBTQIA+, migration, specific events, and other topics including old age, work, and relationship. As of September 2024, these images now require a fee-based license and attribution for all use (including educational media).