



Racial Equity Audit Report

Human Resources | Health & Human Services

Worcester, Massachusetts

PREPARED BY

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Acknowledgement

The Letterman White Consulting, LLC team would like to thank the City of Worcester, Massachusetts for selecting us for this important project and for the participation and support of Acting City Manager and Interim Chief Diversity Officer, Eric Batista, Commissioner of Health and Human Services, Dr. Matilde Castiel, MD, and Director of Human Resources, William Bagley, JD, for their generosity of time, participation, and support throughout the entire audit process. The openness to our suggestions along the way combined with the accessibility we were given to people and information is a strong indication of the City's commitment to continuous improvement and innovation in expanding the diversity of its workforce to mirror its community and improving its culture of racial equity and inclusion.

Foreword

Worcester government senior leadership chose to understand the lived experiences of individuals from traditionally marginalized groups who are employees of the city workplace. They chose to find out whether employees of different races experienced working for the city differently from those who are white. As a city known for its diversity and large immigrant population, these senior leaders chose to hold up a mirror, figuratively, and look at the data openly and honestly. Only a government that is actively striving for a workplace culture of diversity, equity, and inclusion does that. Worcester government is actively striving for a workplace where diversity exists at all levels of leadership and a workplace culture of equity and inclusion.

When reading this report, keep in mind the following:

- A racial equity audit explores the degree of similarity or difference in data collected from people of different races.
- A racial equity audit aims to provide data from traditionally marginalized groups so that when the percentage of marginalized people in the entire system is low, their perspective is made obvious and does not get lost as a low overall percentage in a quantitative data study where data is not disaggregated by race.
- This project audited the HR and HHS departments only. Although not all departments were audited, the results from the two departments were consistent.
- In HHS, we collected data on employee engagement through a written, anonymous survey. In HR, we collected additional data in the nature of documents and descriptions of Talent Cycle processes affecting the experiences of all employees across the City workforce.
- The data collected from HHS employees was consistent with the data collected from HR employees.
- Data from employees in their own words is often the most insightful window into the culture of a workplace and also the most difficult for senior leaders to read without defensiveness. A quote may reflect one person's perception, observation, or

experience; however, when three or more people express the same theme in slightly different words, the quote we select to share is emblematic of the workplace culture. The quote helps convey an experience of groups, who feel similarly marginalized.

Strategic Blueprint

Based on the results of the audit, LWC developed a strategic plan for improving racial equity. Although the audit focused on two departments, Health and Human Services and Human Resources, it is not possible to improve racial equity at the department level without first improving the culture of racial equity and inclusion at the City Government level. Interrelated, overlapping, and interacting levels and divisional elements comprise a system. These elements affect the culture broadly and also more narrowly within distinct departments. Further, changing a city's overarching strategies, structures, policies, and processes is first necessary before changes at the department and other system divisional levels will take hold. Finally, our data indicated significant opportunities for improving racial equity with a primary focus at the higher level of the system.

LWC's recommendations are based on the City of Worcester's (the City's) Request for Proposals (RFP), LWC's racial equity audit results, and current researched-based best practices for developing diversity, equity, and inclusion. The audit, as requested in the RFP, assessed obstructions to the City's commitment to dismantling institutional racism and building a more equitable and inclusive municipality. LWC created this data-driven plan, based on what we learned from the audit data.

Implicit in the RFP's overarching goal is the need to create a municipal culture of inclusion and equity, which is only possible in a system with a growth-mindset culture. In a growth mindset culture, formal leaders, opinion leaders, and respected peers view intelligence, abilities, and talents as learnable and capable of improvement through effort instead of viewing intelligence, abilities, and talents as inherently stable and unchangeable over time. All recommendations contribute to developing a growth mindset culture and a culture of inclusion and equity at the level of the municipality itself and also the HR and HHS levels of the system.

The Plan is divided into three sections, - recommendations relating to the municipality in general and recommendations related specifically to HR and specifically to HHS. Improvements to systemic elements at the municipal level will affect racial equity within all departments. Improvements to divisional elements only usually do not produce the intended results without improvements at the municipal level.

The racial equity strategic plan recommends: divisional structure and process changes; policy and plan review, revision, and/or development; professional development design and content; and strategy updates. This "blueprint" provides direction to carry forward this work with strategies and methods to disrupt systems of racial inequities and disparate treatment and create a culture of inclusion where decisions are made equitably and diversity at all levels of

leadership is encouraged and valued. Where additional details are required, refer back to the Worcester Racial Equity Audit Final Report.

City-Level Recommendations

1. Improve logistical and psychological readiness for DEI/RE change initiatives in general and for specific change initiatives as they arise.
 - a. Develop the rationale for the changes anticipated. The rationale should explain the nature, urgency, and importance of the problem-to-be solved, the vision of what will be different and better, and how the changes will be valuable to the City as a whole, the workplace as a whole, and individually all employees.
 - b. Review resource availability:
 - i. Do people have sufficient time, knowledge, and skills to do what they are being asked to do?
 - ii. Is there sufficient technology?
 - iii. Is there sufficient funding?
 - c. Introduce learning and development as needed to improve skills required
 - i. Innovation, risk-taking, and learning;
 - ii. Strong communication skills for holding difficult, tension-filled conversations; and
 - iii. Cabinet member coaching.
2. Revise the municipal Strategic Plan framework, which is focused on four priority areas, to include diversity, equity, and inclusion generally and racial equity specifically (DEI/RE) as the fifth priority area and goal.
 - a. Cabinet reviews and discusses the Equity Audit.
 - b. Cabinet members collaborate to determine DEI/RE values and Mission Statement.
 - c. Cabinet solicits input from City Council on values and Mission Statement.
3. Develop and execute a communications plan to support DEI/RE change initiatives.
 - a. Develop consistent, powerful, and prolific messaging by senior leadership through written and oral messages and actions about:
 - i. The findings from the HR and HHS Racial Equity Audit report;
 - ii. The City's commitment to promote racial equity and inclusion in general and diversity, equity, and inclusion generally;
 - iii. Why change is urgently needed;
 - iv. The important problems change will address;
 - v. The benefits expected to be produced for the City itself, the workplace, the community served, and individuals personally - that this is not a "zero-sum game;" and

- vi. The values that this change aligns with and that these values matter because managers support them, opinion leaders support them, and peers support them.
- b. Produce and disseminate an annual Diversity Report.
- c. Identify avenues of communication (in person, and virtual, social media).
 - i. Develop partnerships with external stakeholders for message-spreading.
 - ii. Develop options for employees and community members to provide anonymous feedback and questions about change initiatives.
 - iii. Develop and publicize a webpage where questions about change initiatives are answered.
 - iv. Hold community, “Town Hall” meetings where people, together share and discuss information, experiences, expectations, and concerns (feelings of anxiety, loss, and confusion) and include a question and answer segment for two-way feedback.
 - v. Hold facilitated discussions on the difficult tension-filled issues related to diversity, equity, and inclusion.
 - vi. Create and monitor two-way feedback channels between staff, managers, directors, and Cabinet members to cultivate a robust, development-focused dialogue.
- d. Update webpages.
 - i. Include, in prominent locations throughout the website, information about City actions to improve racial equity and DEI/RE initiatives in general such as the banner at the top of the home page for Executive Order on Systemic Racism and updates.
 - ii. Use titles for webpages consistently – in links, web addresses, and top page titles.
 - iii. Decide on the name for the Diversity Office function and use it consistently on webpages.
 - iv. Adjust the website search engine to make sure that when someone searches for racial equity, diversity, or inclusion they get relevant results and avoid an excess of irrelevant results.
 - v. Update videos on [Where Diversity Works | City of Worcester, MA](#) page.
 - vi. Revise the Affirmative Action/Equal Employment Opportunity policy and page.
 - vii. Update the workforce data on the “Executive Office of Diversity and Inclusion” page.
 - viii. Include a link to the Annual Diversity Report, which should be prepared and posted annually.

- ix. When learning and development related to racial equity and DEI in general are developed and offered, post them with links to register on the DO function webpage.
 - x. Show the collaborative relationships between the DO and HR functions on both webpages.
 - xi. Develop separate pages with links for any areas that get transferred under the DO functionality.
 - xii. Develop Employee Resource Groups (ERGs) and then add a page for ERGs where they are described and it is easy for employees to get information and sign up.
 - xiii. Include a link to each division under HR; e.g., Benefits, Labor Relations, Learning and Development, Hiring, etc., details for each area, and contact information.
 - xiv. If existing career development training is offered, include a description and link for signing up.
 - xv. Clarify and align the labor and non-labor position application processes as appropriate. Make it easy to apply from the website to open positions in the City, regardless of whether they are labor or non-labor.
 - xvi. Add a non-discrimination statement to the home page and on all pages related to employment opportunities or of interest to employees.
 - xvii. Make it easy to find information on employment discrimination and how to file a complaint and make it easy to file a complaint.
- e. Design and develop leadership playbooks with DEI/RE strategy and talking points so that all leaders can communicate consistent messaging across the organization during team meetings.
4. Develop the City's DEI/RE vision, goals, objectives, and metrics.
- a. Convene a cross-divisional team of 4-6 people as the working group for developing the vision, goals, objectives, and metrics.
 - i. Include representatives from Cabinet, City Council, Community, and employees.
 - ii. Build a socially diverse team.
 - b. Develop the objectives for the DEI/RE priority area (also called goal on City's strategic plan webpage) for inclusion on City's strategic plan webpage.
 - c. Identify key performance indicators (KPIs) for each objective identified and.
 - i. Workforce diversification at leadership, and management levels with 3-5-year targets.

- ii. Identify hiring, promotion, and retention KPI targets in general and for evidence of workforce diversification
 - iii. With input from CDO and CHRO, identify “say” and “do” behaviors of growth mindset, inclusion, and equitable decision making for inclusion in employee hiring and performance evaluations, career ladders, and professional development.
 - d. Create toolkit for divisional use in their strategy implementation design and execution to ensure alignment with City’s DEI/RE vision, goals, objectives, and metrics.
5. Develop a City-wide plan for collecting, reviewing, and analyzing disaggregated demographic data related to climate and culture.
- a. Select and incorporate the technology.
 - b. Collect data quarterly.
 - c. Collect disaggregated data about people’s experiences with and results of the talent cycle processes (recruiting, interviewing, hiring, onboarding, evaluation decisions, promotions, and terminations), benefits usage, employee attrition rates and intention to leave, employee engagement and satisfaction, and other “climate”-type data.
 - d. Create a cross-divisional committee with a diverse group of 4-6 team members, co-led by CHRO and CDO to review, analyze, and produce publicly available reports on data quarterly and then annually.
 - e. Post reports on an appropriate webpage.
 - f. Distribute reports to divisional leaders.
6. Task divisions with developing their DEI/RE Implementation Plans in alignment with City’s DEI/RE priority area and values, mission, vision, goals, objectives, and KPIs.
- a. Chief Diversity Officer (CDO) or DO representative and CHRO or HR representative collaborate with divisional leadership as expert, advisory partners, to develop divisional DEI/RE Implementation Plans.
 - b. Divisions execute implementation plans.
 - c. Divisional leaders discuss disaggregated data reports provided quarterly for insights into themes and trends to determine what is working well and what should be changed in divisional implementation to meet DEI/RE goals.
 - d. Build department scorecard snapshots to support monitoring and increasing visibility of workforce composition trends through segmentation across hiring, promotion and separations.
 - e. Review workforce composition data quarterly with senior leadership to increase knowledge and understanding around representation, diverse hires, promotions, and separations.

- f. Incorporate workforce composition data into workforce planning activities and utilize data to accurately set diversity goals per department and talent segment.
7. Develop a role, comprehensive plan, and set of processes to reduce discrimination, with reporting and investigation programs similar to what cities like Philadelphia, New York, and Boston have.
 - a. City council should develop a set of antidiscrimination regulations aligned with the City's DEI/RE values and Mission Statement.
 - b. City Council or the City Administration should develop a Human Relations Agency to enforce those laws.
 - c. See examples. Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, has a [Commission of Human Relations](#) responsible for enforcing antidiscrimination laws, including the City's [Fair Practices Ordinance](#). It began with an [addition to their city charter](#) for a human relations agency. This is different from the process and investigative bodies for filing a [discrimination claim against an employee](#) of the city.
8. Restructure the Human Resources and Diversity Office functions to centralize them.
 - a. Introduce lateral processes to ensure alignment of values, vision, and goals across divisions. (Examples of lateral process are cross-divisional teams, working groups, or advisory committees that review DEI/RE data or support divisional implementation planning) Other examples include:
 - i. A DEI/RE working group that connects HR, divisions, DO, and D&I Advisory Committee;
 - ii. Inviting thought leaders into working groups and ensuring the group collectively mirrors the diversity in the Worcester community;
 - iii. Tasking a diverse group with overseeing the development and implementation of DEI/RE initiatives; and
 - iv. Structuring the internal investigation role and function under the CDO to avoid conflicts of interest arising with placing it under HR. The line of authority should not go to the function necessarily implicated in employee management complaints.
 - b. Fund Chief level position salary and office budget to be marketplace competitive.
 - c. Revisit, revise, and clarify leadership roles, responsibilities, authority, and collaboration requirements with other leadership roles to ensure clear lines of authority.
 - d. Revise internal job descriptions.
 - e. Review and revise job posting for CDO.
9. Introduce learning and development to:

- a. Shift the City workplace culture from a fixed mindset culture to a growth mindset culture to support all other recommendations in this plan;
 - b. Explain key DEI/RE terms and concepts;
 - c. Improve cross-cultural communication;
 - d. Improve understanding of unconscious bias and microaggressions and what to do to intervene effectively;
 - e. Improve innovative problem solving;
 - f. Improve equitable decision making; and
 - g. Develop inclusive leader bench strength.
10. Create and cultivate participation in the celebration and remembrance of diverse cultures, perspectives, and backgrounds (Indigenous Peoples Day, Latinx Heritage Month, Black History, AAPI Heritage, Juneteenth, Pride, Holocaust Remembrance, etc.).

HR - Specific Divisional Recommendations

1. Conduct an in depth salary review against role, responsibilities, years of experience, credentialed requirements, and tenure with the City.
2. Establish a job description review committee to review and revise job descriptions.
 - a. The committee should be diverse across social identity and hierarchical level. Create a core committee with additional representation from the departments posting job descriptions and the Diversity Office.
 - b. This committee should review and revise job descriptions through the lens of bias and unconscious barriers towards racial equity and make recommended changes and review job descriptions for alignment with each other.
 - i. Job description for Cabinet members, divisional directors, and employees should include clear role responsibilities, authority to execute those responsibilities, and collaboration requirements with other roles. Then ensure alignment of all job descriptions, existing strategies, policies, evaluation criteria, and the leadership development model.
 - ii. The priority should be non-union positions, because any changes to union job descriptions may require collective bargaining.
 - iii. Review vacant job positions, include the hiring manager to ensure that the recommendations are applicable to the position, and further review the positions that are public facing to determine whether it would be advantageous for the employee to be bilingual in a particular language.

- iv. Job descriptions should detail how the combination of education and training will be used in lieu of education.
 - v. Departments that do not have functional titles for their budgeted positions should create functional titles that are aligned with employee job duties.
 - vi. It is recommended that any job with a city residency requirement be clearly stated in the job description.
3. Develop and monitor Employee Resource Groups (ERGs) using the LWC's ERG Toolkit.
 4. Review and revise employment policies and plans:
 - a. Affirmative Action Plan, Equal Employment Opportunity Policy, and other policies and processes guiding City work; and
 - b. Create a flexible work and alternative work arrangements that take into account employees' diverse backgrounds instead of the current Telework Policy that risks race-related disparate treatment in its application.
 5. Create a Learning and Development (L&D) group within HR.
 - a. The group should have collaboration responsibilities with every other department to ensure technical skills training and inclusive leader training that aligns with department needs and the DO function to ensure development of a comprehensive leadership development and inclusive leader training program.
 - b. It should develop metrics to measure L&Ds impact on the City's key performance metrics, such as culture and climate, employee intention to leave, and disaggregated data about the diversity of the senior leadership (Cabinet members and directors of divisions/department). For every "say" and "do" behavior that defines the City workplace inclusive and equitable culture, and KPIs for skill evaluation of employees, design a training or workshop module for learning and development of those behaviors.
 - c. It should assume primary responsibility for leadership development and all training and development
 - d. It should design a targeted mentorship program for underrepresented groups to advance within the organization with annual metrics on completion and mobility. Create opportunities for employees to develop mentoring relationships with women and people of color internal and external to the organization.
 - e. It should adjust the performance review process for more frequent touchpoints between supervisors and employees.
 6. Engage an outside consultant and/or task the L&D group with develop a leadership model and leadership development program that includes inclusive and equitable leadership skills.

- a. State the program’s purpose to develop leadership bench-strength at all levels of employee from individual contributor up to City Manager;
- b. Select and develop an appropriate Leadership Model with detailed “say” and “do” behavior skills that include those that foster equitable decisions and inclusion for all employees and community members;
 - i. Link behaviors to divisional, team, and individual contributor objectives;
 - ii. Align behaviors to job descriptions;
 - iii. Develop and integrate employee reward and recognition program to highlight employees who contribute to creating a diversity, equitable, and inclusive culture;
 - iv. Integrate behaviors into performance criteria and evaluation;
- c. Develop a performance evaluation framework that is aligned with the Leadership Model; build competencies through L&D trainings and workshops; and track performance;
- d. Adjust the performance review process for more frequent touchpoints between supervisors and employees.
- e. Design and develop career development paths for all job profiles, including lattice structures, and socialize with senior leaders and middle managers. Embed into individual personal development plans, one-on-ones, and frequent discussions with talent. Hold managers accountable to encourage employees to consider development opportunities and positions outside their current functional, technical, or professional area.
- f. Design L&D trainings and workshops for required professional development of workforce. Develop core curriculum for all staff and toolkits for managers that includes basic required information and foundational DEI/RE skills including, but not limited to:
 - i. Legal standards for workplace behavior
 - ii. Basic management training
 1. How to run a meeting so that everyone feels included and valued
 2. How to administer performance evaluations
 3. How to handle discrimination complaints
 4. Project, time, and task management
 5. Delegating tasks
 6. Being a mentor, coach, and sponsor
 7. Understanding communication differences and adjusting style of inclusion and cross-cultural competence
 8. Giving and receiving feedback effectively

- iii. How to notice and stop unconscious bias and microaggressions
 - iv. How to stop bullying and incivility
 - v. Growth mindset and innovation
 - vi. Equity in decision making
 - vii. Effective communication skills to engage in tension-laden conversations related to DEI/RE issues
 - viii. Develop and implement a workplace incivility prevention program that includes a three-tier intervention platform: law/policy, workplace civility and bystander intervention programming and trainings.
 - ix. Design, communicate and execute a workplace violence prevention program that includes clear and precise examples of concrete bullying behavior, accountability measures to thwart incivility and bullying, and solid consequences.
 - g. Begin inclusive and equitable leader development with the Cabinet and offer coaching in addition to training or workshops.
 - h. Develop basic management skills with inclusive and equitable leadership development for divisional leadership.
 - i. Deliver leadership development programming regularly.
 - j. Include evaluation of inclusive leader skills in annual performance reviews.
7. Design and develop performance support tools to build in reminders of the concepts and prevalence of unconscious bias in the talent life cycle that can be regularly reviewed before hiring processes, performance evaluations, calibrations, and other talent related decisions.
- a. Design and develop leadership playbooks with DEI/RE strategy and talking points so that all leaders can communicate consistent messaging across division during team meetings.
 - b. Build in structured agendas and discussion topics for planned touchpoints throughout the year.
8. Improve the recruiting process to improve diversity at all levels of the City workforce
- a. Develop a targeted recruiting strategy.
 - b. Leverage community relationships as part of targeted recruiting strategy.
 - c. Revise job descriptions to encourage qualified applicants to apply with clear equivalency requirements in place of degrees where not necessary for job performance.
 - d. Revise application process to include an online application process for all jobs.
9. Review and revise resume screening with an objective and equitable process to create a more diversified pool of job applicants for the next level of job opportunity consideration.

- a. Centralizing the screening process under HR, redesign the initial screening criteria with objective measures, and provide screeners with training in unconscious bias in resume screening.
 - b. Include a step in the screening process for the CDO to review and approve the list of screened candidates.
 - c. If after the initial screening process, and either before or after review of the CDO, the applicant pool is determined not to be sufficiently diverse, add an additional step of targeted recruiting efforts before putting together another screened applicant pool for the next level of evaluation.
10. Review and revise the interview process
- a. Require interview processes to be run by a diverse interview panel. Collaboration between the HR and DO functions to create diverse panels is likely necessary.
 - b. Require DO approval of interview panels and interview pools prior to interviews being scheduled.
 - c. Require review of interview questions for potential racial bias by both HR and the DO to ensure that interview questions do not elicit a response that could lead to discriminatory, biased decision making.
 - d. Develop a set of interview questions that explore a candidate's values and actions aligned with the City's list of DEI/RE values.
11. Review and revise the selection and offer process
- a. HR and the Diversity Office should approve the selected candidate before a conditional offer is made. Approval should occur in a collaborative review process with the two departments, or CHRO and CDO designates.
 - b. The review process should review the resumes and scoring sheets of all the interviewed candidates and if the hiring manager wants to make an offer to anyone other than the highest scoring candidate, the hiring manager should be required to provide a rationale for choosing either the second or third scoring candidate.
 - c. Then, only if the CHRO and DO sign off on the rationale and decision of the hiring manager should it be permissible for the hiring manager to extend an offer to the selected candidate.
 - d. HR should review the salary to ensure salary equity with similar positions before a salary offer is made.
12. Develop an onboarding program that is half part organizational and enterprise vision, mission and values, and the other part discipline focused programming that introduces new employees orientation to the organizational culture and DEI/RE strategy.
13. Create a fair and equitable promotions and reclassification of position processes.

HHS - Specific Divisional Recommendations

1. Implementation design and execution of HHS- specific DEI/RE strategy
 - a. Hold HHS meetings to discuss the results of the Racial Equity Audit, emphasize the commitment to understanding the current state, and brainstorm additional action to continue improvements to racial equity in the department.
 - b. Define concepts for HHS's DEI/RE, mission, vision, and values, engage employees in design of implementation strategy and its execution.
 - c. Define the culture of HHS and rebrand the values with articulation of refreshed ideals.
 - d. Build department scorecard snapshots to support monitoring and increasing visibility of workforce composition trends through segmentation across hiring, promotion and separations in HHS.
 - e. Evaluate talent acquisition, learning and development, performance management, and succession planning processes and practices for bias; and ensure the resources and tools to refresh and adjust where necessary.
 - f. Discuss and define the individual and collective value for creating a racially equity HHS culture.
 - g. Identify the criteria for excellence in HHS leadership and identify a few key (and critical) behaviors that create an inclusive and equitable HHS culture and reinforce the individual and collective value for creating a racially equitable HHS culture.
 - h. In collaboration with HR and DO representatives, identify the “say” and “do” behavior skills to measure and evaluate leaders against, ensure DEI/RE appropriate goal setting, and the path to achieve consistent experiences across all employees in HHS.
 - i. Incorporate workforce composition data into workforce planning activities and utilize data to accurately set diversity goals per department and talent segment
2. Audit existing community partnerships for diversity and under-represented groups; expand partnerships where gaps exist.
3. Build relationships with community groups to support the ongoing internal development of cultural competency and enrich these relationships with community days where staff can volunteer for these groups.
4. Develop a process to ensure there is racial equity in the HHS vendor selection process.

Racial Equity Audit Data and Analysis

In their Own Words

We begin this report with data – employees’ descriptions about their experience working for the City of Worcester. When at least three people provide descriptions that relate to a particular theme, we select examples that demonstrate that theme. These examples follow.

The problems facing Worcester, Massachusetts in the words of City employees...

“The organization as a whole is not diverse. Many departments are led by middle class white males and females. There is favoritism and nepotism, and people of color are simply ignored, disrespected and made to feel as if they have no voice or ideas or anything tangible to contribute.”

“You feel like reporting racism is a dead end.”

“Nobody mentioned the possibility of a female city manager. Things are much more male dominated, predominantly white men.

“As a member of a minority group, I must perform a certain way. There is a burden to overperform based on capabilities. Because of my race I still don’t get the credibility, or my voice isn’t heard”.

“I have felt excluded from decisions and white leaders were annoyed at my opinion.”

“The open and private disrespect of Black, Latinx and immigrant employees is exactly why the city is notorious for losing BIPOC talent. Leadership prioritiz[es] the needs of white City Council members, and their largely white and wealthy districts. This then affects the quality of life of Worcester’s BIPOC communities and impedes the work that needs to take place to support Worcester’s BIPOC communities. An example of this is reflected in the Polar Park Stadium, the WPD budget, and downtown developments. The budget of the city should reflect the needs of Worcester’s BIPOC residents.”

“Bringing more trainings on Equity and Inclusion to all Departments can increase diversity within each Department.”

“Aside from the work done in HHS main office, DYO and Veterans, I do not see any work being done well regarding diversity, race equity, and inclusion.”

“While we have a history of immigrants, they have been workers not leaders.”

The steps forward to address those problems in the words of City employees...

“I think we are taking first steps and we are having the conversations.”

Employees believe the former City Manager did a good job in “setting the tone” for racial equity and that leadership is truly committed to racial equity in Worcester. Leaders expressed dedication and commitment to the racial equity initiative, and there is general agreement among employees that leaders show they are committed to racial equity, diversity and inclusion efforts.

Worcester Health and Human Services (“HHS”) has demonstrated an earnest desire to achieve an understanding of racial equity by partnering with [the consultants] to undergo a comprehensive racial equity audit.

Employees within departments, and levels express that they are dedicated to HHS’s mission and vision and are proud to work at the organization.

Employees expressed hope that the racial equity audit will result in positive outcomes of a more inclusive and equitable culture.

A large percentage of employees feel that leadership keeps them informed about future direction, plans and progress of the organization.

“Projects out of the HHS main office are informed by community needs and center those in communit[ies] impacted by health disparities.”

“We include equality in every step possible. It is implemented within the hiring process and throughout the onboarding process. We regularly attend trainings that speak about equity, equality, and diversity as well as the challenges different group[s] of people face on an everyday basis.”

“We have an anti-racism group and I think this is so important. I'm immensely grateful that the city allows us to engage in this group during work hours, giving it a level of importance equal to that of our regular work. I find it refreshing and something unique that more employers should be doing - especially governments.”

The Acting City Manager, commissioner of HHS, and two of the HHS Directors are members of a racial/ethnic group.

HR is composed of hardworking, committed employees who completely embrace the “all hands on deck” philosophy. They regularly take on tasks outside of their job scope.

When HHS employees were asked: “What are things that you feel the organization is doing well regarding diversity, racial equity, and inclusion?” Responses included:

- “We’re a very diverse staff and our center is very diverse. I think everything is run impressively.”
- Supporting all who come through the doors through individual and group support, programming, and services geared towards their interests and needs, having conversations, and welcoming their requests and suggestions.
- There’s an increase in diversity and racial equity training and discussions throughout City departments.
- We include equality in every step possible. It’s implemented within the hiring process and throughout the onboarding process. We regularly attend trainings that speak about equality, equity, and diversity as well as the challenges different groups of people face on an everyday basis.
- Acknowledging there is a systemic problem and talking about it.
- Culturally responsive outreach, programs, and services; ADA accommodations; LGBT representation.
- “We’re doing the best we can.”

In their own words, there are existing challenges and efforts underway to improve racial equity in the City of Worcester’s workforce. Not everyone experiences the workplace culture in the same way. There are differences of perception, agreement in some areas, and motivation to make things better. There is also fear that making things better will be for some at the expense of others and a preference among some people to maintain the *status quo*. As the City chooses to communicate more about the challenges and plans for improvement, make changes to improve diversity, racial equity, and inclusion, and begins to address existing challenges, there is reason to believe that racial equity will continue to improve.

Executive Summary

In response to the racial injustices nationwide and the COVID-19 pandemic that highlighted racial inequities the City of Worcester, MA, (“the City”) in September 2021, posted a Request for Proposal (RFP) for consulting services for a racial equity audit of the Human Resources (HR) and Health & Human Services (HHS) Departments. In January 2022, Letterman White Consulting, LLC (“LWC”) was selected to assist both departments in understanding the current state of racial equity within the City’s workplace and how it is perceived by the Worcester community. Per that contract between the City and LWC, LWC agreed to provide the following services:

- Review of documents, websites, and digital materials that relate, refer, or affect the organizational climate in relation to its goal of racial equity, inclusion, and diversity at all levels;
- Assess HR’s talent cycle: external brand for recruiting, hiring, development, career advancement, wellness, benefits, and evaluation processes;
- Evaluate disaggregated workforce demographics;
- Assess and recommend L&D initiatives;
- An organizational assessment of HR and HHS (leadership, strategies, structures, processes, resource allocation, and mission alignment);
- Recommend employee assessments that measure engagement, motivation, moral, satisfaction and other measures related to retention and external brand for purposes of recruiting;
- Facilitate community engagement; and
- Make recommendations on: ERGs; blueprints for continuous learning, growth, and improvement; internal investigation processes, reporting systems, and additional suggestions to create a culture of equity and inclusion with diversity at all levels.

LWC Initiated a thorough examination of the City’s HR and HHS departments’ respective performance related to racial equity by holding a kickoff meeting on January 26, 2022, with, among other key personnel, the then City Manager, Edward M. Augustus, Jr., the then Chief Diversity Officer (CDO), Stephanie Williams, the Director of HR, William Bagley, Jr., and the Health and Human Services Commissioner, Dr. Matilde Castiel, MD, among other individuals who were present. Less than one month after that meeting, Ms. Williams, the third CDO for the City since the role’s inception in 2016, submitted her resignation on February 21, 2022, after less than one-and-one-half years in the role and one month after that Mr. Augustus indicated his intention to step down. These events were necessarily relevant data to our audit.

This audit explains the current state of affairs regarding racial equity in the Human Resources (HR) and Health and Human Services (HHS) functions. Data from both divisions were consistent in describing the employee experience of the City workplace culture and sentiment toward Senior Leadership; i.e., top executive leadership and management. The consistency of data from the two divisions combined with the changes in top executive leadership pointed to

the need for a strategic plan that acknowledged both divisional and organizationally holistic change opportunities.

There was a need to evaluate the City's Strategic Plan, structures, processes, resources, and communication more broadly for their impact on the HR and HHS divisions. This is consistent with Organization Development (OD) best practices for data collection and analysis. To fully understand problems at the divisional level of an organization and be able to identify solutions, best practices dictate evaluating the levels above and below the division, in addition to the division itself.

OD recognizes that changing the culture of one division of an entire system does not happen in a vacuum and also that if two divisions of a system exhibit similar cultures, there is likely strong influence from the system-level strategy and culture on the division. In a system there is overlap and interaction among the various elements. In this case there is significant interaction among the City's Strategic Plan, the tone set by top executive leadership, structures, processes, resource allocation, and communication. It was not our intention to broaden the scope of the project; however, it was our responsibility to follow the data impacting HR and HHS culture and leadership.

Ms. Williams's departure was followed by the NAACP withdrawing from the City's Tercentenary committee, several City Council members expressing concern and requesting an investigation into why the City is having difficulty retaining CDOs, and the City's Diversity and Inclusion Advisory Committee's voting to suspend its work. Since Ms. Williams's departure, responsibilities for the CDO role, including the weekly check-in meetings related to this Audit, were assumed by Eric Batista, who at the time was the Assistant City Manager / Director of Urban Innovation / Interim Chief Diversity Officer. Additionally, Mr. Batista was appointed to the position of Acting City Manager with an effective date of June 1, 2022.

Over the four months following Ms. Williams's departure, LWC consultants designed and implemented a detailed and comprehensive data collections plan. The racial equity audit was conducted using a mixed-method approach, to help lay the groundwork for a comprehensive diversity, equity, & inclusion and racial equity (DEI/RE) strategy.

As part of the HHS portion of the audit, Lead Consultant, Dr. Venessa Perry, PhD, conducted the following data collection and analysis, which included:

- Qualitative methods
 - 10 employee interviews with directors, individual contributors, and managers
 - 3 employee and two external stakeholder focus groups
 - Black, White, and Latino employees¹

¹ One of the overarching issues is that the City of Worcester is not exercising best practices and regularly collecting disaggregated data about the experiences of employees in every division. We collected data within two divisions and to the extent possible, disaggregated data to show the difference in experiences of marginalized employees who work in the City as compared with white employees.

- Race-based caucusing
- 38 participants
- Quantitative survey
 - All HHS employees
 - 70 employees
 - 41 responses
- Review of HHS Standard Operating Procedures, strategy documents, and ancillary programmatic inputs provided by client

In summary, LWC analyzed three years of programmatic documents and standard operating procedures, conducted a series of interviews and focus groups with employees and stakeholders, and administered a Racial Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Survey to gather additional employee insight about HHS.

As part of the HR portion of the audit, Lead Consultant, Heena Trivedi, JD, conducted the following data collection and analysis which included:

- Qualitative methods
 - 12 employee interviews with cabinet members, managers, and individual contributors
 - Black, White, and Latino employees
- Data produced by HR²
 - Candidate applications
 - Employee New Hire Spreadsheet- Last five years
 - Promotions
 - Full employee lists and departures over the last three years
 - Summary of exit interview information broken down in themes developed by an HR employee
- Documents reviewed
 - Website pages
 - Application Scoring Template
 - Benefits Onboarding Slide show
 - Hiring Process Guide
 - Affirmative Action Policy
 - Select Job Descriptions
 - EEO-4 Utilization Report
 - List of Training Programs
 - Exit interview spreadsheet
 - Equal Employment Opportunity Policy
 - Chief Diversity Officer Job Description
 - Director of Human Resources Job Description

² All data is manually entered by an HR employee and subject to human error. One of the most important changes to make is to bring in appropriate technology to collect disaggregated data across all processes of the Talent Cycle and about the culture and climate at least annually.

- HR Hiring Guide
- Application process for civil service and non-civil service employees

LWC worked closely and met weekly with former Chief Diversity Officer, Stephanie Williams until her departure and then with Interim Chief Diversity Officer, Eric Batista. LWC extended an interview invitation to all eleven City Council members that was accepted by five members, who were interviewed.

LWC analyzed data using several frameworks, including a diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) lens, and Systems Dynamics and Readiness for Change frameworks. Consultants further distilled the HR data into specific areas of the HR function, most notably, the Talent Cycle. Often there is overlap in the themes from the HR and HHS data that speak to overarching recommendations, while some recommendations belong exclusively to one or the other department. We expect that this report will become the strategic plan and blueprint for the City to use in its policy development, employee training modules, communication planning, restructuring of roles and responsibilities, and adjustment to processes, practices, and resources to disrupt systems of racial inequities and disparate treatment and build more inclusive and equitable HR and HHS systems.

Prior to this report, LWC delivered an “Early Report of Urgent and Important Actions” on February 23, 2022, which is incorporated here by reference and a “Racial Equity Audit - Preliminary Report Recommendations: Chief Diversity Officer Role,” on March 21, 2022, also incorporated here by reference.

None of the recommendations offered through Letterman White Consulting, LLC, or by any consultants constitute legal advice. Nothing creates an attorney-client relationship, even working directly with a consultant who is licensed to practice law. LWC cannot and does not provide legal advice. It is important that the City of Worcester consult with their labor and employment attorneys before adopting any new HR policies. It is the responsibility of the City of Worcester to determine whether legal review of the recommendations contained in this report is necessary prior to implementation.

Key Terms

BIPOC - Black, Indigenous, People of Color

CDO - Chief Diversity Officer

CHRO - Chief Human Resources Offices (formerly Director of Human Resources)

DEI/RE - Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion/Racial Equity

Directors - Divisional Leaders

Diversity - Refers to the state of variety of differences in a system. A racially diverse system includes people of different races, typically it means proportionate representation across all dimensions of human difference.

Divisions - The departments or different groupings of the workforce under functional titles, e.g., HHS is a division

DO - The Diversity Office or divisional function, also referenced within City data as the Executive Office of Diversity and Inclusion

Equity - Refers to the fairness and absence of bias in decisions

Inclusion - Refers to the culture of a group or system that is welcoming and offers a sense of belonging to all members of the group or system. People feel included, visible, heard and that they can succeed.

Employees - Cabinet Members, Directors, and Individual Contributors

External Stakeholders - Community Members

HHS - Health and Human Services

HR - Human Resources

Individual Contributors - Employees who do not lead divisions or teams and are often in a community-facing role

Metrics - Measures of performance. Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) are metrics.

Senior Leadership - City Manager's Office, Cabinet members, and City Council

Strategy - Refers to the elements of a plan to achieve an aim. A strategy is informed by values, a purpose or mission, and a vision statement, which is distilled into discrete goals and the specific actions necessary to reach those goals. Strategies generally include time frames and metrics to assess progress toward the plan's aim.

Structures - Refer to the divisions of a system. Divisions have boundaries, roles with responsibilities, people in those roles with authority to execute those responsibilities and accountability to other people and the system for their performance.

System - A large structure that is considered a unified whole with layers of complexity. People are systems and exist in groups, which are part of organizations, which exist in communities, which are part of the universe. Each group is considered a system in itself and also part of a larger system.

Processes - A series of actions or operations to achieve a particular result

Talent Cycle - The processes that frame an employee's interactions with an employer from recruiting for an open position to ending the employer-employee relationship.

Introduction

Worcester, Massachusetts, located under an hour from Boston, Providence and Hartford³, is the second largest city in New England and known for its diversity and large immigrant population. The City has a population of more than 200,000 and more than 35,000 college students attending its eight colleges and universities. It operates as a Plan E form of government City Council/City Manager as contrasted with many Massachusetts cities with a City Council/Mayor form of government. There are 11 City Council Members, the “at-large” member receiving the highest number of votes becomes the Mayor. Worcester’s official symbol is a heart.⁴

Worcester's population as of 2020 was 67.7% White (including Hispanics), 13.0% Black or African American, 0.5% American Indian and Alaska Native, 7.2% Asian, <0.1% Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander, 5.2% from Some Other Race, and 6.4% from Two or More Races. Hispanics and Latinos of any race made up 23.1% of the population (of whom nearly half were Puerto Rican). Non-Hispanic Whites were 54.4% of the population in 2020, down from 96.8% in 1970. 19.7% of Worcester's population are below the poverty threshold.⁵ The City is considered to be more diverse than other US Cities according to Best Neighborhood, which gave it a diversity score of 80 out of 100.⁶

LWC’s Approach

At LWC we use a collaborative Organization Development (OD) and Action Research (AR) approach to our consultations and a diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) lens and Readiness for Change framework for customizing our inquiry for our racial equity audits. To organize our data collection, analysis, and reporting, we use a System Dynamics framework and when we examine HR practices we also use the Talent Cycle framework. Additionally, in our HHS audit, we collected and organized data generally with an additional focus on community, the standard operating procedures of HHS, ancillary programmatic inputs provided by HHS, and the services offered.

Planning the Project

The diagram below illustrates the process we used to define Worcester’s racial equity audit, collect and analyze data, and produce the Strategic Plan Design included in this report. LWC is prepared to provide support and direction for the next phases, from “Implementation Plan Design” forward.

³ [Wikipedia Entry](#) and [World Population Review](#) retrieved March 22, 2022

⁴ Worcesterma.gov

⁵ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Worcester,_Massachusetts

⁶ [Best Neighborhood](#) retrieved March 22, 2022

Action Research Framework



After producing a strategic plan, it generally takes 8-13 months for implementation planning and execution. Creating a new culture, which we suggest should be the overarching aim of this plan, takes 3-5 years to anchor in place, after which, new data evidencing this culture change begins to solidly emerge. Based on our conversations, we understand that Worcester is in the process of integrating a new HR platform, Workday. We assume that as Worcester brings in its new HR platform, regular data collection on key performance metrics of racial equity will occur. This will become a valuable method for measuring progress toward racial equity specifically and diversity, equity, and inclusion, more generally.

The scope of work defined in the RFP is shown in the table below.

Scope of Work and Expectations	
<p>LWC Conducts a Racial Equity Audit of HR and HHS Departments</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Collect qualitative and quantitative data using online surveys, one-on-one interviews, focus groups from key stakeholders and review of existing documents and information pertaining to demographics, policies, structures, and practices. - Review, analyze, theme, and organize information according to a performance model and talent cycle framework. -Discuss and receive feedback on specific audit findings with appropriate leaders. <p>Expectations: To understand the challenges and opportunities to improve racial equity in the HR and HHS departments and make recommendations for improvements.</p> <p><i>Completed by LWC</i></p>
<p>LWC Delivers a Feedback Meeting to the City Leadership Team with Preliminary Report and Findings</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A formal feedback session where LWC summarizes data for validation and discussion by the City leadership team and presents recommendations for discussion and feedback. <p>Expectations: City leadership team members obtain a clear understanding of challenges and opportunities for improving racial equity in HR and HHS departments.</p> <p><i>Delivery: “Early Report of Urgent and Important Actions” delivered on February 23,2022, “Racial Equity Audit - Preliminary Report Recommendations: Chief Diversity Officer Role,” delivered on March 21 2022, HR Preliminary Data and Recommendations delivered on May 19, 2022, and HHS Preliminary Data and Recommendations delivered on May 26, 2022.</i></p>

<p>LWC Delivers Final Report, Recommendations, and Blueprint for Improving Racial Equity in HR and HHS Departments</p>	<p>-Develop a report detailing findings, recommendations, and a blueprint for improving racial equity in HR and HHS departments and tracking improvements.</p> <p>Expectations: City leadership has a strategic roadmap with goals to use in implementation planning to improve racial equity in HR and HHS departments.</p> <p>Delivery: <i>This report includes the City's Racial Equity Strategic Plan, which is a strategic roadmap with goals to use in implementation planning.</i></p>
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Collecting and Analyzing the Data

We collected and analyzed quantitative and qualitative data for the purpose of presenting a balanced representation of Worcester’s HR and HHS departments’ current status regarding racial equity. There is an absence of a robust set of existing disaggregated demographic data about the workforce and system with appropriate software and a data-collection plan.

Large, diverse cities like Worcester need a formalized disaggregated demographic data collection system to be able to track data. Worcester should be collecting and reporting disaggregated demographic data about employees’ experiences in the workplace and with Talent Cycle processes (recruiting, interviewing, hiring, onboarding, evaluation decisions, rewards and recognition in general, promotions, and terminations), benefits access and usage, salaries across functionally similar roles, employee attrition rates and intention to leave, employee engagement and satisfaction, and other “climate”-type data. The absence of data means we cannot paint a comprehensive, quantitative, data-based picture of the diversity of the City workforce or how the experiences of people of different social identity groups working for the City might differ or overlap. Where we were able to collect disaggregated demographic data through anonymous surveys or interviews, we include it.

The absence of data also sends inadvertent messages. People may conclude that there is a lack of transparency or that City leaders are intentionally withholding unfavorable information and statistics. They may simply decide that City leaders don’t care enough to want the data.

Our DEI Lens



DEI Lens

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Systemic Commitment and Alignment to DEI/RE
Mission | Vision | Goals

PEOPLE
Who is affected? How? Are effects different or same across dimensions of difference?

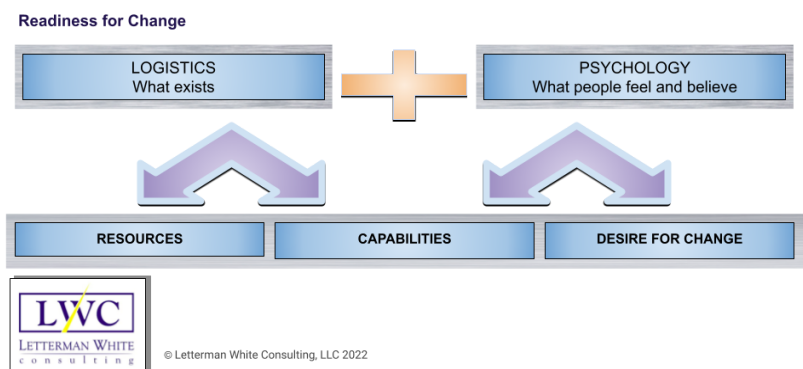
PROCESS
What is contributing to the exclusion and marginalization of communities?

POWER
What is the decision-making power to include under-represented communities and where are the barriers?

Racial equity cannot be properly assessed without also assessing diversity, equity, and inclusion more generally. We used our DEI lens to assess the system as a whole. This includes reviewing the messaging of City leadership about the existence, importance, and application of DEI/RE values, mission, vision, and goals. The City of Worcester does not have a list of DEI/RE values, mission, vision statement, goals, objectives, or metrics, as it does for other high priority areas of its [Strategic Plan](#). If the system itself does not have a clear commitment to DEI/RE values, the inadvertent messaging will affect the application of every process and policy of the system.

We then used our lens in review of City, HR, and HHS policies, plans, processes, and procedures. We consider who is affected and how and whether effects are the same or different depending on whether a person is a member of a marginalized group. We look at informal processes, including cultures, to determine what contributes to the exclusion and marginalization of particular communities. We consider who has decision-making power and who does not and how equitable decisions are made.

Our Readiness for Change Framework

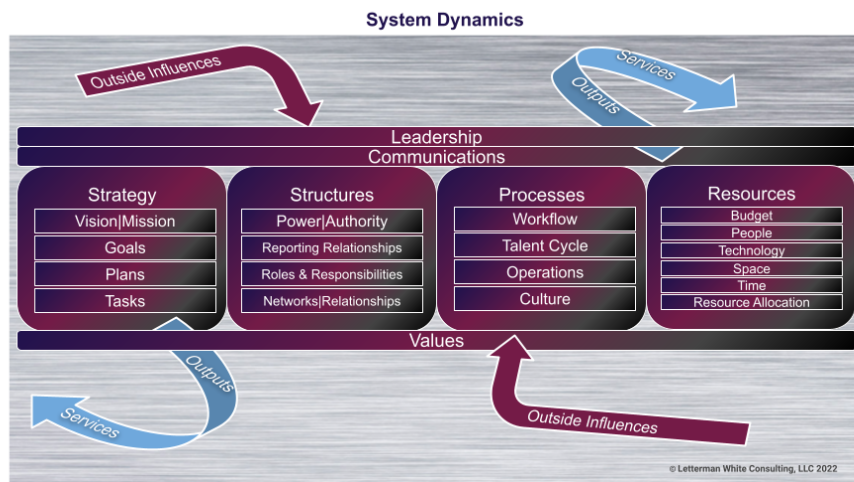


Improving racial equity in Worcester’s City workforce or diversity, equity, and inclusion more generally is a culture change strategy. Changing culture means making changes to leadership,

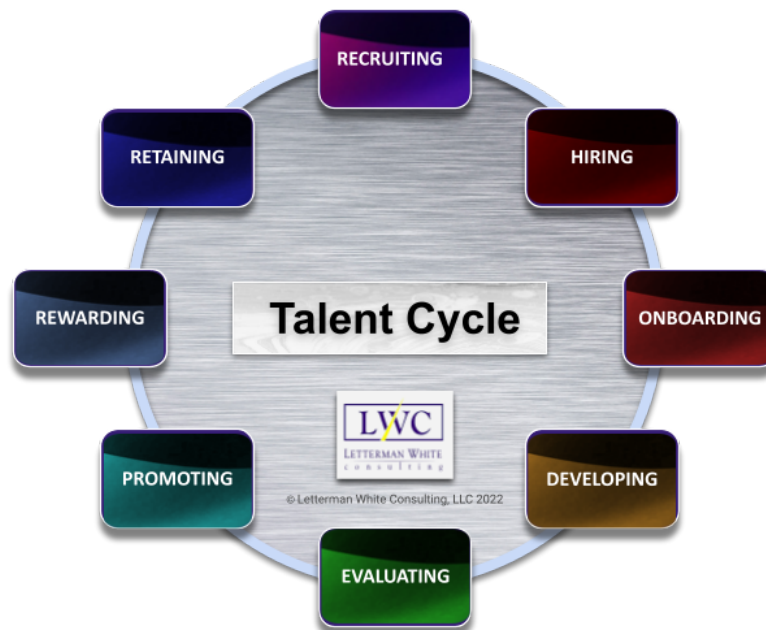
communication, structures, formal and informal processes, policies, and practices, strategy, and resource allocation. Consequently, it is a massive undertaking that affects everyone and surfaces the natural human resistance to change in general. Addressing that natural resistance to change and building systemic readiness for the anticipated changes is critical. System readiness occurs when collectively people want to make the changes planned and believe they will be valuable to them collectively and individually, and collectively they believe leadership will deploy sufficient financial resources and they will have the time and capability to make changes required. We assess the logical and psychological readiness and recommend actions to increase both.

Organizing the Data and Reporting Recommendations

We organize data and report recommendations aligned with the different elements of the City workplace system. We do this for two reasons. Changes within the control of Senior Leadership; i.e., the system itself are easier and faster to make than asking people to change how they think, feel, and ultimately behave. For example, it is easier and faster to change a formal line of authority than to improve interpersonal communication. Second, elements of a system affect one another and Senior Leaders should understand this. A change to a role's reporting relationship changes lines of authority and may affect the equity and transparency within a process that is within the structure's line of authority. For example, later in this report, the structure of the employee complaint investigator role is discussed in conjunction with the investigation process because of the interconnection and biased appearance that results. Tasks, processes, and structures are closely interconnected.



We believe that this organization best assists leadership in planning and implementing strategy, structure, process, resource allocation and communication changes. In addition, since HR is heavily focused on Talent Cycle processes, we also organize relevant data to align with elements of the Talent Cycle.



LWC also takes a holistic and systems approach, which means that we consider the subjects of the audit - HR and HHS functions - individually and in concert with senior leadership, the rest of City government, and the wider City challenges and opportunities. We examine the functions broadly in the context of the entire organization and City of Worcester, itself and narrowly, in the details of the specific experiences of the people who work there and the processes, systems, and structures that may inadvertently keep qualified people from working there. That is why our suggestions include not only changes related to HR and HHS, but also changes to the City's Strategic Plan and the development of a Worcester DEI/RE mission, vision, goals, objectives, and metrics.

The purpose of an organization's design is to create the stability and clarity to implement all strategies effectively and efficiently. This is true regardless of whether the strategy is the annual business strategy for the City or the strategic recommendations of this report. The structures that connect people to each other and people to power and authority may change, requiring city governments to compensate for this instability. Cities do so with a strong, mission-driven culture, clear vision, and implementable strategies. To implement those strategies, they develop their leadership pipelines and workforce with people who have the necessary knowledge, skills, motivation, and ability. When racial equity is a strategic priority, those values are integrated into every part of an organization's design.

In general, mission or purpose informs vision and goals. The goals, prioritized based on the mission and vision, should inform the design of structures, processes, resource allocation, the content, frequency, mode, and direction of communication, and required organizational competencies. Organization leadership, at every level, must be able to make implementable decisions to execute their assigned responsibilities. The most empowered leaders should be the

most vocal and constantly model the behaviors they expect from everyone else. City leaders should speak with a single, coherent message about what is most important - the City's values, mission, and vision. This brings cohesion and signals the importance of collaboration and coordination of efforts, especially efforts to create a culture of racial equity and inclusion.

When the strategy is missing, unclear, or not agreed upon, confusion results. People lack a common direction and may act at cross-purposes. Decision-making criteria is unclear. If the structure is not aligned to the strategy, then friction results. It is difficult to mobilize resources causing implementation of plans to be ineffective. Opportunities are lost. If processes are not coordinated, then gridlock results. There is a lack of collaboration across boundaries. Decisions take too long. Information is not shared. Processes may be formal, yet the process with the strongest influence on people's behavior is the informal culture. If resources are not sufficient or allocated in ways that are unaligned with strategy, structures, and processes, then work stalls, people feel insufficiently compensated and unmotivated, and the wrong results surface.

When structures are too siloed, the rigid boundaries inhibit necessary collaboration and even block the flow of vital information necessary for making implementable and effective decisions. It becomes difficult to form trusting relationships between people across divisions, making it more difficult to create an inclusive workplace. A lack of clear lines of authority and collaboration responsibilities lead to difficulty in implementing change efforts. The result is people acting at cross-purposes or not at all.

Generally, the purpose or mission, plus a vision that provides further definition, signals what is important and guides decisions and actions in the workplace. Mission is distinct from a vision which should indicate action rather than an expression of values or aspiration. A mission of racial equity means that decisions about every piece of a system's design are evaluated through a lens of how they contribute to or detract from racial equity. When we discuss racial equity, we necessarily also include concepts of diversity, equity in general, and inclusion.

- Diversity is a state. We can measure that quantitatively. It is the measure of difference among selected social identity categories of people within a system level.
- Inclusion exists in any group of people when a high percentage of individuals signal to all, regardless of differences, that they are welcomed, respected and trusted. They are treated as belonging in and a valued member of the group. We measure inclusivity qualitatively through the feelings expressed, the stories shared, and the experiences recounted. When a theme is repeated by different people often enough, the qualitative data takes on a quantitative dimension.
- Equity is demonstrated through transparency and the management of unconscious bias in decision-making and distribution of resources to level access to opportunities.

When we present data or discuss structures, we include formal divisions or departments (which we will refer to as divisions) and information relationships. Worcester HR is a cross-divisional structure instead of a centralized structure with lateral processes. At the core of HR is the Talent Cycle, which is the lifecycle of each employee. Recommendations for changes in HR are best

described along the processes of the Talent Cycle; however, the awarding of benefits like vacation time or when a person is allowed to take their vacation (not rewards) should be consistent across divisions with equitable decisions.

Worcester HHS is also a cross-divisional structure. It provides the “coordination and management of the City's critical services in the areas of Public Health, Veterans' Services, Human Rights and Accessibility, Elder Affairs and Youth Services.” It has a DEI/RE component of its mission statement that includes “[e]nsur[ing] that all City residents are treated fairly and equally by reducing bias, bigotry and prejudices.”⁷

Data Collection

This project audited the HR and HHS departments and conducted extensive interviews of employees in both divisions. In HHS, we collected data on employee engagement through a written, anonymous survey. In HR, we collected additional data in the nature of documents and descriptions of Talent Cycle processes affecting the employee experience. A racial equity audit explores the degree of similarity or difference in data collected from people of different races. Best practices for cities the size of Worcester is to regularly collect, review, and discuss disaggregated data about the workplace experiences of employees of different races, including engagement, intention to leave, and climate. The City does not yet collect this data. Where possible, LWC disaggregated data by race.

In the previous sections, we provided background on our approach and shared a few high-level data-based themes, quotes, and recommendations. In this section we summarize the data we collected. In our quest for relevant and meaningful data, we collected and analyzed quantitative data and also people’s perceptions and understanding. We also reviewed existing administrative data. We sought to create a balanced and comprehensive representation of the current situation with regard to racial equity and an inclusive and equitable culture and the aim to attract and retain a workforce at all levels of leadership that mirrors the diversity of the community.

We report quantitative and qualitative data. When we review data from focus groups, one-on-one interviews, or open-ended responses on anonymous written surveys, we look for repeating themes. If a topic or theme comes up in three or more subjects, we take note. If we select a quote, it is because it captures a repeating theme or topic.

Qualitative data – data from employees in their own words – is often the most insightful window into the culture of a workplace and also the most difficult for senior leaders to read without defensiveness. Often a quote is verbatim one person’s perception, observation, or experience. However, when three or more people express the same theme in slightly different words, the quote we select to share is emblematic of the workplace culture. The quote helps convey an experience of groups, who feel similarly marginalized.

⁷ <https://www.worcesterma.gov/hhs/about-us>

When we collect data, we encourage subjects to share their experiences without self-identifying. If we see that a response to one of our questions would inadvertently identify a particular person, we remove any identifying data before sharing it. It is not our intention to blame specific individuals because it is our belief that problems are systemic as are solutions. Changing out one person for another will not change system dynamics. The blame does not belong to any one person, nor is the solution because of any one person. Systems maintain a culture that signals to everyone in that system what “say” and “do” behaviors are acceptable and a system’s culture changes only when changes are simultaneously made to the multiple parts of the system identified in the LWC Systems Dynamics Framework.

We provide graphs and visual depictions of quantitative data to establish the factual basis for the conclusions and story conveyed in the data.

LWC’s HHS Engagement Survey Analysis Summary

LWC highlights findings and considerations from the qualitative interviews and focus groups conducted across HHS. The purpose of the survey was to:

- Examine the impact of the City’s infrastructure and culture on employees.
- Measure employees’ perception of how well leaders demonstrate inclusive leadership behaviors.
- Assess how well the City fosters an inclusive and equitable workplace.
- Gauge how employees experience the organization’s values.
- Evaluate how employees experience the talent infrastructure.
- Investigate employees’ perception of the City’s brand in the community.

Racial Equity Survey Context and Background	
When	The survey was administered between March 20, 2022, to April 20, 2022.
How	The survey was administered online using Survey Monkey.
Who	The survey was administered to all Worcester HHS employees.
What	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 50 multiple choice questions (including demographic information) ● 3 open-ended questions where employees could write in comments ● percentage of employees who added comments
Response Rate	The survey was sent to 70 people of which 41 or 59% responded.
Indices	<p>HHS data was organized into five broad categories.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <i>Leadership</i> measures employees’ perception of the senior leadership of HHS and the City. ● <i>Culture</i> measures employees’ perception of the prevalence of organizational culture values demonstrated, the degree of equity and accessibility practiced, and the overall employee experience.

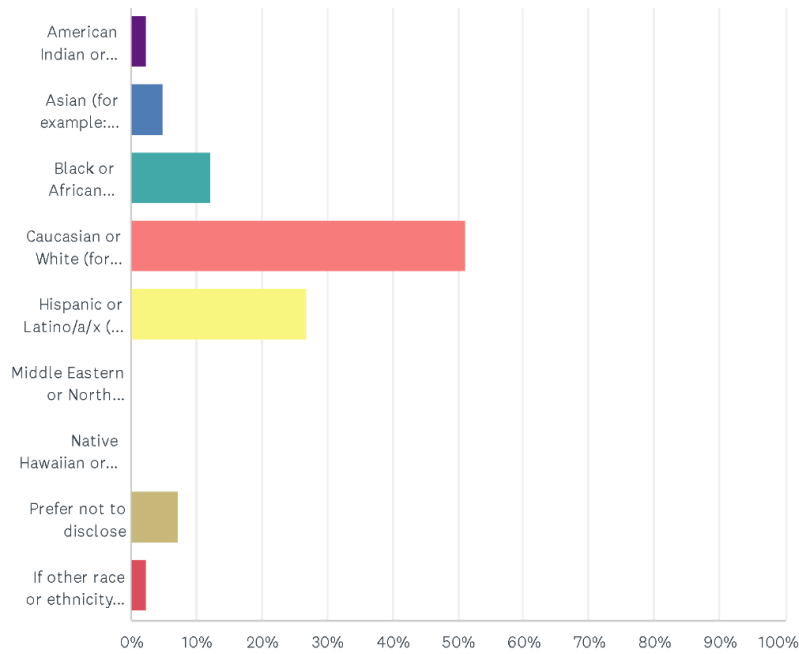
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● <i>Equity</i> measures employees' perception of the fairness of employment decisions.● <i>Talent</i> measures employees' experience with Talent Cycle processes.● <i>Community</i> measures employees' experience of the organization's brand and reputation in the community.
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Data about Survey Respondents

In the aggregate, the decisions not to disclose identity ranged from 2% to 10%. Refusal to disclose identity is an indication of fear, distrust, and a lack of psychological safety. It is important to note that:

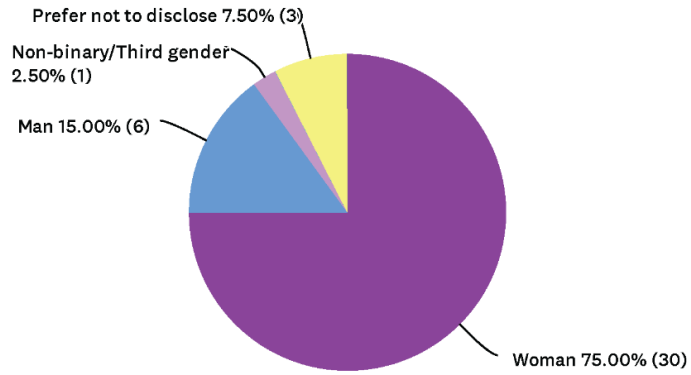
- 7.5% did not disclose their gender identity;
- 7% did not disclose their race/ethnicity;
- 7% did not disclose their tenure;
- 10% did not disclose their age;
- 10% did not disclose their sexual orientation;
- 2% did not disclose their disability status; and
- 7 % did not disclose their military status.

Race/Ethnicity



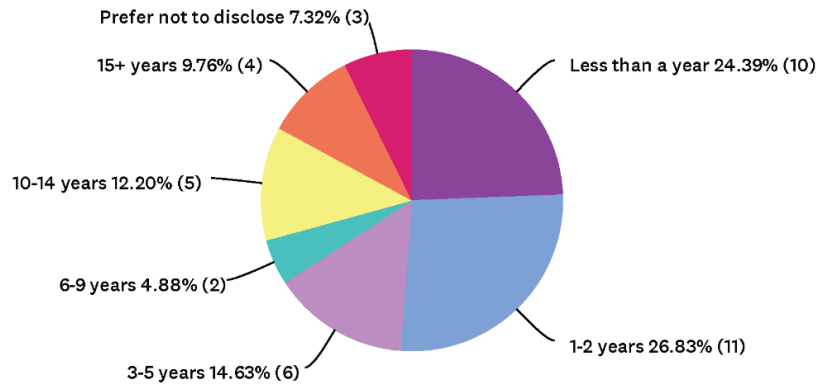
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
American Indian or Alaska Native (for example: Navajo Nation, Blackfeet Tribe, Mayan Aztec, Nomi Eskimo Community, etc.)	2.44%	1
Asian (for example: Chinese, Filipino, Vietnamese, Asian Indian, Japanese, Korean, etc.)	4.88%	2
Black or African American (for example: African American, Haitian, Jamaican, Nigerian, Ethiopian, Somalian, etc.)	12.20%	5
Caucasian or White (for example: German, Irish, English, Italian, Polish, French, etc.)	51.22%	21
Hispanic or Latino/a/x (for example: Mexican or Mexican American, Puerto Rican, Cuban, Salvadoran, Dominican, Colombian, etc.)	26.83%	11
Middle Eastern or North African (for example: Lebanese, Iranian, Egyptian, Syrian, Moroccan, Algerian, etc.)	0.00%	0
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander (for example: Native Hawaiian, Samoan, Chamorra, Tongan, Fijian, Marshallese, etc.)	0.00%	0
Prefer not to disclose	7.32%	3
If other race or ethnicity, please write in	2.44%	1
Total Respondents: 41		

Gender



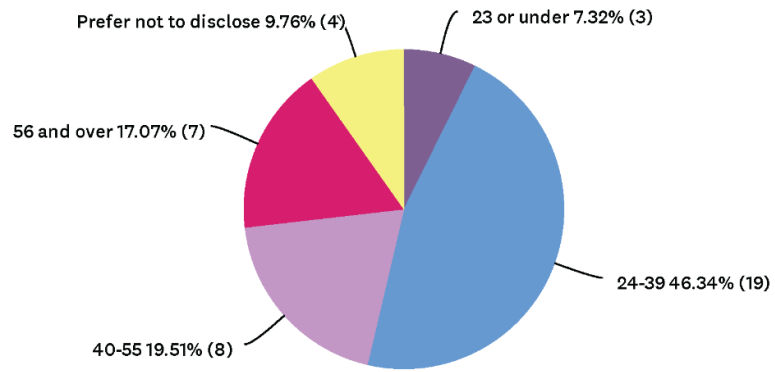
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Woman	75.00%	30
Man	15.00%	6
Non-binary/Third gender	2.50%	1
Transgender / Trans Man / Trans Woman	0.00%	0
Prefer not to disclose	7.50%	3
Self Identify not listed here	0.00%	0
TOTAL		40

Tenure



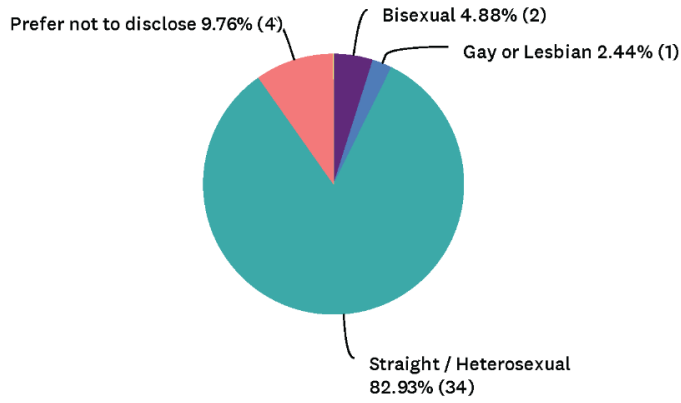
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Less than a year	24.39%	10
1-2 years	26.83%	11
3-5 years	14.63%	6
6-9 years	4.88%	2
10-14 years	12.20%	5
15+ years	9.76%	4
Prefer not to disclose	7.32%	3
TOTAL		41

Age



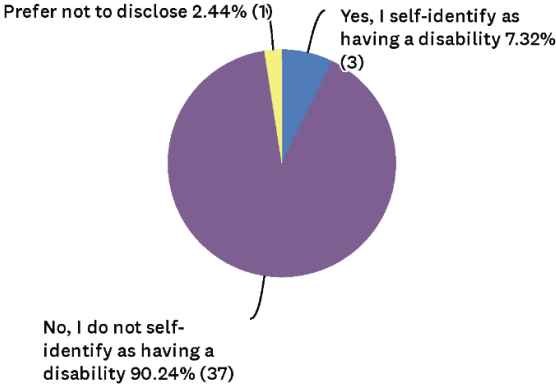
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
23 or under	7.32%	3
24-39	46.34%	19
40-55	19.51%	8
56 and over	17.07%	7
Prefer not to disclose	9.76%	4
TOTAL		41

Sexual Orientation



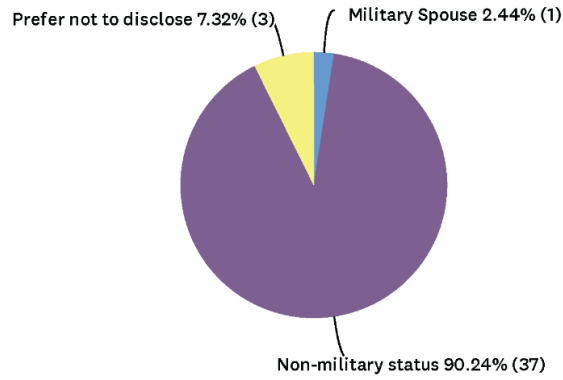
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Bisexual	4.88%	2
Gay or Lesbian	2.44%	1
Straight / Heterosexual	82.93%	34
Prefer not to disclose	9.76%	4
Self-identity not listed here	0.00%	0
TOTAL		41

Disability



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes, I self-identify as having a disability	7.32%	3
No, I do not self-identify as having a disability	90.24%	37
Prefer not to disclose	2.44%	1
TOTAL		41

Military Status



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Prior Active Military	0.00%	0
Reserve or Guard Member	0.00%	0
Military Spouse	2.44%	1
Non-military status	90.24%	37
Prefer not to disclose	7.32%	3
TOTAL		41

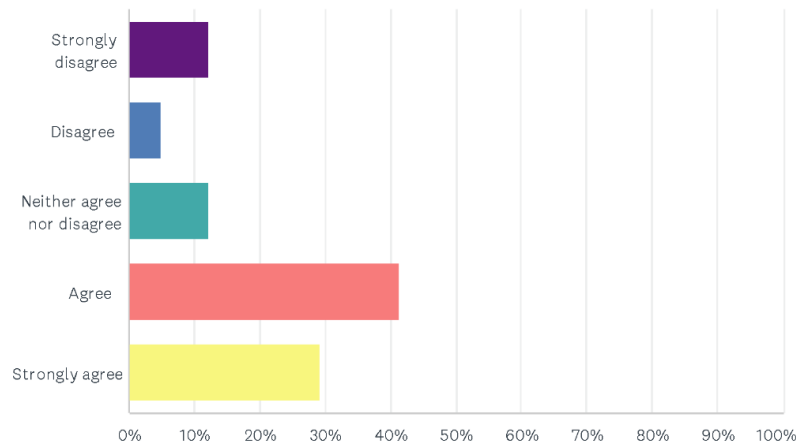
Leadership Aggregate Data

In the aggregate, statements on the leadership scale rated at 70% or above.

In the aggregate statements on the leadership scale with neutrality scores as high as 17 % represented a sample size of 2-7 people. Those who disagreed with leadership, represented 7-12 people or 17-29% and were the opinions primarily of people of color.

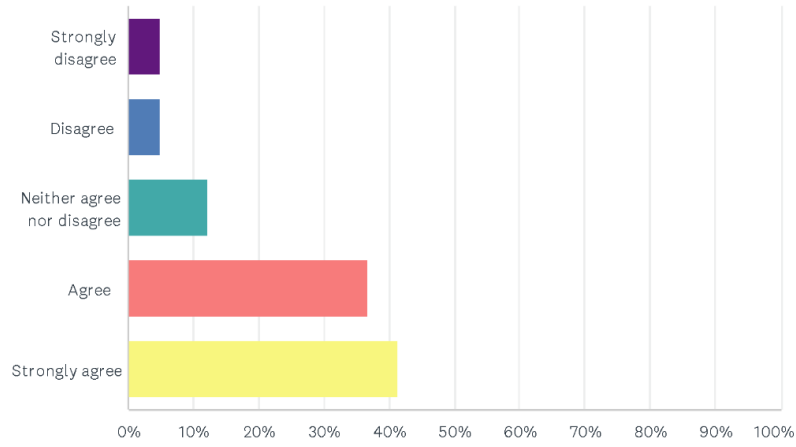
Out of 41 responses, 12.2 % represented as Black/ African American, 26.8 % Hispanic or Latinx. These cohorts represent the largest sample size of survey respondents that identify as non-Caucasian.

I have confidence in the leadership of the organization.



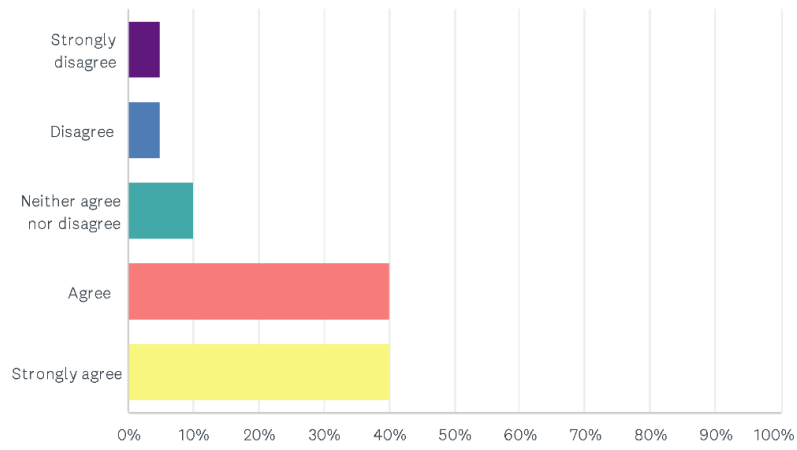
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Strongly disagree	12.20%	5
Disagree	4.88%	2
Neither agree nor disagree	12.20%	5
Agree	41.46%	17
Strongly agree	29.27%	12
TOTAL		41

I see leadership doing the same things they publicly promote.



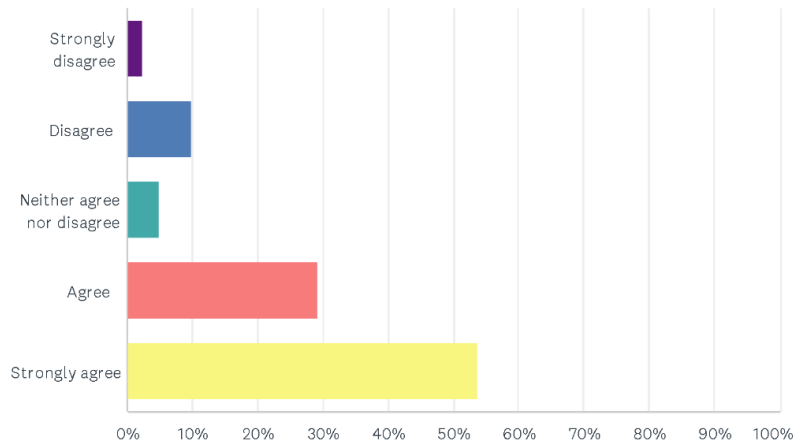
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Strongly disagree	4.88%	2
Disagree	4.88%	2
Neither agree nor disagree	12.20%	5
Agree	36.59%	15
Strongly agree	41.46%	17
TOTAL		41

I see leadership demonstrating the organization's culture values.



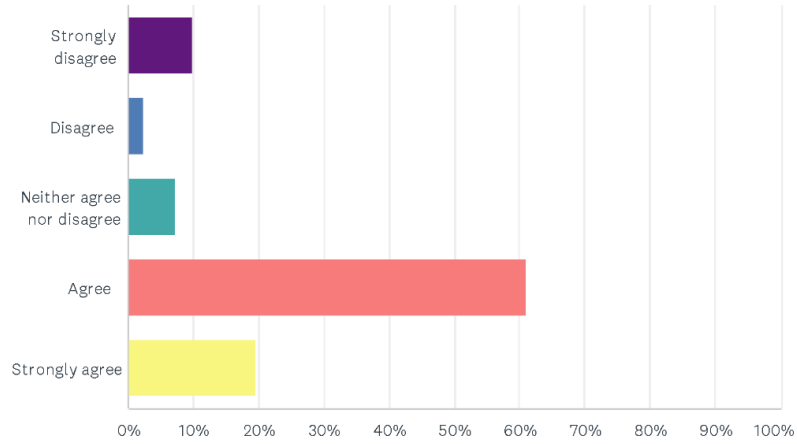
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Strongly disagree	5.00%	2
Disagree	5.00%	2
Neither agree nor disagree	10.00%	4
Agree	40.00%	16
Strongly agree	40.00%	16
TOTAL		40

I am comfortable raising a concern to the person I report to.



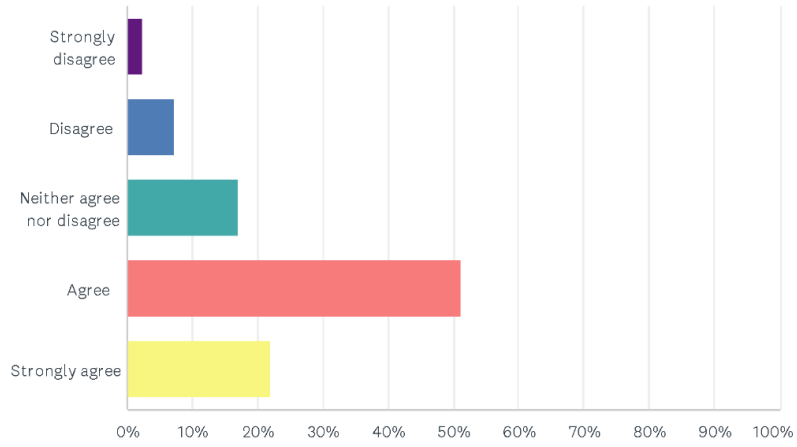
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Strongly disagree	2.44%	1
Disagree	9.76%	4
Neither agree nor disagree	4.88%	2
Agree	29.27%	12
Strongly agree	53.66%	22
TOTAL		41

I am kept well informed by leadership about the future direction, plans and progress of the organization.



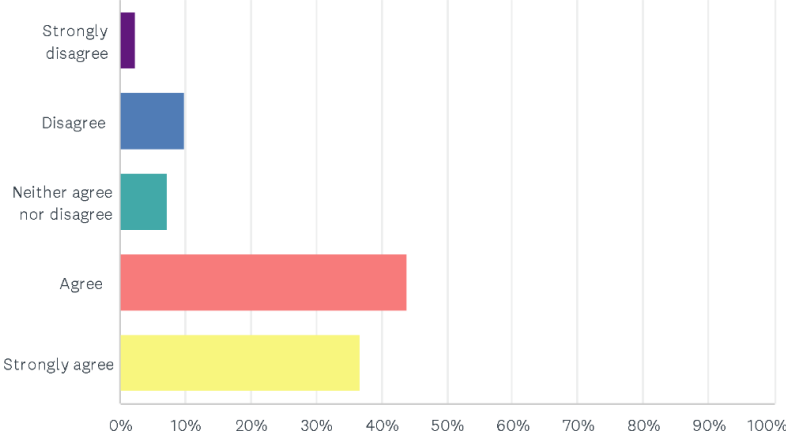
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Strongly disagree	9.76%	4
Disagree	2.44%	1
Neither agree nor disagree	7.32%	3
Agree	60.98%	25
Strongly agree	19.51%	8
TOTAL		41

I am kept informed about my department's future direction and plans.



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Strongly disagree	2.44%	1
Disagree	7.32%	3
Neither agree nor disagree	17.07%	7
Agree	51.22%	21
Strongly agree	21.95%	9
TOTAL		41

There are channels available for me to express my ideas to leadership.



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Strongly disagree	2.44%	1
Disagree	9.76%	4
Neither agree nor disagree	7.32%	3
Agree	43.90%	18
Strongly agree	36.59%	15
TOTAL		41

Culture Aggregate Data

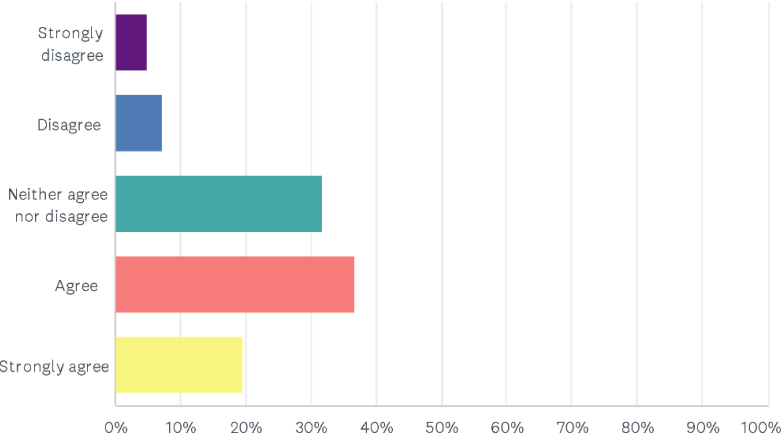
In aggregate statements on culture are 70% or above. Except on the following statements:

Statement	Percentage
I recommend this organization as a great place to work.	61%
Work/Life Balance	48%
Communication on sensitive issues	65%
Work Related Complaints	51%
Retaliation	60%
Communication	65%
Interdepartmental Communication	38%

Over 60 % of respondents indicated that there is a problem with communication. In addition, there are high neutrality scores, over 32 % of all respondents, indicating central tendency bias; respondents did not want to be at the extremes of the scale. This supports the qualitative data themes of siloes, distrust, fear of retaliation and lack of psychological safety among people of color.

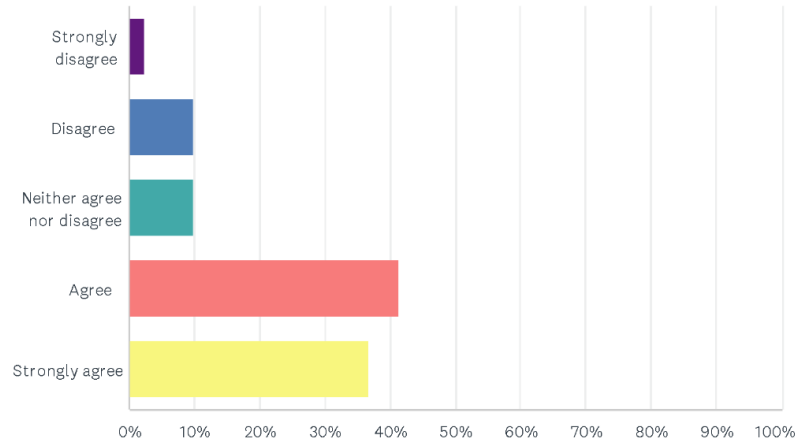
Out of 41 responses, 12.2 % represented as Black/ African American, 26.8 % Hispanic or Latinx. These cohorts represent the largest sample size of survey respondents that identify as non-Caucasian.

The organization's culture is consistent with the way it was portrayed before I joined the company.



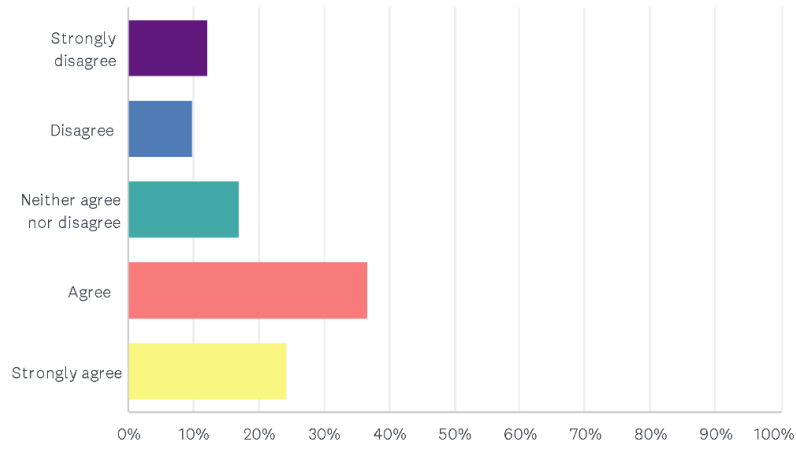
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Strongly disagree	4.88%	2
Disagree	7.32%	3
Neither agree nor disagree	31.71%	13
Agree	36.59%	15
Strongly agree	19.51%	8
TOTAL		41

I can bring my true and authentic self to work.



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Strongly disagree	2.44%	1
Disagree	9.76%	4
Neither agree nor disagree	9.76%	4
Agree	41.46%	17
Strongly agree	36.59%	15
TOTAL		41

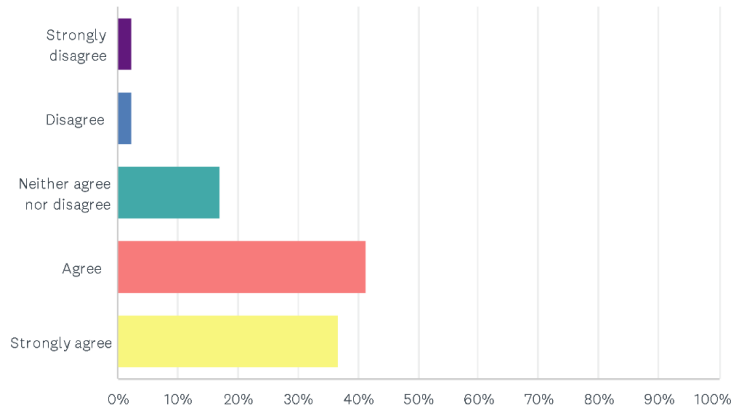
I have a best / close friend at work.



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Strongly disagree	12.20%	5
Disagree	9.76%	4
Neither agree nor disagree	17.07%	7
Agree	36.59%	15
Strongly agree	24.39%	10
TOTAL		41

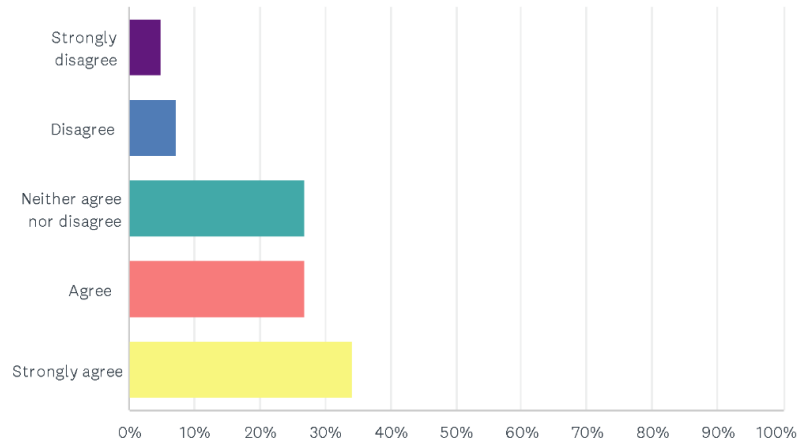
Employees generally respect each other.

Answered: 41 Skipped: 0



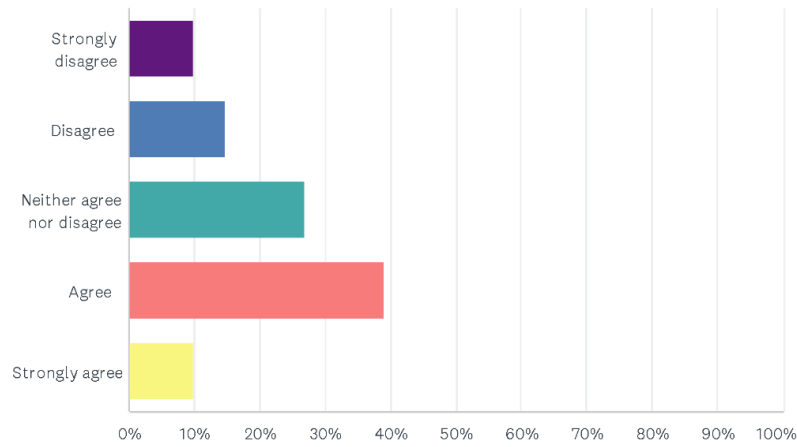
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Strongly disagree	2.44%	1
Disagree	2.44%	1
Neither agree nor disagree	17.07%	7
Agree	41.46%	17
Strongly agree	36.59%	15
TOTAL		41

I would recommend this organization as a great place to work.



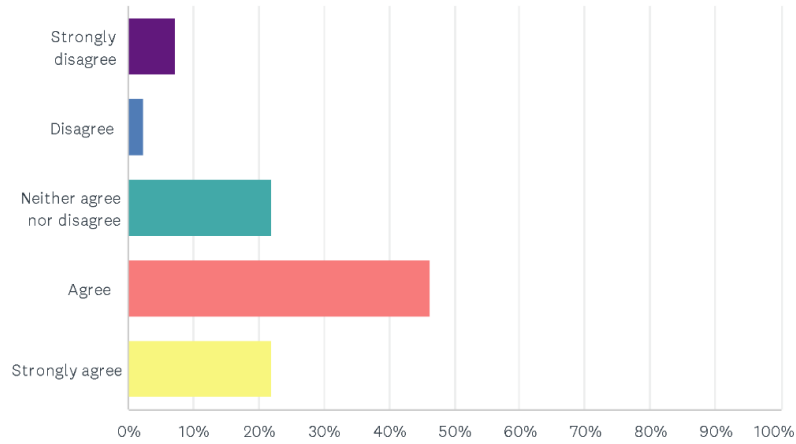
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Strongly disagree	4.88%	2
Disagree	7.32%	3
Neither agree nor disagree	26.83%	11
Agree	26.83%	11
Strongly agree	34.15%	14
TOTAL		41

Employees experience a healthy work/life balance.



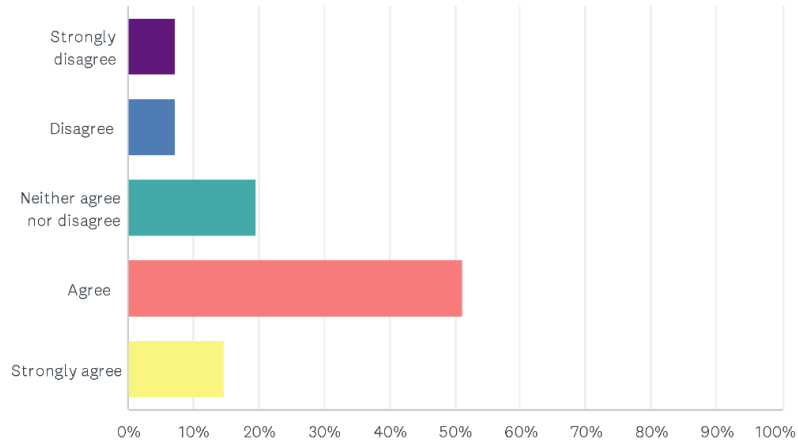
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Strongly disagree	9.76% 4
Disagree	14.63% 6
Neither agree nor disagree	26.83% 11
Agree	39.02% 16
Strongly agree	9.76% 4
TOTAL	41

At work people openly share their professional development challenges, and receive support and guidance from others.



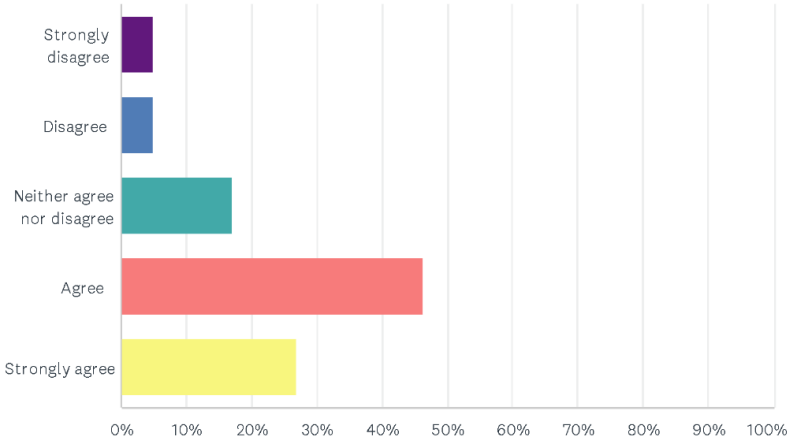
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Strongly disagree	7.32%	3
Disagree	2.44%	1
Neither agree nor disagree	21.95%	9
Agree	46.34%	19
Strongly agree	21.95%	9
TOTAL		41

Anyone can bring up a sensitive work-related issue in the workplace.



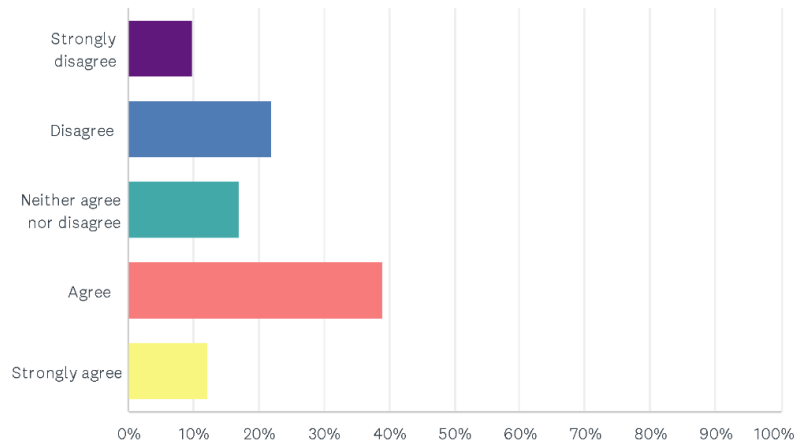
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Strongly disagree	7.32%	3
Disagree	7.32%	3
Neither agree nor disagree	19.51%	8
Agree	51.22%	21
Strongly agree	14.63%	6
TOTAL		41

I feel that I am recognized for my contributions in my department.



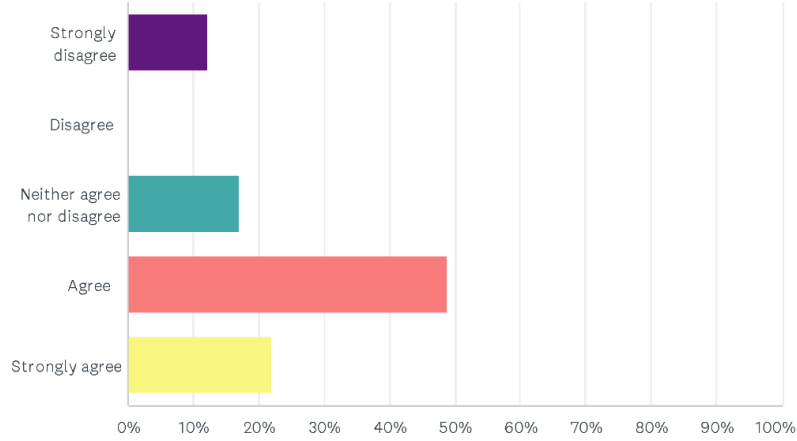
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Strongly disagree	4.88%	2
Disagree	4.88%	2
Neither agree nor disagree	17.07%	7
Agree	46.34%	19
Strongly agree	26.83%	11
TOTAL		41

Work-related complaints and conflicts are effectively resolved.



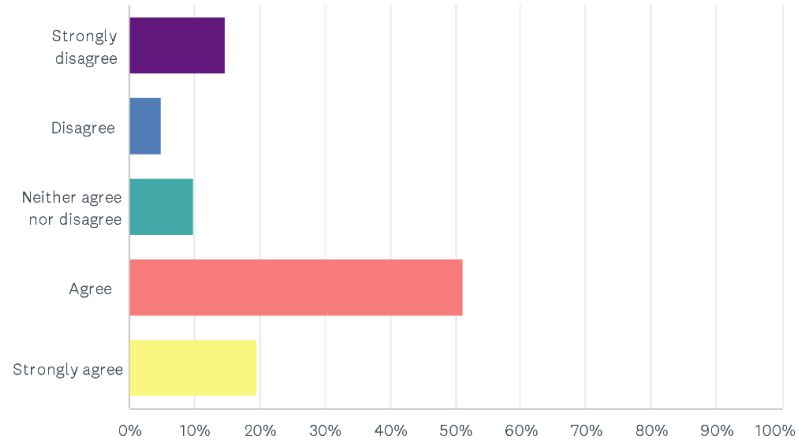
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Strongly disagree	9.76% 4
Disagree	21.95% 9
Neither agree nor disagree	17.07% 7
Agree	39.02% 16
Strongly agree	12.20% 5
TOTAL	41

If I raise a concern about discrimination, I am confident my employer would do what is right.



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Strongly disagree	12.20%	5
Disagree	0.00%	0
Neither agree nor disagree	17.07%	7
Agree	48.78%	20
Strongly agree	21.95%	9
TOTAL		41

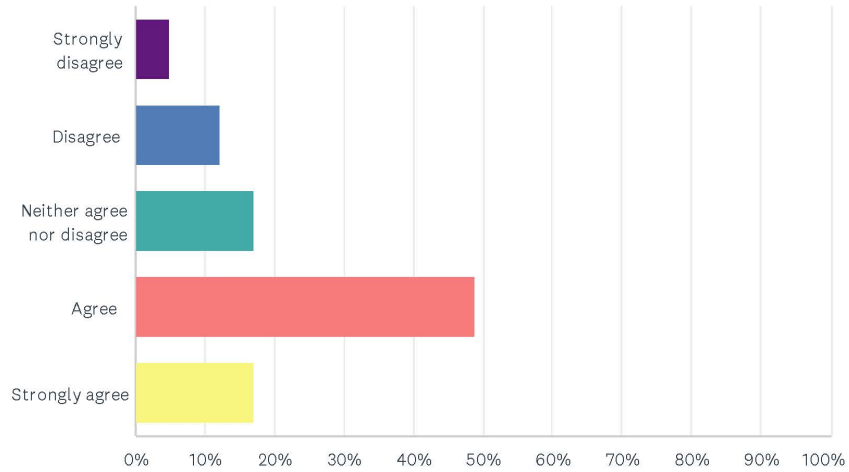
Employees can openly share their opinions without fear of retaliation or punishment.



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Strongly disagree	14.63%	6
Disagree	4.88%	2
Neither agree nor disagree	9.76%	4
Agree	51.22%	21
Strongly agree	19.51%	8
TOTAL		41

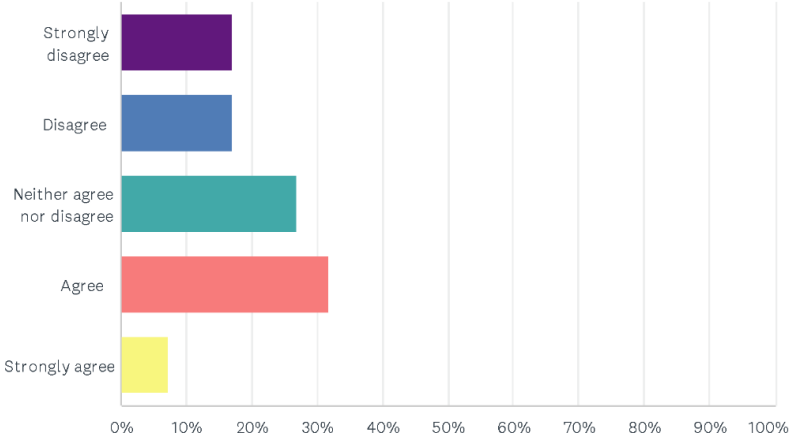
There is effective communication in my department.

Answered: 41 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Strongly disagree	4.88%	2
Disagree	12.20%	5
Neither agree nor disagree	17.07%	7
Agree	48.78%	20
Strongly agree	17.07%	7
TOTAL		41

There is good communication between people in different departments of the organization.

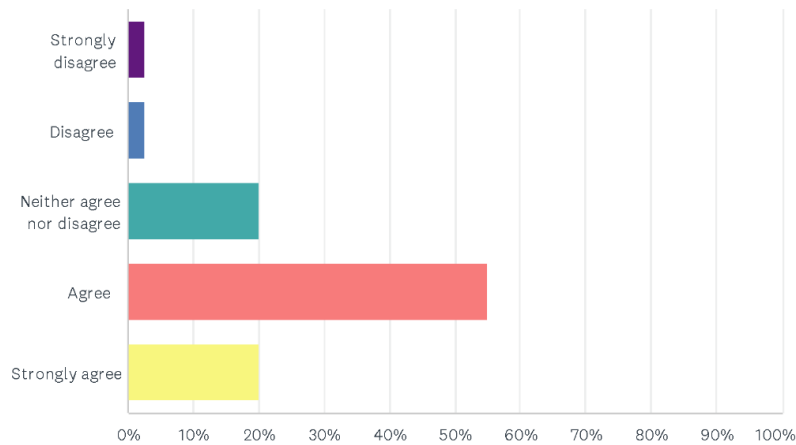


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Strongly disagree	17.07%	7
Disagree	17.07%	7
Neither agree nor disagree	26.83%	11
Agree	31.71%	13
Strongly agree	7.32%	3
TOTAL		41

Equity Aggregate Data

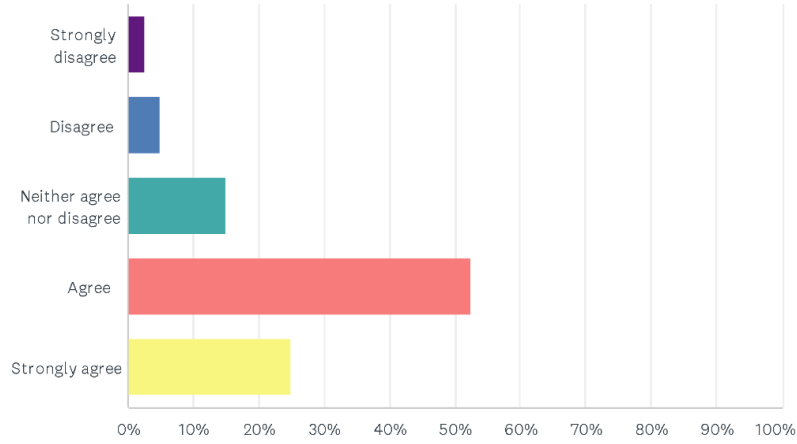
In the aggregate, statements on the equity scale rated at 70% or above. Neutrality scores are as high as 20% indicating central tendency bias; respondents did not want to be at the extremes of the scale. Further analysis indicates high neutrality and disagreement among people of color. This supports the qualitative data around distrust, fear of retaliation and lack of psychological safety.

Within my functional area, high visibility assignments are available to all employees.



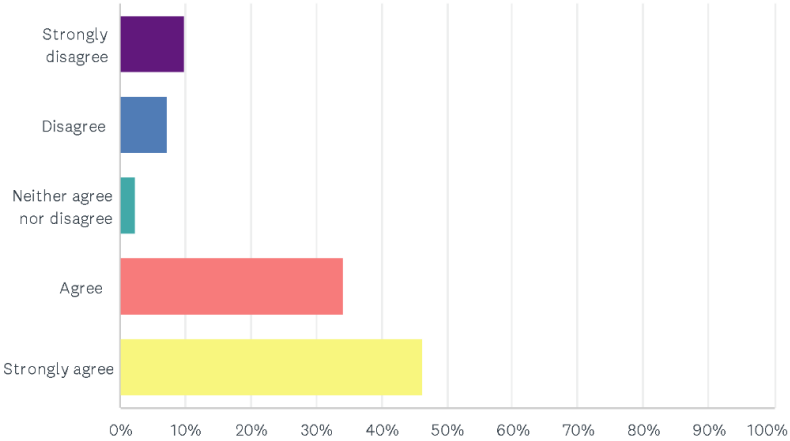
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Strongly disagree	2.50%	1
Disagree	2.50%	1
Neither agree nor disagree	20.00%	8
Agree	55.00%	22
Strongly agree	20.00%	8
TOTAL		40

Within my functional area, work is assigned on a fair and equitable basis.



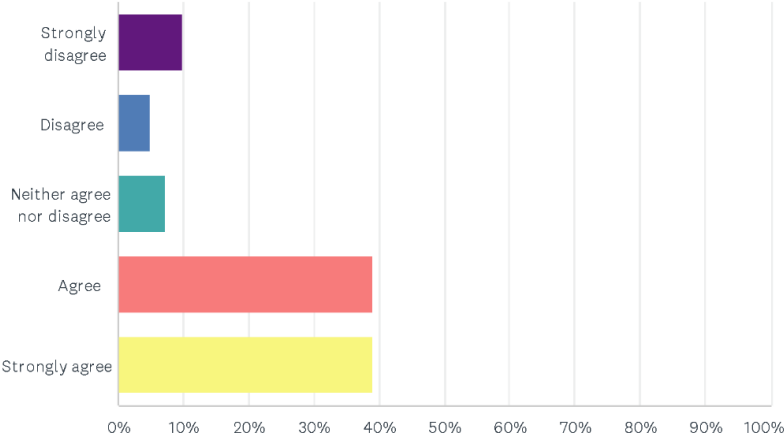
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Strongly disagree	2.50%	1
Disagree	5.00%	2
Neither agree nor disagree	15.00%	6
Agree	52.50%	21
Strongly agree	25.00%	10
TOTAL		40

Regardless of race, employees have an equal opportunity to succeed.



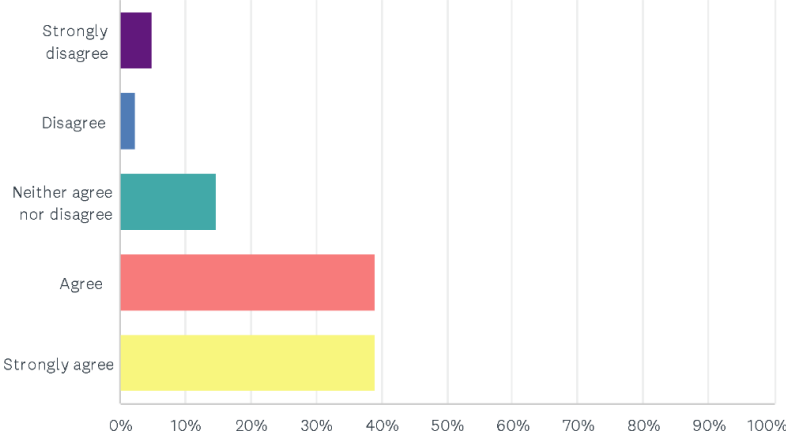
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Strongly disagree	9.76%	4
Disagree	7.32%	3
Neither agree nor disagree	2.44%	1
Agree	34.15%	14
Strongly agree	46.34%	19
TOTAL		41

Regardless of gender, employees have an equal opportunity to succeed.



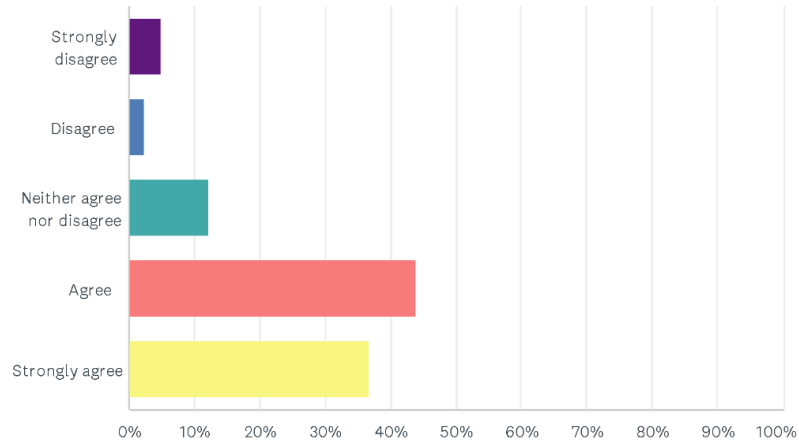
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Strongly disagree	9.76%	4
Disagree	4.88%	2
Neither agree nor disagree	7.32%	3
Agree	39.02%	16
Strongly agree	39.02%	16
TOTAL		41

Regardless of sexual orientation, employees have an equal opportunity to succeed.



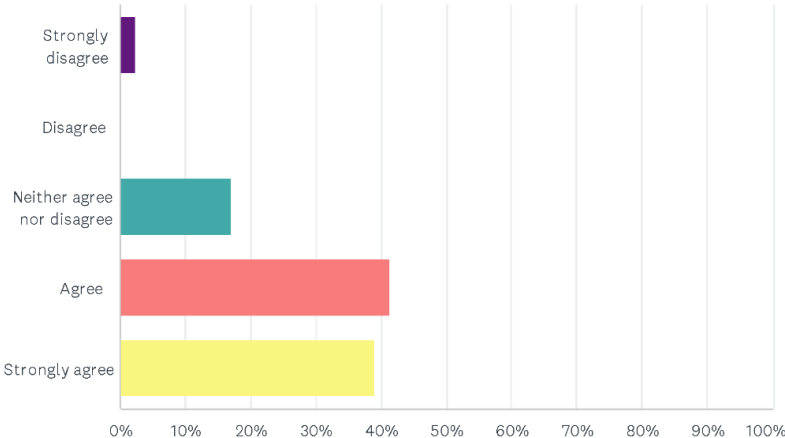
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Strongly disagree	4.88%	2
Disagree	2.44%	1
Neither agree nor disagree	14.63%	6
Agree	39.02%	16
Strongly agree	39.02%	16
TOTAL		41

Regardless of age, employees have an equal opportunity to succeed.



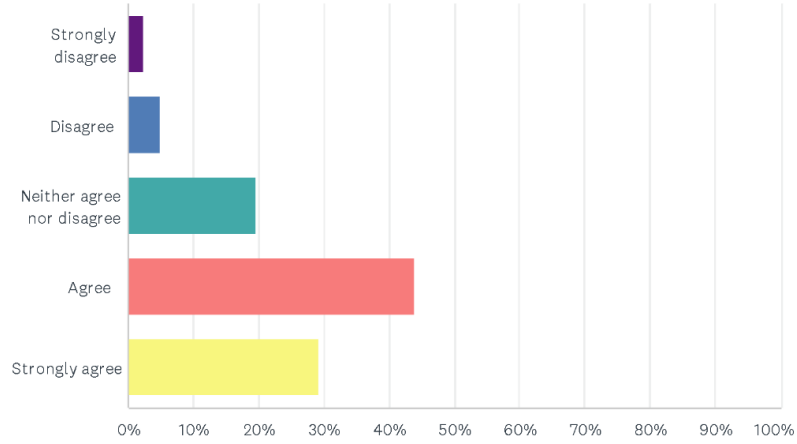
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Strongly disagree	4.88%	2
Disagree	2.44%	1
Neither agree nor disagree	12.20%	5
Agree	43.90%	18
Strongly agree	36.59%	15
TOTAL		41

Regardless of military status, employees have an equal opportunity to succeed.



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Strongly disagree	2.44%	1
Disagree	0.00%	0
Neither agree nor disagree	17.07%	7
Agree	41.46%	17
Strongly agree	39.02%	16
TOTAL		41

Regardless of disability, employees have an equal opportunity to succeed.



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Strongly disagree	2.44%	1
Disagree	4.88%	2
Neither agree nor disagree	19.51%	8
Agree	43.90%	18
Strongly agree	29.27%	12
TOTAL		41

Talent Aggregate Data

In the aggregate statements on the equity scale were rated at 70 % or above. Except the following statements:

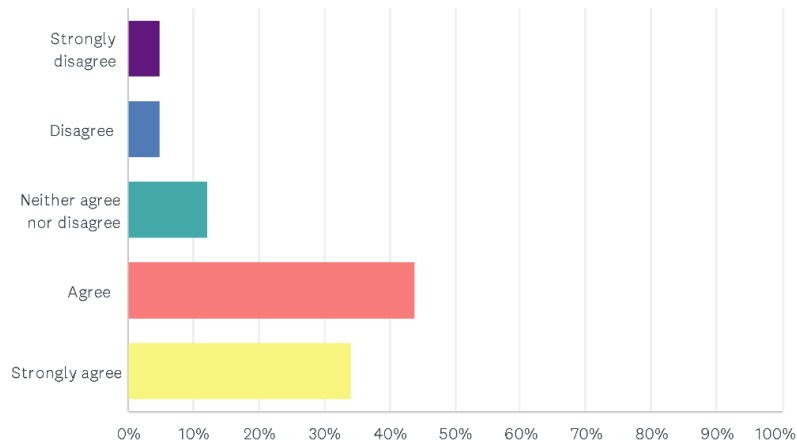
Statement	Percentage
Opportunities for growth	60%
Opportunities for advancement	41%

Neutrality scores are as high as 40% indicating central tendency bias; respondents did not want to be at the extremes of the scale. Further analysis indicates high neutrality and disagreement among people of color. This supports the qualitative data that there are lack of opportunities for people of color within the organization.

Out of 41 responses, 12.2 % represented as Black/ African American, 26.8 % Hispanic or Latinx. These cohorts represent the largest sample size of survey respondents that identify as non-Caucasian.

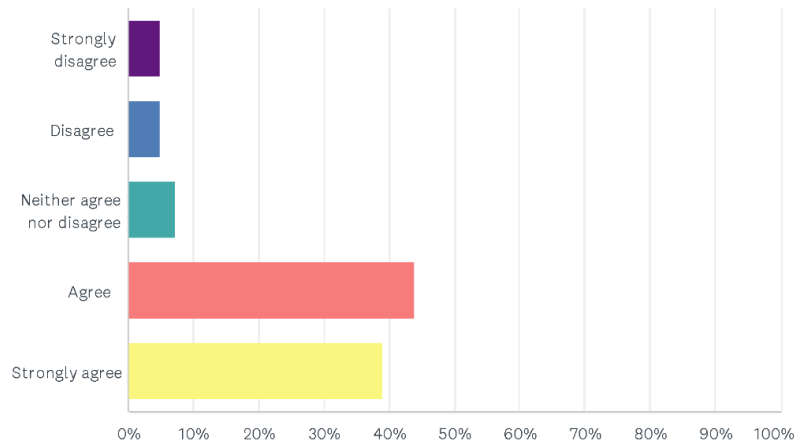
Out of 41 responses, 49 % are supervisors and the remainder, 51% are individual contributors.

My manager gives me clear and realistic performance expectations.



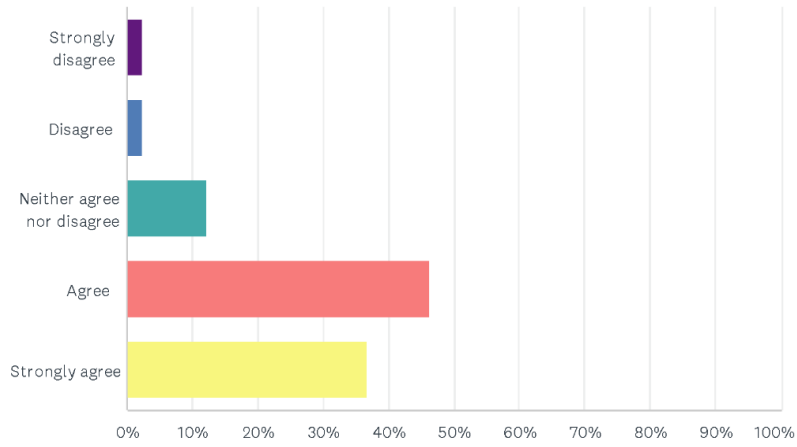
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Strongly disagree	4.88%	2
Disagree	4.88%	2
Neither agree nor disagree	12.20%	5
Agree	43.90%	18
Strongly agree	34.15%	14
TOTAL		41

My supervisor gives me feedback on my work and performance.



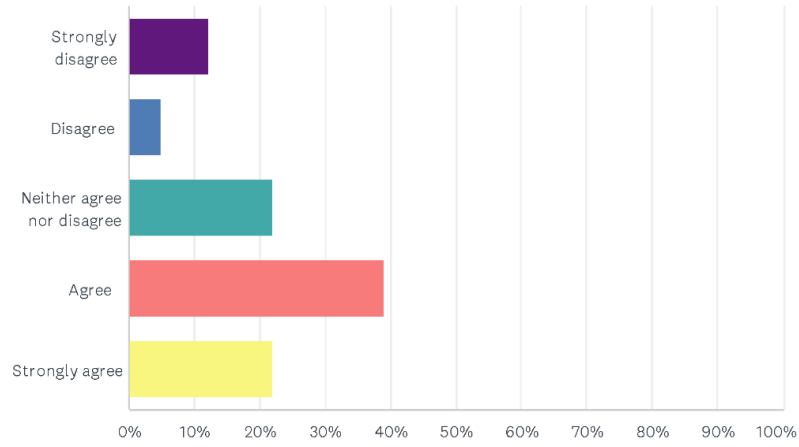
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Strongly disagree	4.88%	2
Disagree	4.88%	2
Neither agree nor disagree	7.32%	3
Agree	43.90%	18
Strongly agree	39.02%	16
TOTAL		41

I believe my performance is evaluated fairly.



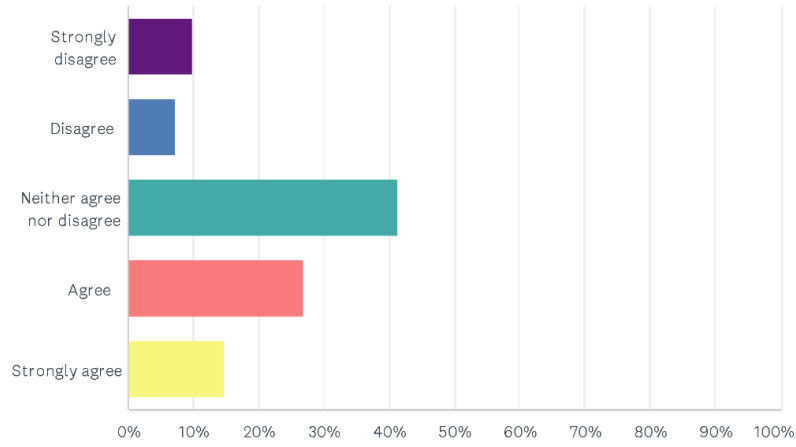
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Strongly disagree	2.44% 1
Disagree	2.44% 1
Neither agree nor disagree	12.20% 5
Agree	46.34% 19
Strongly agree	36.59% 15
TOTAL	41

I feel like I have opportunities for growth at my organization.



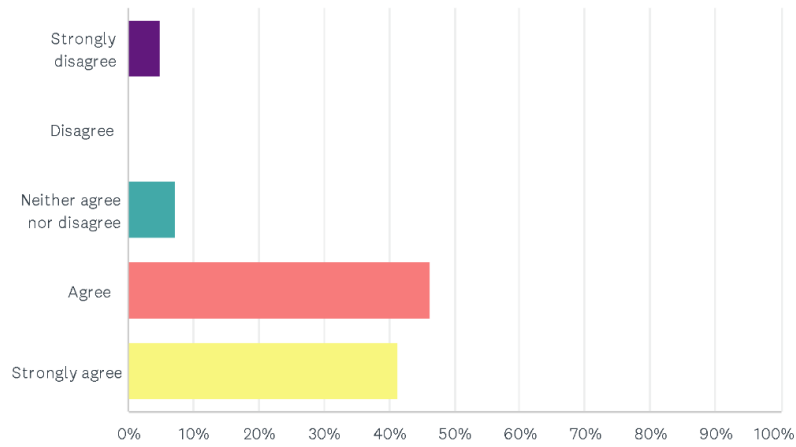
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Strongly disagree	12.20%	5
Disagree	4.88%	2
Neither agree nor disagree	21.95%	9
Agree	39.02%	16
Strongly agree	21.95%	9
TOTAL		41

I feel like I have opportunities for advancement at my organization.



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Strongly disagree	9.76%	4
Disagree	7.32%	3
Neither agree nor disagree	41.46%	17
Agree	26.83%	11
Strongly agree	14.63%	6
TOTAL		41

In the past year, I have had opportunities to learn and grow.

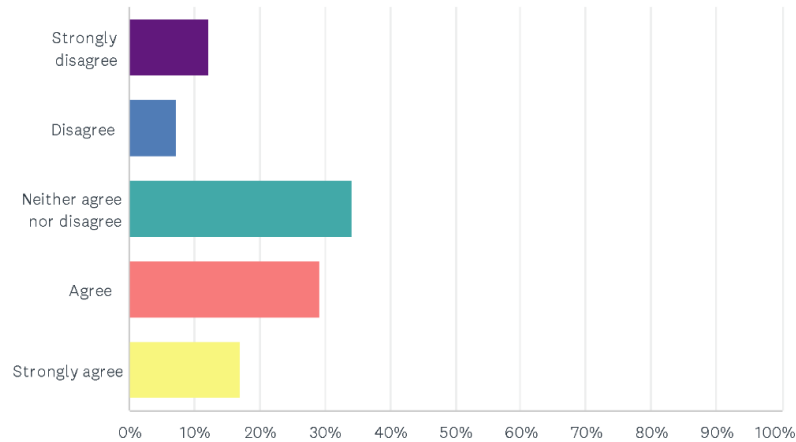


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Strongly disagree	4.88%	2
Disagree	0.00%	0
Neither agree nor disagree	7.32%	3
Agree	46.34%	19
Strongly agree	41.46%	17
TOTAL		41

Community Aggregate Data

In aggregate, 54 % of respondents were neutral or did not believe people are drawn to the organization based on its commitment and dedication to racial equity, diversity, and inclusion.

Job seekers are drawn to our organization because of our commitment and dedication to diversity, racial equity and inclusion.



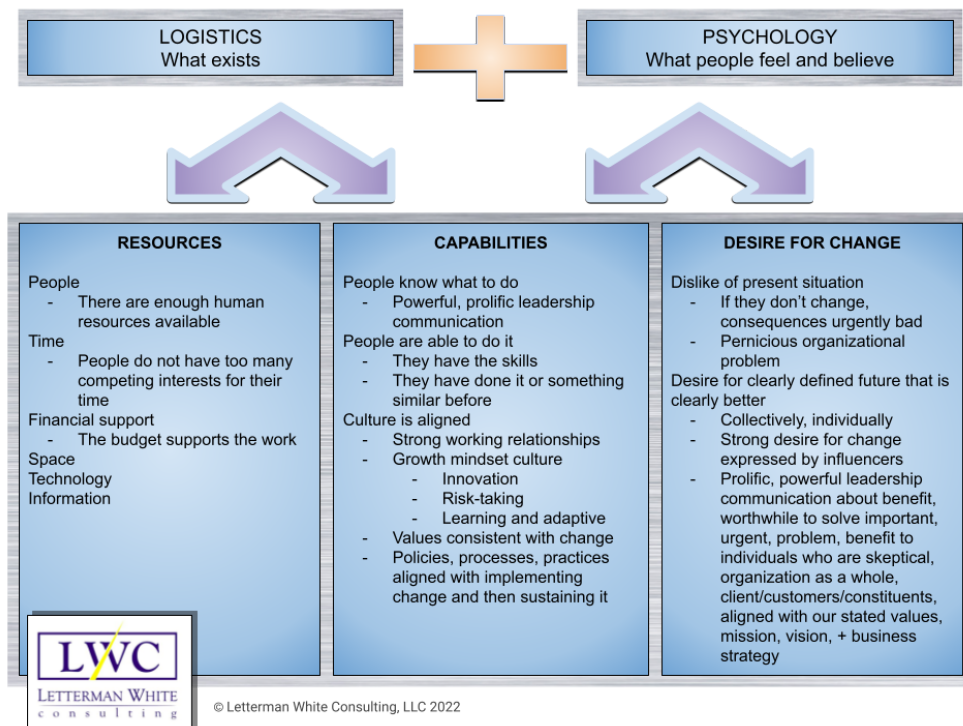
ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Strongly disagree	12.20%	5
Disagree	7.32%	3
Neither agree nor disagree	34.15%	14
Agree	29.27%	12
Strongly agree	17.07%	7
TOTAL		41

Data Findings and Recommendations

Readiness for change leads off LWC’s findings. The measure contrasts preparedness with resistance. Unless psychological and logistical preparedness is high enough, resistance and inertia will maintain the *status quo* at best or worse, push the system further from stated goals.

Readiness for Change

At LWC, we organize readiness for change data into two main categories with overlap. Systems must be logistically ready. The system must have sufficient resources in terms of finances, people, technology, information, and time for the changes anticipated. The individuals and groups within the system also must be psychologically ready for the anticipated changes.



Logistical Readiness

Culture change is preceded by conversations about specific anticipated changes.⁸ Discussing diversity, racial equity, and inclusion begins with a collective understanding of the meaning of these terms. That is a precursor for logistical readiness to discuss the changes necessary for racial equity. There is an absence of clear City-wide definitions for key terms. Therefore, it is not surprising that data indicated directors and managerial level staff do not understand the full meanings of the terms diversity, racial equity, and inclusion and how they relate to the organization.

⁸ Social Construction, is a proven theory that conversations about change precede actual change.

The culture change for racial equity brings to the forefront disagreements about the values, beliefs and assumptions, needs, and wants of different individuals. It also opens the door for important discussions about the tensions between color awareness and color blindness; whether in the US anyone with tenacity, resilience, and desire can be successful or whether privilege also plays a role in a person's ability to be successful; and whether the success of one person must come at the expense of another ("zero-sum game") or whether "a rising tide raises all ships."

It would be shocking if there were not discussions about these topics before people adopt inclusive and equitable thinking and behaviors. Logistical readiness means that people have the capabilities to have these discussions. Psychological readiness means they feel safe to do so.

Data demonstrating low capability comes from leaders' management practices. When leaders do not foster an environment of empowerment or healthy opposition, as was the consistent theme from data collected, there will be difficulty in having tension-laden conversations. Leaders must develop the capability of supporting differences of perspective and difficult discussions around those differences. All employees must have the foundational communication skills to hold tension-laden discussions about the current culture of a successful career ladder and the roles tenacity, resilience, and privilege play will be difficult, overly contentious, and mostly unproductive. There is no indication in our data review of learning and development that employees' communication skills have been a focus. Similarly, there is no indication whether divisional leaders and managers are prepared to take the recommendations in this report and design and execute implementation plans to put those recommendations in place.

Data demonstrating low psychological safety include perceptions that "staff do not take ownership of the work," there is "constant push-back against change," and many employees' believe that the changes proposed mean that "something will be taken from them." The consistent theme speaks to the collective belief that racial equity is a "zero-sum game," where benefit to one comes only at the expense of another and push-back combined with a lack of leadership for racial equity maintains the *status quo*.

Logistical readiness also requires sufficient resources - people with sufficient time to have discussions, devote to additional learning and development for fundamental skill improvement, make the changes required and adjust to those changes. Changes required include restructuring departments, reviewing and revising job descriptions, and creating a City DEI/RE set of values, mission, vision, goals, metrics, and implementation plans. These resources are low.

External support for this culture change is necessary. There is no Chief Diversity Officer. Mr. Batista became the Interim Chief Diversity Officer when Ms. Williams resigned and the Acting City Manager when Mr. Augustus resigned. He is effectively doing the work of three people. The Communications Department consists of one person following the resignation of the Director. Communications is a significant part of developing and implementing DEI/RE strategy, structure, and process changes. HR data show hardworking, committed employees who completely

embrace the “all hands on deck” philosophy and regularly take on tasks outside of their job scope because the City was operating with 24 fewer full-time employees at the beginning of this year than it had at the beginning of 2019, a drop of 1.3%. Our workforce interviews uncovered that during COVID, “they didn’t really have time to discuss DEI” or even current events around racial justice. There is little time for existing employees to take on tasks related to this culture change. If people have too many competing demands on their time, their ability to focus on this culture change will be split and diluted.

Logistical readiness also requires sufficient technology. Generally, there is a need for the right technology to support virtual learning, people management, and the collection, analysis, and storing of disaggregated data about the workforce. Information must be available to the people who need it when they need it and they must have the knowledge to use it effectively and efficiently.

Psychological Readiness

Psychological readiness for creating a culture of racial equity means that collectively there exists:

- A strong dislike of the *status quo* in relation to racial equity;
- A clear vision of a different and better future for individuals and the collective once the specific changes are made;
- A strong desire to make those changes;
- A belief that there is psychological safety to have the difficult discussions, reflect, learn, and make the changes;
- A belief in the collective ability to have the difficult discussions, reflect, learn, and make the changes; and
- A belief in the ability to adjust to those changes.

Collectively means that there is a tipping point of people who embody the feelings and beliefs in the list above. Feelings and beliefs are contagious.⁹

Resistance to change is ingrained in the City workforce culture. LWC encountered anecdotal information that many employees did not want to complete the survey, participate in interviews, or be part of focus groups due to fear of reprisal. This was validated by the sourcing survey for the HHS focus groups where only 27 % of respondents indicated they wanted to participate. Further, although the City does not collect disaggregated data, interviews with people of color revealed a repeated theme of fear of reprisal; i.e., low psychological safety, as a reason for not participating.

It’s not enough if people know what to do, even if they also have the skills and experience. Where the changes involved will necessarily require people to stretch beyond their comfort zone

⁹ Klotz, F. (2020). *Employee emotions aren’t noise - they’re data: Emotions provide insight into what motivates people and how to improve performance*. MIT Sloan Management Review. 61. P. 2. <https://mitsmr.com/34yqb6D>

in feelings, thinking, and action, the organizational culture must support a growth, rather than a fixed mindset.¹⁰ Culture reflects collective feelings and beliefs by signaling acceptable behavior. People collectively must share the belief that everyone has the capacity to learn and grow and that learning and growth result from experimentation, practices, and reflecting on mistakes and failures to problem-solve and find new, innovative solutions to long-standing, structural problems. This skillset is new for most people.

A strong collective desire for change begins when a sufficient number of people within the collective have a strong dislike of the *status quo* and a strong desire for a different and better future that they can imagine. People perceive any change as a loss of what is familiar and comfortable. They naturally resist change for that reason and only embrace it when the resistance is addressed. It is the role of leaders to create the messages that build these two desires in enough people to overcome any skepticism and resistance and engage enough people in changing how they feel, how they think, and what they are willing to do.

Bringing about collective readiness, a shared psychological state of commitment to change and readiness to act,¹¹ requires senior leadership to:

- Create and communicate across a variety of media consistent messages about what is needed, why it is important, beneficial, and worthwhile:
 - Why racial equity generally and specific changes are urgently needed;
 - The important problems the specific changes will address;
 - The benefits expected to be produced for the City itself, the workplace, the community served, and individuals personally;
 - The values aligned with the changes proposed; and
 - That these values matter because managers support them, opinion leaders support them, and peers support them.
- Facilitate meetings where people have the opportunity to ask senior leaders questions and participate in discussions of the difficult tension-filled issues related to racial equity, diversity, and inclusion; and process the feelings of anxiety, loss, and confusion that come with leaving a familiar way of doing or being behind and embracing new skills, ideas, and ways of thinking and behaving; and
- Emphasize innovation, risk-taking, and learning; good working relationships; and strong communication skills for holding difficult, tension-filled conversations, often through training programs, workshops, and coaching.

We cannot overemphasize how strongly workplace culture affects readiness for change. Employees always consider whether what they say and do will lead to reward and recognition or criticism and punishment. Consciously or unconsciously they select beliefs and actions to fit in,

¹⁰ Someone with a growth mindset views intelligence, abilities, and talents as learnable and capable of improvement through effort. On the other hand, someone with a fixed mindset views those same traits as inherently stable and unchangeable over time.

¹¹ Weiner, B.J. (2009). A theory of organizational readiness for change. *Implement Science*. 4(67). <https://10.1186/1748-5908-4-67>

belong, and be treated like an insider, rather than an outsider. Selection depends on workplace community values, as much, if not more than personal values. Where community values are clearly explained, rewarded and recognized, presented clearly in formal job descriptions and performance evaluations, people are guided in their actions. When people are provided with professional development and career advancement aligned with DEI/RE values then held accountable through formal and informal systems of feedback, reward, and recognition, they embrace those values and act accordingly.

When people in a system do not believe a particular change is desirable or possible, they will resist the change. If enough people actively resist a change, it will not happen. Worcester, like every other city intending to improve racial equity, will be better positioned to design and execute implementation plans for the recommendations in this report if it first focuses on increasing its collective readiness for change.

Unfortunately, the data show a high level of collective belief that the changes are not individually valuable. Less prevalent in the data was the expression of hope, “a step in the right direction,” and thought that “we are setting up a good foundation for...the anti-racism group.”

Examples include the following:

“Regarding the city government “There is a lack of buy-in to systematic changes, including white privilege, they don't buy in because they think something will be taken from them.”

“I think the fact that the City Council is hiring a consultant to hear what the issues are is a step in the right direction. Hopefully the plan does not sit on a shelf.”

“I think we are setting up a good foundation for these things like the anti-racism work group, but I feel like staff do not take ownership of the work.”

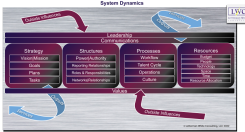
“There is a need to go along with the *status quo* and not rock the boat. That usually means siding with [senior leadership] in all things even if what you're advocating is for the betterment of the community.”

“There is constant push back against change. We are always told it's not done like that in a municipality. But I have had to provide documentation, legal documentation to get things changed.”

“Non-people of color feel personally attacked when things are brought up instead of looking at the systemic issue and working to change it.”

These examples demonstrate the high level of resistance to change and low level of readiness for change.

Sufficient readiness is not quite present.¹² The dissatisfaction with the present situation must be stronger and within the feelings of a larger group of the collective. Senior leaders must speak up to demonstrate the need for racial equity, the commitment to racial equity, and the collective value for one and all from the changes proposed. People must be given the time to develop the capabilities and use them to advance racial equity. Space and time should be devoted to two-way dialogue about proposed changes.



Outside Influences

As if navigating a global pandemic is not enough, we are living with polarized position-taking, a blurring of the boundaries between scientific facts and fantastical stories¹³, but also a growing awakening to the realities of racial inequities.¹⁴ These outside influences affect Worcester in several ways. First, new reports make people aware of the repeated incidents of injustice that cannot be ignored. Second, it has become more difficult to hold an open and honest search for facts and solutions that also offers space to different perspectives, experiences, and opinions. Third, the consequences of COVID are ongoing as is the need for constant adaptation and adjustment.

The outside environment is particularly important in an racial equity audit. The structural, systemic nature of racism in the United States and tendency toward marginalizing and scapegoating groups of people, more worldwide, suggests both the nature of the problem and the required solutions. Systemic problems persist even when individuals change, so laying blame for the problem on one or two people and replacing them will not remedy the problem.

¹² Some change projects succeed while others fail, despite excellence in project management. Beginning in the 1960s with David Gleicher and over time with Richard Beckhard, Reuben Harris, and Kathy Dannemiller, the concept of “readiness” for change was developed to predict the likely success of a change initiative. The formula asked the question:

Is the collective dissatisfaction with the status quo plus the clarity and desirability of the vision for the future plus the knowledge of what to do now greater or less than the personal cost or points of resistance to change? Getting people to do the work necessary for organizational change and not interfere depends on a clear vision of a different and better future that is also desirable individually and collectively. Further people expected to adjust to changes or implement changes needed to know what to do and be able to do it at a personal and collective cost that makes it all seem worthwhile to them.

¹³ Gottschall, J. (2021) *The story paradox: How our love of storytelling builds societies and tears them down*. Hachette Book Group.

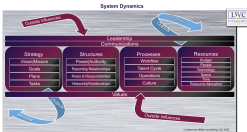
¹⁴ Olin, A. (2021, May 21). *The killing of George Floyd altered views of Racial Discrimination in Houston*. The Kinder Institute for Urban Research. Retrieved May 20, 2022, from <https://kinder.rice.edu/urbanedge/2021/05/12/killing-george-floyd-altered-houston-area-views-racial-discrimination>

Systemic awakening to a problem is also the beginning of collective awareness of the problem and curiosity to find innovative solutions.

Systemic racism is the ongoing disparate effects of laws that no longer exist, the failure to enforce laws that do exist, and the violence that continues and is aimed at people of color, people of minority religions, ethnic minorities, and other minority groups, even in a minority-majority city. The disproportionate access to resources is correlated with the disproportionate impact of COVID on communities of color. This awareness, as for example expressed in the growing movement to examine the effects of existing policies and practices in medicine that may be driving racial health inequities across the US,¹⁵ helps change thinking.

Outside influences can serve as drivers for change or they can just as easily inhibit change. We are still living with COVID, which has changed how people work and what they are willing to do for any job. Hiring and retaining the right people has become more difficult for most every organization and in almost every industry. The polarized position taking combined with the blurring of the boundary between fact and belief has infused itself into the US culture. This increases the difficulty for people with different beliefs to communicate with each other effectively and negotiate solutions for challenging, systemic problems.

It has become more important than ever to cultivate culture and develop a workplace of people with effective communication skills. It has become more important than ever to pay attention to the rapidly evolving environment, which is external to the City workforce, and for senior leaders to have excellent skills in innovation and strategic thinking, to lead changes for racial equity.



Leadership

City Council, the City Manager, and the Cabinet (“Senior Leaders”) and Director-level leaders and managers set the tone and reinforce cultural values. Effective leadership and management demonstrates a commitment to racial equity, diversity, and inclusion and ensure those values are embedded into all other elements of the City workforce system. Diversity at the Senior Leader level will signal a career path forward for underrepresented minorities.

City Council | City Manager

The City of Worcester is governed by a Council-Manager, or Plan E, form of government. This is different from most other cities in Massachusetts that operate with a Mayor-Council form of government.¹⁶ The City Manager heads the executive branch of the City, while the City Council, composed of eleven members, including the Mayor, is the legislative branch of the City,

¹⁵ Steven Ross Johnson, [Erasing Race in Medicine. U.S. News and World Report](#), February 3, 2022

¹⁶ https://www.mma.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/forms_of_local_government_0.pdf

according Sections 1-3 and 2-1 of the City Charter. These two branches must work together on racial equity issues. For example, City Council can propose and enact legislation but without implementation it is meaningless. Further, legislation enacted can be vetoed by popular vote.

For example Section 2-8 of the City Charter empowers Council to elect a City Clerk and City Auditor. On November 3, 1987, the citizens of Worcester repealed the provision of Section 2-8 empowering City Council to elect a Citizen Complaints Officer “for processing citizen complaints and inquiries that are directed or referred to him/her. He/she shall investigate and analyze data on all citizen complaints received by him/her and shall regularly submit reports as directed by the city council.”

The legislation was well-intentioned; however, it was vetoed. The position was responsible to “investigate and analyze data on **all citizen complaints**...and submit reports as directed by the city council.” We cannot be certain of the electorate’s rationale; however, we can surmise that the expansiveness and lack of clarity of the provision of Section 2-8 that was repealed, or the fact that there was no indication of what Council would do with reports submitted, may have contributed to their thinking.

Regardless, when City Council and the City Manager collaborate, there is great potential to draft enforceable legislation to signal to all that Worcester is city that welcomes diversity, cares about inclusion, and values equity. For example, if working together, the City of Worcester could choose to develop a role, comprehensive plan, and set of processes to reduce discrimination, similar to what cities like Philadelphia, New York, and Boston have done.

Some cities, like Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, have a [Commission of Human Relations](#) responsible for enforcing antidiscrimination laws, including the City’s [Fair Practices Ordinance](#). It began with an [addition to their city charter](#) for a human relations agency. This is different from the process and investigative bodies for filing a [discrimination claim against an employee](#) of the city. If Worcester has similar ordinances, they are not easy to locate and not obvious on its [Ordinances and Regulations](#) webpage. Based on the data collected from City Council members, the time is ripe to develop new legislation, perhaps similar to that developed in other cities, and follow that with the creation of new procedures and processes to implement the legislation in a meaningful way to the community.

The repeal of the provision of Section 2-8 empowering City Council to elect a Citizen Complaints Officer is an event worth reflection. It came close to creating a process that invited the community to share its feedback with Council on what it found undesirable about the City. With reflection, it is possible to learn what to propose legislatively and do differently in the future, especially given the current level of Council awareness of a need to improve diversity, equity and inclusion as indicated in the data below.

Questions and Summary Responses City Council	
<p>1.How do you feel and what do you think about Worcester’s position on improving diversity at all levels of the city workforce and creating a culture of equity, inclusion and belonging?</p>	<p>It’s a “superficial view - we have the black superintendent and first black CDO. So we’re good. All falls on ...the ‘one’ and ‘only’...the City and community views “were never fully aligned.” We “ do not like to talk about it. [There is] a lot of discomfort to admit we have a problem.”</p> <p>“Excited about the equity audit to validate what we’re doing well and action plan for what we’re not doing well.”</p> <p>“It’s more of a PR strategy than an implementation commitment.”</p>
<p>2.What do you think are the obstacles limiting progress right now?</p>	<p>Fear, Resistance, Defensiveness, absence of data ...black people exiting the city, culture of speaking up and lose your job. Fear that if we provide resources to one group, another will lose their resources.</p> <p>“Division of people into two different camps - BLM or Back the Blue...COVID made us come together a little, but the real issue is the lack of insight.”</p> <p>“Majority of people living in the City can’t fathom that racism exists and truly acknowledge it as an issue.”</p> <p>“In Worcester it is more difficult to create diverse teams because you often cannot hire someone outside the city. Then to narrow the applicant pool more, educational requirements create more barriers. We must focus and prioritize creating diversity in leadership in all departments.”</p> <p>“Salary disparities. Work culture - not transparent...There is an imbalance of people who are working hard and those who are not...it is also about racial equity.”</p>
<p>3.What do you think are the opportunities and internal strengths that could be leveraged to make progress right now?</p>	<p>There are “lots of suggestions [for] implementing.” Meet “resistance [with] dialoging.” “Push conversation on the Council floor.” “Community groups [are] doing this work.” “Community needs transparency...even if it’s not the full picture.”</p> <p>“Hire as many Worcester residents as possible, then we would hire more diversity. This would reflect the city. Many qualified candidates within the city.”</p> <p>“Complete review of our policies... We do not take advantage of all that is available for us.”</p> <p>“Diversity officers for fire, city, and police...roles, responsibilities, authority, etc., are not aligned and all report to different people.”</p>

	<p>“[T]each people ... what does DEI mean? What is this important? Help them understand systemic racism and privilege, People are open to learning now - an opportunity making them vulnerable.”</p> <p>“We have innovators in some places...we need to utilize their talents.”</p>
<p>4.What has the City communicated about why this work is important as a business imperative right now?</p>	<p>“Little communication led to conspiracy theories” regarding the dashboard showing where Federal money was going. There is no communication about what data we are tracking - track what we are and are not doing and figuring out how we can have this dialogue with this public that is not contentious and reactive.”</p> <p>“CM has executive order and directives.”</p> <p>“As some of the initiatives come online, there are messages about how the initiative is connected to existing orders, but there is no real dialogue or communication.”</p> <p>“Tried to do a month theme of ethnicities.”</p> <p>“Gender inclusive bathroom”</p>
<p>6.What has the City done to foster a sense of inclusion and belonging for employees and community members, who are from different identity groups, workstyles, and experience?</p>	<p>“It doesn’t look like there is any intentional efforts for inclusion... What the City does comes from pushes from outside groups.” HHS is the only department ... equity clinics...and vaccinate people.”</p> <p>“Nothing that I know of.”</p> <p>“A lot as it relates to class standard - linguistically done a nice job.”</p> <p>“A lot is hinging on these assessments...”</p>
<p>7.What would be your recommendations to make more progress right now?</p>	<p>“Work can’t fall on shoulders of one person.” Make equity audits public. Don’t make it impossible for next CDO to do the job. Transparency about what we are tracking and accomplishing.</p> <p>“Job fairs and outreach”</p> <p>“People of Color as leader[s] [makes it possible for People of Color to] envision getting there... and leads to higher retention and a sense of safety.”</p> <p>“The City must stop overlooking immediate [incidents and] set the tone.”</p>

Themes that repeat throughout the City Council members and echoed in the HR and HHS interviews and focus groups are that there is a willingness and desire for action now and also a skepticism about this audit and racial equity work due to past efforts that have not quite taken hold. There is also optimism and areas of strength, too. As one Council member said, “people are open to learning now.” As another pointed out, Health and Human Services (HHS) is doing things - holding equity clinics and vaccinating people.” Yet another commented on the fact that the City “linguistically [has] done a nice job.” City council members are looking to this assessment as the way forward. They are “excited” to discover “what we’re doing well and an action plan for what we’re not doing well.”

The lack of transparency came up several times. Without that the community does not see “the full picture” and imbalances in salaries and working hard are hidden. There are smart, talented, and motivated innovators in place, but it is not sustainable or effective for efforts toward change to fall on the “one” and “only” Chief Diversity Officer or Person of Color or External Community Group. It must start at the top with the legislative and executive branches. City Council and the City Manager must work together and “set the tone.”

Skepticism speaks to the immediate need for collaborative leadership of the City Manager and City Council on DEI/RE initiatives. It also speaks to the need to “roadshow” the results of this audit and plans for change, increase the system’s readiness for change, and decrease the level of collective resistance to change, without delay. Leadership, given the governmental structure, must be a collaborative process between the City Manager and City Council. The complementary roles and responsibilities must combine for change efforts and initiatives to be effective.

Executive Branch Personnel Changes

Since LWC began its Racial Equity Audit in February 2022, two key leadership positions have changed. Chief Diversity Officer, Stephanie Williams, resigned in March 2022. Then, Assistant City Manager, Eric Batista was appointed Interim Chief Diversity Officer. City Manager, Edward Augustus stepped down at the end of May 2022, and Mr. Batista was appointed by City Council to be Acting City Manager on June 1, 2022. ACM Batista has [announced his intention](#) to hire a temporary assistant city manager who would also take on the diversity and equity role. This is a significant amount of change in leadership and with all significant changes, it presents an opportunity.

As soon as Mr. Batista stepped into the Interim CDO role, he began building a bridge from his office to City Council to include their voices in this audit. Invitations to speak with LWC, as part of this audit, were extended to every City Council member and the Mayor. Five out of eleven Council members accepted the invitation. Given how busy City Council members are, the fact that nearly half made the time to speak with LWC speaks volumes to their commitment.

When Ms. Williams resigned, ACM Batista immediately stepped up. He continued weekly meetings with LWC without missing a beat. He reviewed the two early and urgent recommendations LWC provided prior to this report and acted on them. This speaks volumes to his commitment and the commitment of his Cabinet to following his lead.

Senior Leadership

Leadership is responsible for creating and communicating the DEI/RE values, mission, vision, goals, and metrics. It is the group responsible for creating readiness and leading communication efforts. Leaders must model inclusive leadership behaviors, make decisions using data, and notice and address challenges for performance improvement. Employees always notice what the leaders at every level above themselves say and do. The data we collected was consistent with this. Criticism was not leveled at the leaders of HR or HHS *per se*; consistent with culture-based issues, criticism was leveled at the highest levels of leadership - the Cabinet in general.

Data from employees in HR and HHS collected in interviews and focus groups show that employees look to Senior Leaders for what they say and what they do. Statements such as “leadership sets the tone for the rest of the team” and “racial equity” is “one of the first things we think about if we have anyone new coming in,” exemplify this. The same data set also show an absence of observable behaviors by Senior Leaders that define an inclusive leader and the immediate need for inclusive leader development for Senior Leaders.

“Leadership in all the departments in HHS and throughout the city lack core competencies around strategic leadership, community engagement, DEI, cultural competence etc. to build the case for DEI and antiracism work.”

“Leadership at the City level, talk the talk but do not walk the walk. Do as I say not as I do.”

Cabinet members must set the example of inclusive leadership. Employees interviewed expressed disbelief that Cabinet Members “follow policies, lead by example or set the tone” against bias. Leadership is the perception of others and the entire workforce looks “up” at the leadership to know how to act. Then, people model the behaviors they notice. If Cabinet Members are to model inclusive leader behaviors so that the rest of the workforce follows their lead, they must first learn what inclusive and equitable leadership means in terms of “say” and “do” behaviors and then job descriptions should be adjusted to include these behavioral expectations.

The City of Worcester lacks a comprehensive leadership model and leadership development program. Developing inclusive and equitable leaders and managers and a culture of racial equity and inclusion should be baked into the leadership model and development program. The performance and evaluation criteria should be identified in job descriptions, hiring decisions, performance evaluations, and promotion decisions. Rewards and recognition, in addition to

promotion decisions, should be based on demonstrating the behaviors identified. The clarity from a comprehensive leadership development and assessment process contributes significantly to culture development, creates a diverse pipeline of talent for leadership positions, and creates leadership bench strength with a diversity of perspective and ability for innovation.

Repeating themes in data are provided based on summarizing data collected. These represent the perception of employees and not the opinion consultants. Themes from HHS data include:

- Leadership at every level is reportedly experienced inconsistently by staff. There is not a defined set of competencies and behaviors such as “Inclusive leadership;” and some leaders are reportedly not held accountable to their incivility.
- Although there is diverse representation at the director leadership level, they have no power or say so within the organization.
- The administrative and frontline workers have higher headcounts of individuals that identify as non-Caucasian, perpetuating “narratives” of inequality and inaccessibility.
- The high level of homogeneity among leaders erodes employees’ confidence in leaders’ sincerity and ability to implement racial equity, diversity, and inclusion.
- Most HHS leaders view their role in racial equity, diversity, and inclusion primarily as agreement with a set of beliefs and values related to fair and equitable treatment of employees. Comparatively few possess an awareness of how their day-to-day behaviors contribute to a culture of inclusion.
- Senior leaders and those at the city level are believed to currently lack the cultural competence and inclusive leadership behaviors to carry racial equity, diversity and inclusion work forward.
- Employees are discouraged by the lack of racial equity and diversity in leadership. The lack of visible diversity is believed to contradict HHS commitment to racial equity and contributes to distrust in the organization.
- Due to the high level of homogeneity of identity and background, some HHS senior leadership is vulnerable to groupthink and shared blind spots.
- Employees stated that people of color do not hold or get selected for positions of power within city government and leadership positions evade them. People of color are relegated to primarily secretarial or lower-level positions.
- Conflict is reportedly not handled satisfactorily, and/or not solved appropriately. Some employees report that their dissatisfaction with how conflicts and complaints are resolved erodes their trust in leadership and the organization.
- Employees provided numerous examples of the Commissioner being undermined by other directors, city council and the City Manager’s office who are not people of color.
- The Chief Diversity Officer role has been a revolving door with three people leaving in the last five years. The role has no clarity or resources (human capital or financial) to do the job effectively. There was a lack of respect for the position that was apparent in responsibilities and pay disparities. The role is mostly seen as figure head role with no power to create long term transformational change.

- There is no support or buy in for racial equity within the highest level of government, City Manager's Office, and City Council.
- The bureaucracy of the City causes it to take months to issue contracts to vendors. Many of these vendors serve people of color and can't wait for funding. If the vendor is a small minority business, they go out of business or disappear.

The opportunities to contribute toward racial equity are to develop Senior Leaders into Inclusive Senior Leaders, develop a leadership model, and identify performance metrics for inclusive leadership, while also setting goals for increased diversity in Senior Leadership.

Commissioners and Divisional Heads

While Commissioners are part of Senior Leadership, those people in lines of authority under Commissions are more like middle-management. The need for both groups to model inclusive leader behaviors cannot be overemphasized if the culture is to change.

There are several opportunities for improvements. First, the little diversity in the highest levels of City leadership is slowly changing and will continue to do so with a strong focus on targeted recruiting, equitable decision-making, and developing a strong culture of inclusion because the Worcester community is diverse.

Second, the inconsistency in salaries should be reviewed and remedied. Up until recently, the Chief Diversity Officer was not a cabinet member and still that role's salary falls toward the bottom of comparable positions.¹⁷ Although pay increases resulting from tenure in a position will arise, there cannot be a significant pay disparity across functionally similar levels of responsibility that correlates with race, gender, ethnicity, etc., in a City that intends to convey diversity, inclusion, and equity as core values. The only solution is an in depth salary review against role, responsibilities, years of experience, credentialed requirements, and tenure with the City.

Third, the HR and Diversity Office (DO) functions are dispersed and unaligned. The responsibilities, authority to execute those responsibilities, and power to hold others accountable for implementing strategies that fall under the leadership of either the CDO or the Director of HR are presently dispersed across different departments instead of being centralized. This is a recipe for inconsistent and inequitable decisions involving staff management. The DO and HR functions should be centralized. Then lateral processes, like cross-functional teams and collaboration responsibilities, should be integrated to create cohesion across divisions. Recently, based on our recommendation, the Director of Human Resources title should be changed to Chief Human Resources Officer (CHRO). The title change signals the importance of both the CDO and CHRO role and also the need for alignment of these roles across responsibilities, authority, and collaboration.

¹⁷<https://www.wbjournal.com/article/worcesters-chief-diversity-officer-was-the-lowest-paid-chief-among-city-cabinet-members>

City Council data show, “[d]iversity officers for fire, city, and police...roles, responsibilities, authority, etc., are not aligned and all report to different people.” Common themes repeated in HR interview data support the lack of alignment. The City is “in silos.” The absence of lateral processes is why the data show that few people other than the CHRO and Assistant Director for HR had worked in any capacity with the former CDO. While leadership and being accountable regarding DEI/RE should be given to a CDO, implementation responsibilities cannot fall on a single person. This is where a centralized CDO role with lateral processes to direct diversity officers in different departments would be useful.

Similarly, the absence of a centralized HR system that is overseen by the CHRO makes it difficult to track disparities and inequities in HR-related decisions about hiring, promotions, and benefit approval. The lack of centralization presents difficulties in holding leaders accountable for their decisions and actions that are contrary to DEI/RE values. This combined with the absence of technology to collect disaggregated data about the City’s workforce sends the inadvertent message that DEI/RE values are not important and inequities will be overlooked. When there are not consistent criteria for decisions, people will fall back on unconscious biases in making decisions.

Siloing and dispersion of authority is also evidenced in a story shared of an occurrence during an annual individual budget meeting. In this instance, the result was blinders to data. The first slide in the presentation reviewed the demographic breakdown of the department. In the words of that Cabinet Member, it would have “made sense to have the Chief Diversity Officer there to talk about the demographics and say ok, what can we do to change that.” Instead, the Cabinet Member said, the presentation breezed through the demographics.



Communication

Communication, whether formal or informal, in all directions, and of various types serves multiple purposes. It keeps people informed of actual facts and slows down the fabrication of assumptions. It engages and connects people with a purpose, values, and vision of success. It influences their feelings, thoughts, and actions. Communication includes dialogue and questions. It builds relationships and understanding. Communication prepares people for changes on the horizon.

Communication plans are integral pieces of readiness strategies for change, strategic planning, and implementation planning and execution. They also build strong relationships for transferring emotions and messages and engaging people in effective and efficient execution of tasks.

Powerful, prolific, and factual communication controls the narrative and builds trust with internal and external stakeholders.

There is little messaging to internal or external stakeholders about the current situation regarding racial equity, current efforts to assess and publicly report on racial equity in HR and HHS, or future plans to address racial inequities, improve diversity at all levels, and create a strong culture of equity and inclusion. At the time of our data collection communication about the racial equity audit was a “request” from leadership “to support the racial equity study,” and little else.

This leaves a void that is being filled with conjecture and news that highlights the symptoms of a problem and not the efforts to address that problem. The void created by an absence of factual communication is an invitation for “powerful stories [of disinformation] causing reason to run amok.”¹⁸ An example comes directly from one interview subject who said, “little communication led to conspiracy theories” about the dashboard on distribution of Federal money.

Another example, which also demonstrates how an absence of accurate communication lowers trust, relates to communication about the resignation of the last CDO. Interviews revealed that most employees learned of the departure “not from [leadership] but from the media outlets and newspapers.” Then employees concluded that Senior Leadership is hiding something and form their own theories of events. “The fact that the city has had three chief diversity officers in the past 5 or 6 years because of lack of support to do the work to create systematic changes is telling. However, the messaging from the city is that they are leaving because of personal challenges and that’s not true.” When employees know that the messaging from leadership is untrue, it undermines trust, which is difficult to rebuild.

Communication will improve in frequency and accuracy if Senior Leadership incorporates into its Communications Strategic Plan collaboration partners. Partners include City Council, the seven-member Diversity and Inclusion Advisory Committee, appointed by City Council, news reporters, and community groups. Collaboration partners do more than just spread Senior Leadership’s messages. They contribute expertise and insight into the needs of their particular community members.

Communication between managers and their teams is the foundation for building trust, relationships, and careers.

Improving and increasing the formal and informal communication internally between supervisors (Cabinet level of Director level) and their direct reports is a growth area and opportunity. It is the best way to ensure information flows from the top down into the independent contributors to avoid information voids. It also captures feedback from the community-facing contributors and sends it to Senior Leadership for input into strategy-related decisions. While building trusting

¹⁸ Gottschall, J. (2021). The story paradox: How our love of storytelling builds societies and tears them down. Basic Books

relationships, it also models the value of communication and relationship-building across differences.

Regular, informal feedback from supervisors to direct reports keeps an employee’s performance aligned with expectations and on track for positive annual reviews, rewards and recognition, and promotions. Timely communication from direct reports to supervisors about existing problems opens the possibility of addressing issues before they fester. When psychological safety is present and direct reports are taught to notice and encouraged to communicate problems regarding inequities, unconscious biases, and microaggressions in the workplace, these problems can be immediately addressed. When employees share information about what is working well, this reinforcing feedback informs decisions about useful processes to increase diversity and improve a culture of inclusion and equity.

In HR, partly due to COVID, there has been limited formal, planned communication to build relationships, create career paths for managers’ direct reports, and build trust. When asked about the frequency of managers “check[ing] in with direct reports,” the responses were that since COVID, there have been “no formal staff meetings” or they are much more infrequent. Meetings occur, “when necessary, if something is happening,” unless “via email.” Otherwise, people work independently.

Questions and Summary Responses from HR Regarding Communication	
How often is diversity, race and/or bias discussed within your team?	Overwhelming response was that “it is not discussed” and “we don’t talk about it” except in investigations or when someone voluntarily discloses their race on a form. The data shows that if and when race or bias is discussed it is related to the allegations of adverse employee actions.
Are DEI values communicated to your team?	Overwhelming response was “not sure” or “can’t think of specifics” and that there is not any communication about values or if so, it is marginalized. It’s left “up to the CDO to communicate, to teach. It’s not woven into the daily routine [or] job culture...Even as a directive, we just do not have time.” It may come up in the hiring process when we “talk about the diverse population and expectations to work with a diverse group” or during “onboarding” or referencing the Language Bank or Language Access Line of on-demand ASL as a moral obligation under the ADA.
What does your manager do to listen and learn about your experiences at work?	There was mention of “open door policy” and “open” relationships where managers and direct reports “share opinions and share knowledge about the work..and reach decisions together.” However, there was also reports that managers have “too much on [their] plates” that competes for time and “not had an opportunity to meet with direct reports” and so “nothing” is happening or that managers are “not the best listener and more reactive.” This has led to some people working much more than others without any overtime pay.

<p>What do leaders do to set the tone and encourage speaking up and speaking out against disrespectful behavior?</p>	<p>7 of the 13 employees reported that they do not know what the Cabinet members do or they believe they do nothing at all. One employee stated, “hell if I know,” and another said, “they do not lead by example.” The explanation offered was a recurring one, “with the workload, they probably don’t have the time.”</p>
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The data show that where there should be robust, ongoing discussions at all levels of the City workforce about DEI/RE issues, there is silence, except in regard to problems of inequities. Consequently, employees reaffirmed that even discussion about DEI/RE values is left up to the one CDO to teach them or arises only in the context of telling new hires that the population is diverse or mentioning on-demand American Sign Language as a moral obligation under the Americans with Disabilities Act. This is an opportunity for more than just HR; it is an opportunity for the entire City workforce and leadership starts at the top.

Leadership Communications for Buy-in and Motivation for Change

Currently, communication about racial equity - what has been achieved, what is currently happening, and what is on the horizon - is almost non-existent. Our workforce interview responses repeated the theme that although employees are asked to support DEI efforts, there was never any Cabinet Members messaging about Cabinet Member commitment. Although the previous City Manager emphasized the importance of addressing systemic racism and racial equity in the City of Worcester, Cabinet Members were never held accountable to follow through and communicate this within their departments. This is an example of how a lack of communication can inhibit the changes required to drive an executive order forward.

Previously, this report explained the importance of communication from Senior Leaders for developing system readiness for the changes recommended in this report. LWC’s February 23, 2022, recommendation to design and implement a racial equity audit communication strategy, with sufficient budgetary and human resources to design and implement it, will be even more critical when the City moves into the Implementation Design and Execution phase. Developing buy-in for the significant culture change anticipated will require the participation of all leaders and managers and the design and deployment of powerful and prolific messages using collaboration partners, websites, social media, email, and live in-person and virtual events.

DEI/RE Webpages

Worcester’s Home Page

The City of Worcester’s home page <https://www.worcesterma.gov/> is the landing page for people seeking current and important information about the City. The current banner running at the top of the page is where new items related to DEI/RE belong with links to separate pages with details. It would be an ideal location for mentioning the Executive Order on Systemic Racism and the results of this audit. When plans for developing the City’s DEI/RE values,

Mission Statement, Vision Statement, Goals, Metrics, and divisional implementation plans are underway, a mention on this page would be valuable.

People often perceive the importance of a message because of how and where it is conveyed as much, if not more, than the actual concepts, ideas, and words. When reducing skepticism and resistance to a culture change is intended, the placement and timing of messaging matters. Prominence helps convey the City's intention of transparency about DEI/RE plans, actions, successes, and learning moments and builds trust in leadership.

The "Worcester Now|Next" information and link is very good. The plans for public input for the next iteration of the City Strategy is great. It would be a valuable addition to mention how DEI/RE is also part of the thinking.

Employees may visit Worcester's Home Page even though they are looking for information that is functionally under HR. Include a link to the HR webpage on the Home Page.

DEI/RE Webpages

The organization of the City of Worcester's website is confusing and the importance of DEI/RE to the City gets lost. There are too many different names for the functional division. Is it a department, division, or an executive office? Addresses often do not match, page titles, creating another layer of confusion. Searching for "diversity" results in the following relevant webpages, in addition to many pages where "diversity" isn't the focus.

<https://www.worcesterma.gov/diversity-inclusion> The page title is "Executive Office of Diversity and Inclusion" and includes links to:

<https://www.worcesterma.gov/diversity-inclusion/advisory-committee> This webpage includes a link to a brochure with information of this committee, which voted to suspend activities earlier this year. The [last set of meeting notes posted](#) by this committee was March 14, 2022.

<https://www.worcesterma.gov/diversity-inclusion/affinity-groups> This page lists four affinity groups, none of which relate to racial equity. Based on a website search for "Employee Resource Groups" it appears that none exist.

<https://www.worcesterma.gov/diversity-inclusion/where-diversity-works> There are two separate links to this page. One toward the top of the page and another at the bottom. One link is sufficient. This page is houses a set of videos dated between January 6 2017 and February 15, 2019. There is nothing since the onset of Covid and the murder of George Floyd and there have been significant additional violent events worth mentioning under the topic of DEI and/or RE. It is described on the as "a series of programming and commercials to celebrate diversity and inclusion across all departments."

<https://www.worcesterma.gov/uploads/21/66/21664c348761fe19659dea5e5f4241bd/institutional-structural-racism-recommendations-timeline.pdf> This PDF includes a February 4

2022, update of initiatives from the February 23, 2021, Executive Order. However, the Executive Order was not part of this PDF or anywhere else on the “Executive Officer of Diversity and Inclusion” webpage.

<https://www.worcesterma.gov/uploads/49/4e/494e797eeb2a0ce2af826b7892e77718/affirmative-action-policy.pdf> This PDF is the “Affirmative Action Policy.” This policy and Equal Employment Opportunity Policy are combined. Each separate policy needs to be updated. Changes should be made in consultation with the City’s legal counsel.

<https://www.worcesterma.gov/human-resources/employment-opportunities> This is a list of open positions and not specifically related to DEI/RE.

The “Executive Office of Diversity and Inclusion” page also includes a graph with a summary of workforce minority and non-minority annual percentage from 2012-2020. There is also a link to additional details up to 2019. An update through 2021 is missing. Additional enhancements might include:

- Listing all functions of the Diversity Office (DO) with links to learn more about the processes of functions, such as lodging a complaint of discrimination and how that complaint is investigated;
- Explaining the collaborative relationship between the DO and HR functions;
- Explaining how DEI/RE values, such as racial equity, are incorporated into Talent Cycle processes;
- Links to public documents, such as City demographic statistics and workforce statistics once collected and reported quarterly and annually;
- Lists of DEI/RE related learning and development opportunities;
- Annual Diversity Report when created;
- Plans, when created, that are intended to address racial inequities and inequities related to underrepresented identity groups;
- Showcasing improvements when they are made; and
- Success stories of employees and community members of underrepresented identity groups.

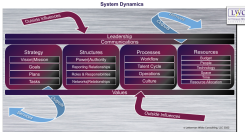
Make it easy for an employee, who is seeking information on a topic, like investigations, to find the information on what to do. Keeping this webpage fresh and also up-to-date with current information demonstrates efforts being made and the ongoing City commitment to DEI/RE.

Human Resources Webpage

The HR website <https://www.worcesterma.gov/human-resources> is the natural location for people seeking jobs within the City, regardless of whether or not they are currently working for the City. Current employees reported that when a new position opens, they do not become aware, unless they are specifically looking for an open position; however, the recent “Work for Worcester” banner announcement on the landing page of the City’s website includes a link to a new webpage, housed under HR, with what appears to be a completed and updated list of open positions.

As it relates to DEI/RE, there are opportunities for improvement.

- There is a link to <https://www.worcesterma.gov/diversity-inclusion/where-diversity-works>, which we have already explained is a page in need of updating.
- There is no mention of Employee Resource Groups. ERGs are an important element of any plan to develop racial equity. We include an ERG tool kit for you as part of this report.
- As on the DO webpage, explain the collaboration processes between DO and HR functions as it applies to the talent cycle to emphasize the importance of DEI/RE.
- Include a list of all departmental functions in HR with a link to each, e.g., Benefits, Labor Relations, Learning and Development, Hiring, etc. Each webpage or block of information about a particular departmental function should include an explanation of what the function does and contact information. There is a link from the HR webpage to a webpage listing all departments, but does not appear to be a link on the Home Page to the list of all departments.
- If existing training is offered, include a link for signing up.
- Currently there is a different application process for labor positions and non-labor positions. Clarify and align as appropriate. Make it easy to apply from the website to open positions in the City, regardless of whether they are labor or non-labor.
- A non-discrimination statement on webpage is needed.



Strategy

A common theme discovered through data collection was that diversity, equity, and inclusion goals in general and racial equity goals in particular are neither discussed nor woven into the business strategy of the City or the fabric of the culture. “We need clear direction from the city manager’s office, HHS commissioner, and Human Resources about a vision and process to address all these [DEI/RE] topics,” was the repeated theme from HHS employees.

Strategy starts at the top with the City’s business strategy. Diversity, equity, and inclusion, along with racial equity, must be an intentional and central part of that strategy. Every structure, process, divisional strategy, and resource allocation must be examined through a DEI lens to consider how it helps or obstructs people of different identity groups, who want to access opportunities the City offers.

Based on LWC’s audit of HR and HHS in addition to overarching City-related strategy statements, it is evident that there is no coordinated strategic planning process. Siloes exist and are pervasive. Each department has its own mission, vision, and values or none at all. LWC recommends centralizing Strategy development, and later in this report, we recommend and explain why the HR and DO functions should also be centralized. Centralizing certain functions and then adding in lateral processes is the solution for bringing clarity, consistency, and equity into many of the decisions that affect the City workforce and the Worcester community.

The City of Worcester developed and launched its strategic plan in fiscal year 2020. That plan has four high-priority objectives, none of which include a clearly articulated priority of racial equity or diversity, equity & inclusion.¹⁹ Worcester Now | Next is the “long-range comprehensive planning effort, started in Spring 2022 and is anticipated to end in June 2023... [to] address housing, land use, environmental issues, transportation, and economic development throughout the City of Worcester.”²⁰ Although DEI/RE as an objective is not mentioned, it is arguably implied in the list of intentions. It should be specifically and clearly stated on the webpage and in all related planning materials.

LWC recommends clearly stating that DEI/RE is a high-priority intention/objective of “Worcester Now - Worcester Next.” Specifically state that DEI/RE is the 5th high priority pillar of the City’s strategic plan and will be similarly prominent in its current long-range comprehensive planning.

There is no clearly developed set of Worcester values that promote DEI/RE. There is no Mission Statement or Vision Statement that has incorporated in those values. There is no DEI/RE City Strategy. This is what makes it more difficult to integrate DEI/RE into any divisional strategy including HR and HHS.

Further, even if there were DEI/RE values, a mission statement, and a vision statement, the City does not collect and publicly report disaggregated workforce statistics, broken down by race and hierarchical position. This data is integral to measuring the impact of any strategy and its implementation process. The data should be compared with the City’s demographic data with the goal of developing a workforce that mirrors the City.

The City’s ability to attract a racially diverse workforce is enhanced with a City DEI/RE strategy (values, mission, vision, goals, metrics, and divisional implementation plans) that is robustly communicated and the results of which are routinely measured and published in areas easily accessible to all. A City DEI/RE strategy offers individuals throughout the City a sense of purpose and mission and the values to guide their behavior so that they can make decisions about what to do and how to do it.²¹ The strategy should describe a strong sense of mission, values, and vision, as well as short- and long-term goals.²²

When it exists, it will set the direction for the City and improving workforce diversity, the experience of external stakeholders regardless of social identity, and the internal government culture of inclusion and equity. Worcester needs an engaging and compelling DEI/RE mission statement that encompasses the right values of diversity, innovation, transparency, inclusion, and equitable decision-making. It then needs to distill the mission statement into a vision and goals for the City as a whole and each functional division, including HR and HHS. Then, each division will be in a position to work with the DO to design a specific implementation plan and then execute it, and measure progress over time.

¹⁹ <https://www.worcesterma.gov/urban-innovation/strategic-plan>

²⁰ <https://now-next.worcesterma.gov/>

²¹ Edward Lawlor, *Business Strategy*, in *Organization Development* pp 545-564 (ed. Joan V. Gallos 2006)

²² Jay Galbraith, Diane Downey, Amy Kates, *Designing Dynamics Organizations* (2002), p. 3

The Executive Office of Diversity & Inclusion mentions the following:

A priority of the City of Worcester is to enhance the diversity in its workforce!

The Diversity & Inclusion Division is dedicated to recruiting, hiring, including, developing, retaining, engaging and motivating a diverse, results-oriented, high-performing workforce. This is accomplished by:

- *Adjusting employment and promotion processes*
- *Using strategic hiring initiatives for underrepresented people*
- *Ensuring all employees have access to diversity and inclusion training and education*

This is valuable. It makes a statement about a priority value and three related action items. It would be more meaningful with a more visible placement, as previously discussed, and specific, measurable, actionable goals that have due dates, even if those dates are aspirational. Examples of what committed organizations are doing were included in a December 5, 2021, Boston Globe article listing the top equitable workplaces in New England. The entities selected took action beyond articulating the business case for diversity and made public promises of their goals and then publicly reported their results. VA Boston Healthcare System explained its specific plan to screen for “cultural humility” in interviews, by finding out whether candidates could demonstrate critical thinking about their identity, rather than stopping at saying they would use “strategic hiring initiatives for underrepresented people.”

Although Worcester’s strategic intent - how it will improve the diversity of its workforce - is missing from the website, the City does publicly report that it is “proud to have increased our minority representation by 67% from 188 in 2012 to 318 in 2020.” The message should tie into a mission to increase diversity so that the percentages reflect the percentages of the City’s population. Further, disaggregated data is critically important. Cities should not group all minorities together for demographic data. The message of being “proud” of an increase where all social identities are grouped together as “minority” may be insulting to some readers where the actual population demographics are that nearly 21% of the population is of Hispanic or Latino origin; Black or African Americans comprise 13.29% of the population, and Asians comprise 7.4% of the population.

The City has an urgent and important opportunity to identify and clarify DEI/RE goals. This report makes many recommendations that are valid goals. When moving into implementation planning, best practices suggest focusing on S.M.A.R.T. Goals, which distill a broad or ambiguous idea or recommendation into concrete milestones. Goals should be described in a way that is:

- Specific: You (individually and/or collectively if speaking on behalf of a team or organization) are able to describe a goal in a way that unambiguously and clearly expresses what will exist when the goal is met.

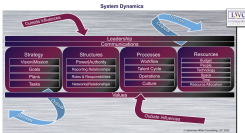
- Measurable: Your description of the goal implies a metric for measuring progress toward goal attainment.
- Actionable: You logistically and psychologically ready to execute the necessary actions to move closer to the goal.
- Relevant: Goals support the stated mission and vision.
- Time Bound: You have attached a specific date by which you will attain the goal.

A goal is S.M.A.R.T. when anyone reading it understands and can explain:

- What the idea means (Specific);
- What has to happen before we can agree that the goal has been attained (Measurable);
- Who is responsible to do what to advance closer to attaining the goal (Actionable);
- How the goal supports the overarching values, vision, and mission (Relevant); and
- When actions needed to attain the goal will be implemented and completed (Time Bound).

When a S.M.A.R.T. goal requires multiple steps and is more than a single task, separate it into smaller tasks to complete over a shorter time period. Creating an Action Plan is separating large tasks into discrete tasks until you are able to identify actions to complete today, weekly, monthly, quarterly, and annually. S.M.A.R.T. Goals and Action Plans are meant to be revisited and updated on a regular basis.

LWC recommends convening a working group to develop the implementation plans for the recommendations in this report. Develop the list of DEI/RE values, then the City's DEI/RE Mission, Vision, Goals, and Metrics, then delegate to divisional leaders the task of designing for their division an implementation plan to advance DEI/RE values and goals and begin its execution.



Structures

Structures in a system are where power lies, lines of authority, and the dividing lines between people and groups. Organizational charts show formal structures, such as functional divisions, and lines of authority, while informal boundaries can arise based on people's relationships and feelings of inclusion or exclusion. The overarching structures of the City of Worcester are City Council which has legislative authority and power to vote in favor of the City Manager's budget and the City Manager, who has the chief executive power of the City. Cabinet Members answer to the City Manager and divisional head answer to Cabinet Members. Informal boundaries and relationships to power are created when employees observe favoritism by senior leadership toward certain people and not others, as indicated in the HHS data.

Structures support the strategy and align and mobilize resources. If the structures are not aligned to the strategy, friction results from a lack of clarity in roles and responsibilities or

inaction results from a split between responsibilities and the authority or resources needed to execute them.

When divisional structures have boundaries that are too rigid, it creates vertical silos. Siloing results from a lack of communication, collaboration, and interaction between divisions and is more likely when geography separates departments as with HHS and the Department of Public Health. This can lead to a culture of exclusion and an “us versus them” interdepartmental dynamic. Further, without sufficient lateral processes between divisions, inconsistencies arise in values-based judgements such as in hiring and promotions and resources such as information and team support are not available when needed. Lateral processes, like interdepartmental teams, reduces silosing.

The right structures and lateral processes define who or which divisions are responsible for doing what, provide the necessary authority and resources for those responsibilities, and clarify how different divisions and individuals are supposed to collaborate and support each other. When roles are structured with responsibilities but not the power, resources, and collaboration partners needed to get the job done, frustration and failure to achieve potential results. Further, when decision power or access toward resources skews toward white males, the likelihood of unconscious bias creeping into decisions is high and it creates a perception of racism. This tends to be true, as the data we collected, repeatedly demonstrated. There were multiple examples from employees and community members expressing surprise and frustration at the too-frequent instances of the voice and authority of people of color being usurped by non people of color, even when a person of color is in a role of higher authority within government administration than the non person of color.

These themes came up repeatedly in interview data we collected.

“People of color have to share space, even the directors, but the white directors don’t share space.”

“The main person who decides where we outreach is a white man who feels uncomfortable going into certain areas. We miss out on a larger demographic that we could be helping in the community.”

“The way the municipality is currently structured it’s to keep certain people out and to give access to certain people. There needs to be a more humanistic approach.”

“Leadership creates a trickle-down culture of prioritizing the needs of white City Council Members, and their largely white and wealthy districts. This then affects the quality of life of Worcester’s BIPOC communities and impedes the work that needs to take place to support Worcester’s BIPOC communities. An example of this is reflected in the Polar Park Stadium, the Worcester Police Department budget, and downtown developments. The budget of the city should reflect the needs of Worcester’s BIPOC residents.”

Information and decision making must cross boundaries between divisions and individuals. Information, interpersonal relationships are critical structures to support information flow up, down, and throughout a system, maintain cohesion of the system, and contribute to a culture of inclusion within the system. They depend on trust and need to be mutually beneficial for their existence and strength. They can be cultivated in cross-divisional teams, training events, social events, and Employee Resources Groups (ERGs).

Questions and Summary Responses from HR Regarding Structures	
How often do you check in with your direct reports/or does your supervisor check in with you?	Since Covid, there have been, “no formal staff meetings.” All employees identified informal check-in’s with their supervisor, “every couple of days” or “on an as needed basis.” Otherwise, people work independently. This further can add to overlap in job duties, inconsistencies and not knowing “who does what” within the department. One HR employee stated that they, “don’t believe that their colleagues know what they do.”
Do you work with the CDO on anything and if so, in what capacity?	The overwhelming response was, “No,” The CHRO and Assistant Director of HR shared that they work with the CDO on various projects. One other employee shared that in their role, they worked on various parts of the hiring process with the most recent CDO and was hoping to work with them more. This further exhibits the need for process changes to ensure collaboration between the Diversity Office and HR.

This theme was echoed in the HHS interviews. “The city is very siloed in its approach and would assign Black/African American issues to the Chief Diversity Officer. The responsibility of the CDO goes beyond race. Race is part of the work, in addition to all other aspects of DEI. Racial Equity is part of DEI.”

Chief Diversity Officer Role²³

This report must acknowledge the challenge the City has experienced in retaining qualified people in the CDO role over the last 5-6 years. Three different people have held and resigned from the role. As one person interviewed said, “I hope we get to the bottom of this Chief Diversity swinging door. I believe the first one was not the right one not sure about the other two. The city has an ingrown pattern that will be hard to change.”

We believe we have “gotten to the bottom” in this audit. There was consensus in the data that the last Chief Diversity Officer (CDO) was excellent, yet even excellence is not enough when as another person interviewed explained, “the scope of work for the CDO is too great” and expectations are “too high.” The last CDO resigned because of “diversity, equity, and inclusion

²³ See also LWC’s *Preliminary Report Recommendations: Chief Diversity Officer Role* delivered on March 21, 2022.

being an extracurricular activity...there are too many tradeoffs to being 'resilient' vs acknowledging the (very) real challenges (significant) institutional barriers."²⁴ In short, the job was overwhelming for even the most qualified person.

The Chief Diversity Officer (CDO) is in the City Cabinet and leads the Executive Office of Diversity and Inclusion. This office should have sufficient personnel and a sufficient budget for the myriad responsibilities. For racial equity purposes, it is critical that the role be compensated at least in the middle of the range of all other Cabinet positions.

As previously noted, the DO function should be centralized under the CDO's authority and direction. LWC discovered that there exist diversity officers in certain divisions. They should report to the CDO. Part of the implementation strategy design to restructure and centralize the function should include developing and clarifying in job descriptions and the lateral processes that ensure collaboration, cohesion, and consistency in DEI/RE initiatives.

The CDO is the strategy partner for the City Manager, CHRO, Commissioner of HHS, and every other Cabinet Member and where applicable other divisional leaders. As the DEI/RE expert the CDO's advice should be sought out and followed to address the examples of disparate treatment of individuals based on race in the data collected in this equity audit.

All other Cabinet positions and director level positions must be rewritten to align with the CDO position and be held accountable as collaboration partners with the CDO on implementation planning and executive for reaching DEI/RE goals. It is particularly important to specify the CDO's responsibilities, authority, and status as the DEI/RE expert and collaboration partner for the Chief Human Resources Officer (CHRO), for different Talent Cycle Processes, and complaint investigations related to discrimination. It is equally important that every other job description is reviewed and revised to align with the CDOs authority and expertise.

Chief Human Resources Officer Role

The Director of Human Resources should be titled similarly to those of other Cabinet members. We recommend changing the title to Chief Human Resources Officer.

Talent Cycle processes and discrimination complaint investigations must be consistently carried out to avoid inequities. They require centralized oversight for consistency and alignment with the City's DEI/RE strategy. To that end, the Chief Human Resources Officer (CHRO) must work with the CDO to ensure racial equity in all Talent Cycle processes and also lead an HR team with responsibility for specific Talent Cycle processes, such as recruiting, hiring, and promotions. The HR function must be centralized and lateral cross-divisional team processes must be integrated to ensure alignment with the City's DEI/RE strategy, Talent Cycle-related, decision-making consistency, and information flow to and from divisions for efficiency and effectiveness.

²⁴ https://www.scribd.com/document/566019390/Stephanie-Williams-Resignation-Letter#from_embed

DPW has a large number of civil service positions. In our investigation, LWC discovered that the HR manager does not have access to the applications and therefore is unable to consider the experience of current employees when a promotional position is posted. This inhibits the possibility of promoting well-qualified persons of color, who might never be advised of an opening that is well-suited to the next step on their career ladder. Currently awareness of open positions requires notification by HR managers with access to information on open positions, applications, and employees' experience and expertise. This is one example where collaboration responsibilities under the DO, HR, and functional divisions such as DPW should be clearly set forth in all relevant role descriptions.

Roles, Responsibilities, and Collaboration Requirements for Cabinet and Director Level Positions

Review and probable adjustment of all job descriptions for cabinet positions and director level positions is necessary to align with the:

- City's DEI/RE values and high priority pillar of its strategy;
- City's DEI/RE strategic plan;
- CDO's centralized authority and expertise in DEI/RE issues; and
- DHRO's centralized authority and expertise in talent management.

HR Needs a Reorganization to Prevent Racial Inequities

The HR department has a number of employees that do various jobs; however, job assignments are perceived by employees as "inconsistent." Jobs appear to be assigned based on who is available to take on the extra workload at the time. Interview data show that HR is "unresponsive" and "inconsistent" in their responses. Additionally, interview data showed that individuals within HR are not sure who is responsible for various HR functions and HR is "unresponsive" to questions about job assignments.

There should be a comprehensive review of all the HR department functions and responsible parties and existing HR staff's expertise, interests and experience. This should be followed by a comparison of job assignments with HR staff expertise, interests, and experience. This should be followed by a realignment of duties to rightfit employees into roles that are aligned with their education, skills and interests.

Inefficiencies, redundancies, and unresponsiveness can slip quickly into racially disparate treatment because there is no organized and objective means for assignments. Further, this level of disorganization contributes to high intention-to-leave and attrition rates, feelings of being treated unfairly, and a climate that is unattractive to underrepresented groups of qualified people, who have their choice of jobs.

Job Descriptions for all Roles

Better job descriptions and functional titles will improve the chances that more job seekers will make the connection between their skills, education, experience, and abilities and the

requirements for being hired into any particular job posting. This is one example of transparency relating to hiring and promotions. Transparency is a vital tool in promoting racial equity.

Employee Resource Groups

Data show there are no Employee Resource Groups (ERGs) or if there are, employees are unaware of them. Further, the psychological safety for People of Color is low. “People of color are afraid to get together because it is perceived that they are plotting against authority.” LWC recommends devoting budgetary, human, and other resources toward implementing the set-up of ERGs.

ERGs can play a central role in the City’s DEI/RE strategy as they often do in other organizations. ERGs are networks of voluntary, employee-organized communities that foster connections between employees that share similar interests, characteristics, or backgrounds. Most commonly, employees of similar races, ethnicities, gender identities, or sexual orientations form employee resource groups to give them a safe space to discuss their experiences at work.

These groups are great tools for fostering inclusion for employees from underrepresented communities and can be so much more. The groups in addition to fostering their own professional development, often become a valuable resource to their employers, providing information about their identities, performing community outreach, opening new networks for recruiting, supporting business objectives, and serving as a visible sign of their employers’ commitment to a diverse and inclusive workplace. ERGs are so prevalent in Corporate America today that 90 percent of Fortune 500 companies have them.

Historically, most companies started these initiatives with African American and women’s groups, followed by Latino and Asian employees. With changes in regulations and the composition of the workforce, companies began developing groups for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) employees, employees with disabilities, generational groups and veterans. Most ERGs are inclusive, allowing anyone to join, further promoting values of inclusion, learning, and belonging. According to the Society for Human Resource Management, ERGs offer employers excellent opportunities to recruit and retain diverse talent and profit from the wide range of thoughts, perspectives, cultures, and experiences they bring to the workplace.

Worcester is often described as a microcosm of America, whose minority population continues to expand and evolve, and so does the desire for an environment that is equitable and fair for all. To support the efforts of the City’s goal toward building a more diverse workforce and its commitment to fostering racial equity among its close to 1700 employees, LWC suggests setting up Employee Resource Groups (ERGs).

Additionally, benefits derived from ERGs will contribute to changing the workplace culture to a sustainable culture of inclusion where everyone in the workforce and anyone in the community interacting with the workforce benefits. ERGs contribute to:

- Psychological Safety - ERGs have the ability to create safe spaces for underrepresented and minority groups where they can show up as their authentic self regardless of race, religion, gender, or sexual orientation, and they won't be ignored or judged because of those same things. Psychological safety also supports a growth mindset culture, where employees will openly express their observations and ideas relating to overall system performance improvements.
- Reducing Unconscious Bias - Through training, educational and informational series, and events organized by ERGs, employees raise their awareness of the benefits of diversity and everyone's role in counteracting unconscious biases and microaggressions.²⁵
- Professional Development - ERGs don't just offer friendship and inclusivity—they also provide accessible opportunities for professional growth. They focus on creating leadership development opportunities for members in the form of training, workshops, networking, mentorship, and sponsorship. The foundation for these opportunities for is relationship building, which is a valuable skill for any workplace culture.
- Recruitment - An organization that can show it celebrates diversity and inclusivity with ERGs that align with the company's DEI/RE values, mission, and strategy will be better able to recruit from a more diverse talent pool.
- Retention - Recognizing and respecting the talents and contributions of all employees increases morale, maximize retention and productivity, and raise the City's profile in the community. When the City is able to be more productive and not waste time and money replacing excellent employees because of high attrition rates, it's a win for the entire community.

The implementation plan for setting up ERGs should include widely dispersed communication of the rationale, how to start one, and how to join one.²⁶

Internal Investigations Role

Through review of the Affirmative Action Policy and data collected from interviews, LWC was able to review the internal complaint process. We applaud the changes currently underway and recommend a slight restructure of the role to report directly to the CDO.

Until January 2022, the Human Resources Department did not have a position fully dedicated to investigations based on discrimination, harassment and retaliation. In the new position, the new full-time investigator has created a standardized complaint form and a tracking system for complaints because the City leadership recognized the need for tracking internal complaint procedures and processes.

²⁵ Although the most well known form of unconscious bias is implicit bias, where judgments about a person are quickly, and without analytical reason, attributed to a person because of their identity group, unconscious bias also includes the fast thinking that can undermine good business judgment in all decisions affecting performance. Microaggressions are a comment or action that subtly and often unconsciously expresses a prejudiced attitude toward a member of a marginalized group (such as a racial minority).

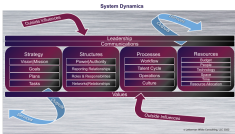
²⁶ The LWC ERG Toolkit is provided under separate cover.

Interviews revealed the widely-held perception of a lack of complaint and discipline tracking, despite that HR was able to produce the data associated with complaints dating back to October 2019. The new investigator has been tasked with creating a formal investigation process. This will bring formality and accountability to the complaint process.

Presently, the investigator reports to the Coordinator for Labor Relations and Worker's Compensation (CLR), who reports to the CHRO. The CLR reviews the investigator's work product and represents the City on all complaints filed with the Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination (MCAD complaints).

This reporting line (line of authority) poses a conflict for the City along with the risk of the investigator appearing biased. If an applicant or employee files a complaint for a discriminatory employment decision, it is essentially against the Human Resources Department, the function responsible for all employment-related decisions. The argument could be made that the investigation was not or would not be fair, neutral, and equitable because the investigator is within the line of authority to the accused party.

We recommend that the investigator position report to the CDO. This separation will allow the City to affirmatively show that the investigative process is neutral. Additionally, when the City responds to an MCAD complaint, it will show that the Coordinator for Labor Relations was not involved in any way with the investigation.



Processes

Culture is a Process

Culture is an exceptionally powerful influence of employee thinking, emotions, and behavior, and therefore racial equity in the City. It is the combination of unspoken and unwritten systemic rules that explain what is important, how the work gets down, and how people succeed. HR processes, like hiring or performance evaluation, have a significant impact on culture and those effects are more apparent in the perception of people outside of the HR function, who are not applying the processes. Changing culture requires making multiple changes to multiple elements of the system.

The City culture is apparent through the structures, processes, behaviors, and perceptions of employees and City Council Members. In addition to the details provided about specific processes and how they may create inequities based on race and economics, we evaluate culture through the recurring themes in the experiences of City employees. That data suggest that currently, the culture of the City workplace does not support racial equity and is not widely supportive of change in general.

Examples from HHS interviews show the perception of the culture by employees of color.

“The organization is not diverse. Many departments are led by middle class white males and females. There is favoritism and nepotism, and people of color are simply ignored, disrespected, and made to feel as if they have no voice, ideas, or anything tangible to contribute.”

“[T]he leadership of the City of Worcester is toxic. They tokenize leaders of color and their experiences. While they openly value and uplift white employees, their perspectives, and needs. The budget, publicity, and levels of respect reflect those ideals deeply tied to a culture of white supremacy.”

“The city has a very toxic culture for anyone who is not a culture fit or does not do as they are told.”

“HR advocates diverse recruitment but the environment is racially toxic, therefore it will only harm new diverse hires.”

“The core infrastructure of the city is rotted. To begin to address racial equity, the council and the City Manager must begin at the root and rebuild the basic infrastructure.”

“You build community at the speed you build trust.”

“When Black women express themselves, they get stereotyped as aggressive, angry or taking up space.”

“You feel like any reporting racism will be a “dead end.”

“People of color are exploited. As a Black woman I feel exploited.”

General findings from HHS data include:

- The organization shows up as sharing a restricted understanding and reactionary approach to racial equity, activating race equity efforts in the absence of fundamental infrastructure that would enable success.
- Diverse representation (particularly race/ethnicity) is non-existent at the director level within DPH, Human Rights and Elder Affairs and has been for some length of time, perpetuating and sustaining “narratives” of inequality and inaccessibility.
- The practice of inclusion, specifically collaboration in decision-making is non-existent; and underrepresented groups strongly believe they are not actively involved.
- Organizational trust and psychological safety are low, impacting employee performance, resilience, morale, and retention.

- Organizational shame is present as exhibited by themes of leadership versus employees, favoritism, blaming, and incivility plays an active role in perpetuating a culture of fear.
- Cultural competence (specifically in race/ethnicity) is anecdotally not consistently demonstrated towards employees and acknowledgement of diversity is reportedly tokenized and/or serves as the focal point of negative micro-behaviors.
- A presenting culture of fear prevents staff from speaking-up and feeling heard and taking safe risks. The culture reportedly thwarts employees from fully engaging.
- There is a cynicism for the race equity work; employees believe this work to be disingenuous. The work is largely perceived as contributing to more tokenism and ensuring optics, rather than building a more inclusive organization.
- Organizational culture is decentralized and siloed vertically and interdepartmentally, with distilled and/or fractured communication channels and low levels of transparency.
- A culture of privilege, perfectionism, arrogance, narcissism, and cultural incompetence is experienced at every level of the organization creating an exclusive, non-humanistic, and untrusting work environment.
- HHS lacks clear organization definitions for diversity, racial equity, and inclusion. Directors and managerial level staff do not understand the full meanings of these terms and how they relate to the organization.
- Current organizational resources do not appear to be able to support large scale, racial equity, diversity, and inclusion efforts towards culture change.
- Employees report that the organization has a reputation of being closed where “White Directors” with long tenure are favored by senior leadership... This elite culture of privilege and worldview is resistant to change.
- Employees reported having experienced and overheard racist remarks, contributing to an organizational culture of exclusion.
- Some employees report feeling betrayed and exposed by past actions, such as lack of discretion or confidentiality by leaders in the organization who are supposed to protect them.
- At least one person in leadership constantly referred to people of color as “those people”.
- Employees question whether racial equity initiatives are genuine because they appear to be surface level only.
- Fear of reprisal is so high within the organization that many employees either did not participate in the survey, focus groups or interviews. Those that participated in the survey represented many respondents who neither agreed nor disagreed.
- HHS has an unhealthy culture of competition that is perpetuated by a desire to please senior leadership.
- Communication remains a problematic theme across the organization and within City government as reported by employees. Over 60 percent of employees do not believe there is good communication between departments within the organization.
- Some employees reportedly feel that they cannot speak up, and because of speaking up will face retaliation and/or experience hostility and incivility from Senior Leadership and City Council.

- Employees, who identify as a race/ethnic minority report feeling tokenized in the organization because they believe they're being only symbolically included for strategic gain by virtue of their identity.
- Employees, who identify as a minority, report feeling only hired for their identity marker rather than inherent value and question their own skills and capabilities.
- Employees, who identify as a minority, report being asked to be the single representative of their identity marker and put on the spot to educate.

A strategy redesign, with explicit DEI/RE values at the core, as previously discussed in this report, coupled with learning and development programs that emphasize new values, beliefs, and assumptions aligned with racial equity are needed. Additionally, where the aim is to change human behavior, shifting the culture toward a growth mindset is critical. People shift their behavior to align with cultural expectations in an effort to protect their status within the system, the degree to which the person is acceptable and welcomed in the group.²⁷ They will discern culture, by watching the behaviors of Senior Leadership, the high status individuals in the City's workplace. This is why Senior Leadership learning and development should focus on developing a growth mindset and part of the communications plan should emphasize the cultural shift toward a growth mindset.

Data from the HHS audit shows a fixed mindset culture where organizational trust and psychological safety are low, impacting employee performance, resilience, morale, and retention and themes of leadership versus employees, favoritism, blaming, and incivility plays an active role in perpetuating a culture of fear. This indicates a fixed mindset culture, rather than a growth mindset culture. Employees are likely emulating a fixed mindset culture and incorporating fixed mindset values and beliefs into their self-concepts of status and using them to evaluate others, inhibiting change and growth in a vicious circle.²⁸ Asking people to act contrary to the organization's culture will only cause anxiety and resistance to change.²⁹

A growth mindset culture is also referred to as an adaptive culture. It encourages motivation, passion, taking risks, being curious, making and learning from mistakes, tenacity, and resilience. It also offers quantitatively measured organizational benefits, too.

- More people are attracted to a workplace with an adaptive culture because it signals that with hard work, they can advance, be rewarded, and have a successful career at the organization.
- It creates an attractive employer brand and leads to higher employee retention.
- People are cued by the culture to cope more effectively with challenges and setbacks. They expect that through perseverance, extra effort, and hard work they will overcome the challenges and find solutions to setbacks.

²⁷ Rock, D. and Page, L.J.(2009). *Coaching with the brain in mind: Foundations for practice*. Wiley

²⁸ Murphy, M.C., and Dweck, C.S. (2010). *A culture of genius: How an organization's lay theory shapes people's cognition, affect, and behavior*. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*: Sage.

²⁹ Id.

Every one of these benefits translates into improvement to key performance metrics, like employee retention and productivity and customer satisfaction. Related metrics are the same as those for assessing inclusion and belonging, and include:

- How much a person anticipates feeling that they belong as a member of the group;
- How comfortable they feel during meetings and activities;
- How accepted they feel by other members of the organization; and
- Conversely, how much they think they might stand out “like a sore thumb.”

These metrics should be incorporated into hiring and performance evaluations, the leadership development model, and developmental programs and plans.

An indication of a growth mindset culture is that people tell stories of overcoming personal hardships and improvement through resilience, tenacity, practice, and hard work instead of stories that emphasize sheer brainpower and intelligence. An indication of a culture of equity and inclusion is people telling their stories of facing and overcoming personal hardships with the support of sponsors, mentors, coaches, and affinity groups. The more those stories surface, the more energy and motivation there will be to overcome resistance.

Additional metrics of a growth mindset and inclusive culture are evidence of:

- Stories in the workplace of overcoming personal hardships and improvement through resilience, tenacity, practice, and hard work;
- Stories of people of color and minority employees facing and overcoming personal hardships with the support of sponsors, mentors, coaches, and affinity groups; and
- How well and often the organization publicizes success stories that emphasize the adaptive learning, growth mindset culture.

HR Processes

LWC conducted an in-depth review of the City’s HR function, evaluating roles and responsibilities as previously discussed and as discussed in this section, general practices, and several policies (also called plans), with a detailed focus on the processes that fall within the Talent Cycle. Talent Cycle processes shepherd employees into and through a career with the City. These processes offer opportunities to invite in, develop, and retain a workforce that mirrors the diversity of the community served. LWC’s in-depth review of the City’s HHS department also surfaced Talent Cycle data and issues consistent with the HR data. Both are reported in this section.

HR Disaggregated Data

The City is not formally or regularly collecting a robust set of disaggregated demographic data related to employees. Consequently, it is more difficult to accurately know and manage problems contributing to the lack of diversity within Senior Leadership or discuss the true

situation of the City's workforce. For example, in a divisional budget meeting the first slide was about the racial demographic breakdown of a department. The presentation quickly went past the slide until a request to go back to the slide to speak about the demographics.

It is difficult to counter an inaccurate narrative about the City's efforts toward racial equity without data. For example, the absence of a full compensation review by job title, description, and actual responsibilities, meant the City lacked the data to comment in a meaningful way on a recent news article that identified salary disparities in leadership positions based on race. Consequently, the news article advances the narrative and perception of racial inequity in Worcester's workforce.

Also, it is impossible to measure change after making adjustments intended to infuse equity into any Talent Cycle process. For example, a robust implementation plan to increase the racial diversity of recruiting and hiring depends on every hiring manager knowing the racial demographics of their respective departments and the demographics of the recruiting pool, applicant pool, and interview pool before and after changes are made.

LWC recommends adopting technology and instituting processes to collect disaggregated data about job applicants and City employees on a quarterly basis.

Policies and Plans

Policies and plans are related. A policy is principle to guide action, while a plan is a detailed list of related actions to achieve the objective of a policy. Both affect processes. The City uses the terms interchangeably.

LWC examined the Affirmative Action Plan and the Telework policy, both of which affect employee management. All City policies and plans should be reviewed holistically and cross-referenced for alignment with the DEI/RE values, mission, and strategies, once developed. We provide examples from each document as a guide for additional review and revision of each.

Affirmative Action Plan

This document is actually a combination of an Affirmative Action Plan (AAP) and an Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) policy and process. Each should be a separate document.

The EEO policy is on the first page after the table of contents and references the AAP. It makes vague reference to "Protected Groups" having "the right to file a complaint in accordance with the procedures that shall be enacted by the City" if they believe they have been discriminated against. It also states the responsibility of "each department of the City, its administrators and its employees...to ensure affirmative action and equal opportunity in the affairs of City government."

The EEO policy should include link to a webpage with information about the investigative procedure and how to file a discrimination complaint related to employment. The investigative

procedures webpage should include a link to begin the complaint process. The responsibility described for department administrators and employees³⁰ should be detailed and included into job descriptions and employee evaluations.

The “Scope of the Plan” needs review and possible revision in these areas:

Present Language	Concerns and Suggestions
“The City will promote the most qualified employees, with a preference for promoting members of Protected Groups that are underrepresented in the applicable City division/department.”	Reword to avoid tokenism inferences. Perhaps highlight “preference” to hire and develop a workforce that matches the diversity of the population served.
“The City will provide all employees with an equal opportunity to participate in applicable training and development programs.”	Ambiguous phrase - “opportunity to participate.” What are the specifics of implementation, especially when applied to union employees or hourly employees?
“The City will compensate all employees based upon the principle of equal work.”	Ambiguous – how do you determine what qualifies as “equal work” and what are the consequences of superimposing union requirements and civil service?
“The City will establish and/or maintain all employee facilities on a non-discriminatory basis.”	This statement can lead to confusion if the building is not ADA compliant because of its age.
“The City will not limit, segregate, or classify its employees in any way which would deprive any individual of opportunities, or adversely affect his or her status as an employee because of such employee's status as a member of a Protected Group.”	There is a consent decree for police, so veterans with disabilities are classified differently.
“The City will administer all personnel activities such as recruitment, hiring, promotions, downgrading, layoffs, discipline, compensation, benefits, transfers, and training, equally among employees, with the goal of elevating members of underrepresented Protected Groups and in accordance with civil service regulations.”	Similar to comment above. Also, reword to avoid inadvertently implying that diverse candidates will be elevated because of their protected status.

³⁰ Consistent language should be used in all documents. Instead of referencing department administrators and employees, the document should reference Cabinet members and division leaders. Consistency aids in transparency and avoid confusion. Select terms like “division” or “department” and “Director” to reference the head of a division or department that is not a Cabinet member. The terms “administrators” and “employees” should be defined specifically to assist in determine which job descriptions should be revised and how for aligning responsibilities, assessment of performance of those responsibilities, and accountability.

<p>“The City will take affirmative steps, including the establishment of goals and timetables, to ensure that the City workforce, at all levels and in all types of positions, reflects the demographics of the City.”</p>	<p>If the goals and timetables have been established, they would need to have been detailed in the Diversity report along with an explanation if the goals had not been met.</p>
<p>“The City will take affirmative steps to develop the talents, skills, and other abilities of its workforce and ensure that members of underrepresented Protected Groups have equal opportunity for advancement.”</p>	<p>Consider additional language to the effect of, and “ seek to remedy past discrimination/bias”</p>
<p>“The City will not utilize tests or selection criteria or other procedures in hiring or promotion that are not validated as appropriate or necessary for evaluating ability to perform the essential functions of the job.”</p>	<p>This is providing an opportunity to challenge the scoring and screening process. The screening process is not consistent, because it is not centralized as described further in this report and instead conducted by individual local managers.</p>
<p>“The City will establish and maintain job descriptions that accurately reflect the essential functions, qualifications, and duties.”</p>	<p>We know from the audit that this is not happening, create the risk of making a false statement.</p>
<p>“The City will invite all employees to participate in all City sponsored activities such as training programs, professional development opportunities, tuition waiver program, team building activities, and social or recreational activities.”</p>	<p>The term “invite” seems to contradict the affirmative steps taken in other areas. Improve clarity between mandatory participation and invitations to participate. Certain trainings should be mandatory. Also, as an AA policy, the language should reflect affirmative steps; e.g., “The City will take affirmative steps to encourage all employees to participate in...”</p>
<p>“All City personnel must comply with the procedures set forth in the Plan. The purpose of the Plan is to set forth goals and timetables designed to recruit, employ, retain, train, and promote members of Protected Groups to the extent that such employees are fully utilized. The Plan is applicable to all employment actions taken by the City, including but not limited to recruitment, interviewing, selection, hiring, training, promotions, demotions, and termination.”</p>	<p>Technically, everyone is a member of a “Protected Group;” while not everyone is a member of a marginalized, protected group. If the City wishes to hold leadership accountable for their recruiting, employment decisions, retention percentages, and training of any particular marginalized group, it should be clear in delegating those responsibilities, assessing performance according to specific criteria, and then holding those leaders accountable. It should also be careful to avoid excluding any group from opportunities to succeed as a member of the City’s workforce. However, it is in the best interest for the City of Worcester to require that all employees are provided the opportunity for training so</p>

	that they are fully utilized. The focus should be on promoting more opportunity for everyone.
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Responsibility and Accountability for the Plan needs review and possible revision in these areas:

Present Language	Concerns and Suggestions
City Manager’s responsibilities regarding the AAP	The word “designated” should “designates.” The Human Resource Director title should be Chief Human Resources Officer. The City Manager must ensure that responsibilities are specifically assigned and reflected in job descriptions, criteria for performance evaluation is developed, and accountable for performance is maintained.
CDO’s responsibilities regarding the AAP	<p>Make sure to align with the City’s DEI/RE strategic plan, which will become the CDO’s responsibility to maintain and update. The AAP is part of that strategic plan.</p> <p>More than just reviewing and approving potential hires, the CDO should be involved in the whole hiring process- approval of interview pool, approval interview panel, approval of additional screening criteria (if it deviates from the norm), approval of the final candidate- CDO will be looking at it through an EEO perspective. HR from a process and financial perspective. If at the time the position is being screened there is not diversity in the pool, the CDO and CHRO need to work together to implement a specific targeted recruiting process.</p>
CHRO’s responsibilities regarding the AAP	<p>The CDO should monitor recruiting, hiring, promoting, and retaining strategies to increase the representation of people from underutilized Protected Groups. CHRO and CDO should collaborate on monitoring training.</p> <p>If the CDO is going to be held responsible for making sure that EEO compliance is achieved but CHRO is responsible for application process, then both offices need to be in collaboration and work together to achieve the”goals and timetables to address</p>

	<p>underutilization and underrepresentation of Protected Groups in any given EEO category.”</p> <p>Complaints of discrimination should follow the investigation process currently being formalized by the full-time investigations officer. Eliminate this language from the CHRO’s list of responsibilities: “Accept and investigate complaints of discrimination per current City ordinances, personnel rules and policies.” Instead, align with LWC recommendations regarding CDO having authority over investigator instead of CHRO.</p>
Department Heads’ responsibilities regarding the AAP	Align with job descriptions that clarify CDO role of authority and expertise on DEI/RE.
Managers, Supervisors, and Directors’ responsibilities regarding the AAP	<p>Add in the responsibility to “Encourage discussions of diversity, equity and inclusion and collaborate with CHRO and CDO for topic specific training.”</p> <p>Add in the responsibility to report incidents to the investigation unit to section “Counseling and/or disciplining employees who engage in activities exhibiting unlawful bias, including but not limited to, verbal, written or pictorial expressions of said bias.”</p>
Diversity Officers and Diversity Liaison responsibilities regarding the AAP	Add in “In conjunction with/at the direction of CDO and CHRO” to “Develop and monitor recruiting, hiring, training, promoting, and retaining strategies to increase the representation of underrepresented Protected Groups in their department.

Develop the communications plan for disseminating the revised AAP and then integrate dissemination with the revised onboarding process for new hires. Display it prominently where employees would naturally seek it out on the City’s website.

Under the section on “Implementation” of the AAP, revise the paragraph to avoid the appearance of tokenism and/or favoring one protected group over another. This issue arises repeatedly in the AAP. The intention should be to provide equal employment opportunities for all qualified employees, who should be recruited and encouraged to apply for open positions.

Under the section on “Discipline.” It may be unnecessary for the CDO to review all disciplinary actions. However, all disciplinary actions should be tracked. If discipline is associated with discrimination, harassment or retaliation, the CDO should be involved in reviewing the discipline.

Under the “Complaint and Resolution Procedure” section, reference is made to “a Protected Class Harassment Grievance Officer.” It is unclear whether this position actually exists. It should be easy for employees to locate the information in this section and file a complaint.

Check definitions in the glossary for accuracy and consistency with legal definitions and use throughout City documents.

Telework Policy

Currently the City of Worcester has a [Telework Policy](#), providing some employees the opportunity to have a flexible work schedule, including start time, end time and location employees will perform their work. The City does not have a flexible schedule policy.

The [Telework Policy](#) details the expectations and procedures for approval of this benefit. Departments/Divisional heads have authority to approve requests based on their determination of whether, among other factors, there is a satisfactory, designated workspace for the employee. Additionally, employees need to demonstrate they have resources, such as a dedicated workspace, “internet service at their own expense” and a phone. If an employee needs a flexible work schedule to care for children or elderly family members, the only option is to follow this policy, and this policy can lead to a disparate impact based on socioeconomics.

The Massachusetts Budget and Policy Center noted in its December, 2015, publication, *Race to Equity: The State of Black Massachusetts*, that homeownership has been the primary way of building wealth for most people; however, that this avenue of wealth generation has been closed off or made less available to communities of color. This has resulted in many families living in multigenerational homes. The likelihood of meeting the requirements of the Telework Policy is an area ripe for race-related inequitable decisions.

The City should consider creating a flexible work schedule policy that would potentially benefit all employees and review all HR policies and plans to ensure that they are consistent and do not lead to inequities among the workforce.



Talent Cycle Data Generally

There are many options for improving racial equity by improving Talent Cycle processes. When HHS employees were asked where to focus and prioritize efforts on increasing diversity, racial equity, and inclusion, the major theme was HR (hiring, retention, pay equity, and training). Specific answers to the question included:

- Career advancement paths;
- Use of hiring equity tools;
- Increasing positions, higher salaries to attract a wide range of qualified applicants, assistance with recruitment of diverse applicants;
- Recruitment and retention of employees of color;
- Training at the beginning of employment and continuous;
- Interactive training to gain hands on experience of other cultures;
- Making sure all employees (especially BIPOC employee) have opportunities to advance within the City; and
- Bringing onboard talented war refugees.

Findings related to the Talent Cycle surfacing from HHS data include:

- Race equity in candidate selection, development, performance management and compensation are inconsistently experienced throughout the organization.
- Racial Equity in development, performance management and compensation are inconsistently experienced throughout the organization, impacting development, promotion, and engagement and retention.
- There is no true performance management, feedback, or development to promote, engage or retain talent.
- Education and training on racial equity are needed for all levels within the organization.
- There is not a clear pathway for career advancement.
- There are pay disparities among people of color. Individuals are not given pay commensurate with their titles or in line with their white counterparts.
- There are structural and systems barriers in the human resources office that prevent people of color from entering the organization.
- There is a need for training on racial equity throughout the talent life cycle beginning with the hiring process.
- The hiring process is prohibitive towards people of color. Positions are not advertised in places where underrepresented groups have access.
- Employees indicate there are disparities in treatment between people of color and the majority related to time off and benefits.



Recruiting and Hiring

HR employees were asked, “When you are hiring for your department are the racial demographics of your department discussed. If so, at what point in the process?” The overwhelming response was “No.” Interviewees also stated that hiring managers do not receive race data and the discussion of increasing diversity in the departments is done, “at the end of the process,” after the department has selected a candidate. Problems were identified in various portions of the hiring policy such as job descriptions, pre-screening, on-boarding and the application process.

HHS employees were asked, “What are the areas [of the Talent Cycle] that you feel are the most problematic for racial equity initiatives? Responses included the following:

- “Efforts to intentionally hire more people of color in management/key decision-making roles should be prioritized.”
- Race equity in candidate selection, development, performance management and compensation are inconsistently experienced throughout the organization.
- There are structural and systems barriers in the human resources office that prevent people of color from entering the organization.
- The hiring process is prohibitive towards people of color. Positions are not advertised in places where underrepresented groups have access.
- “People hire who they want to hire, but people of color are required to follow a process and the candidate still isn’t hired.”

The recruiting process causes racially disparate treatment of candidates.

Currently, filling a position means first submitting an “RFP” to HR. The form asks for information that is not attainable at the beginning of a recruiting process, such as start date, starting pay step, or proposed employee. The form also has a section on promotions, which are not actually promotions as much as an internal job posting. Further, the process preliminarily requires budget office approval even though divisional heads receive budgetary approval for positions at the beginning of the budget cycle leading to a process that is “mind-numbing” and causes unnecessary delays in posting open positions.

The RFP process should be streamlined. The Budget office and HR can both look at the submission simultaneously. With such a competitive market, candidates from underrepresented backgrounds are in high demand. Delaying the process of a job posting, lengthens the time it will take to fill the position and potentially leaves a position vacant for a longer period, as qualified candidates look elsewhere for a comparable position

Job titles, descriptions, and classifications are unaligned with job duties and discourage qualified people from applying.

Job descriptions begin with job titles. Only some department positions have functional titles and many positions only have budgeted titles such as, “ Staff Assistant,” which do not clearly define the role. LWC’s document review and interview data show that job descriptions often have degree requirements, where equivalent experience would suffice and degree requirements, without looking at equivalent experience in lieu of a degree, is also used in promotion decisions. The bias for degree holders over experience is significant for managerial positions. The rationale offered for requiring a Bachelor’s degree was paygrade, not job performance.

Too often posted job descriptions do not align with actual job duties, limiting the number of qualified applicants for a position. In August, 2014 The Harvard Business Review published a research article titled, “ Why Woman Don’t apply for Jobs Unless They’re 100% Qualified.” The research found that the various barriers accounted for “78% of women’s reasons for not applying, have to do with believing that the job qualifications are real requirements, and seeing the hiring process as more by-the-book and true to the on paper guidelines than it really is.” Although the article did not address race, women make up 50% of the country and about 40% of the population are non-white. This is an example of the exceptional burden of intersectionality faced by underrepresented people, who are not male and not white.

For example, currently the City is seeking a “Project Administrator II,” in the Division of Public Health. One of the requirements is that the applicant have a “Bachelor’s degree in Public Health, Nursing, Healthcare Administration, Community Health or a related health field.” The description does not account for transferable skills, such as a business degree, or a person who may have healthcare certificates. Although, there is a disclaimer that a combination of training, education, and experience will be considered in lieu of the requirements, there is an absence of details on how an applicant’s experience will be weighed. This is exactly what discourages qualified applicants from applying and receiving an opportunity to work for the City.

As evidence for not needing a degree, a quick review of the Massachusetts Community Health Center’s CEO’s educational backgrounds, uncovered that only four of the thirteen CEO’s with easily accessible educational information held bachelor’s degrees in a health related field. Had similar requirements been placed on them, their different paths, would have inhibited some of those people from being considered for the position. A January, 2021 Forbes article discussed creating more inclusive job descriptions and quoted Hosea Chang, chief operating officer at Hayden Los Angeles, “if you ask for skills, experiences, degrees, and levels of seniority that aren’t necessary for success, you’ll be reducing your candidate pool and missing out on talented people that would excel in the position you need to fill.” When racial equity and increasing racial diversity is a goal, the better process for job descriptions is to detail the experience, knowledge, and skills needed to do the job successfully and not use a degree as a proxy.

Also, in the City of Worcester, candidates with a second language offer a valuable skill for engaging and communicating effectively with more community members. In a City job description requiring the “[a]bility to establish and maintain effective working relationships with a

diverse, multicultural community, organizations, and staff,” there was no mention of a second language preference or preference for languages that are predominantly spoken in the community. Placing a language preference in the job description potentially encourages greater diversity in applications by targeting those people with the ability to communicate with a broader range of community members.

Even when a problem with a title or job description is acknowledged, it is difficult, if not impossible to change it. Divisional heads or hiring managers generate job descriptions. HR reviews the job descriptions. Two employees interviewed described instances where they “pushed back” when the job description needed adjustment. There is “no process for reclassifying positions and eliminating existing non-union positions.” It is difficult to make useful changes to job descriptions.

A job description review committee, diverse across social identity and hierarchical level, should review job descriptions through the lens of bias and unconscious barriers towards racial equity and then recommend and revise titles and descriptions. The priority should be non-union positions, because any changes to union job descriptions may require collective bargaining. The committee will need representation from the HR and the DO with additional representation from the departments in which particular jobs exist. Committee tasks include:

- Reviewing vacant job positions with the hiring managers to ensure that the recommendations are applicable to the position;
- Reviewing the public facing positions to determine whether it would be advantageous for the employee to be bilingual in a particular language;
- Detailing in job descriptions how the combination of education and training will substitute for a degree;
- Developing functional titles that are aligned with employee job duties in place of budgeted titles; and
- If a position has a city residency requirement, state it clearly in the job description.

Add targeted recruiting to general recruiting efforts.

Open positions are posted on the City’s website, Facebook, LinkedIn, JobQuest, Indeed, the Chamber of Commerce, and DiversityJobs.com. Jobs are also posted on specific professional websites if applicable (e.g. Massachusetts Lawyers Weekly for an attorney position). They also are listed in the paper version of the Human Resource Bulletin. HR has hosted a career day with the Police and Fire Departments and has sent employees to job fairs at local high schools and has the opportunity also to established relationships for purposes of job recruiting with local colleges, vocational/technical schools, high schools, or the many community-based organizations with BIPOC members. Presently, open positions are not being promoted in places that could expand the applicant pool with a more diverse group of people.

The lack of a targeted recruiting process that includes partnering with the many educational institutions and community organizations where BIPOC community members are, is a recipe for racial inequities and a lack of diversity in the City’s workforce. Interviews revealed that limited

basic recruiting is performed by HR. There is no overarching HR targeted recruiting strategy or dedicated staff for this task.

Targeted recruiting, beginning with the creation of a generalized list of community organizations, websites, technical schools, high schools and professional organizations is an avenue to reach a broader population that includes people of color, by reaching out to them where they already have a presence. Job applications that include a question about how the applicant learned of the job opportunity is valuable data to learn which avenues of promoting an open position were effective for recruiting a racially diverse pool of applicants and which were not. Partnering with City Council, external stakeholder groups, and the Diversity and Inclusion Advisory Committee will lead to the organizations and groups where racially diverse applicants already go.

Encourage employees to share job postings with their personal and professional networks. HR should partner with the Legal Department to create a template of specific wording for employees to use when forwarding job postings.

The application process for non-civil service positions widens the gap of racial equity.

The majority of labor positions within the City fall within the civil service designation. Civil Service is governed by MGL Ch. 31. Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 31, Section 8, regulate promotions of civil service employees if they are being elevated in the same unit. That section states:

An appointing authority, with the approval of the administrator, may promote an employee in the official service from one title to the next higher title in the same series in the same departmental unit, subject to the following requirements: (a) such employee shall have been employed in such unit in such lower title as a permanent employee for three years or longer immediately preceding the request for approval of such promotion; (b) such employee is the first, second, or third ranking employee in length of service in such departmental unit who is willing to accept the promotion; and (c) such employee shall demonstrate, by the passing of an examination prescribed by the administrator, that he possesses the qualifications and abilities necessary to perform the duties of the higher title; provided that an employee in a departmental unit of a city, town or district who has been employed in such unit in a lower title as a permanent employee for not less than one year next preceding the date of such request may be promoted to the next higher title in the same series if there is no other employee in such lower title or any other lower title in such series who has also been so employed, and if such employee shall demonstrate, by the passing of an examination prescribed by the administrator, that he possesses the qualifications and abilities necessary to perform the duties of such higher title. The relative ranking of titles as next higher or lower shall be determined by the administrator.

Labor positions, regardless of whether they are civil service positions or not, require an applicant to print out an application and either mail it to HR or hand deliver the application. The non-labor positions, such as customer service representatives and project managers, and seasonal positions allow all candidates to submit an electronic form.

The application process for labor positions, which are predominantly civil service positions, assumes that all individuals have access to a printer or access to a public space that has extensive hours of operation where at any convenient time, they can print out job applications. Where statistically, people of color are more likely to be economically disadvantaged, the adverse impact of this process widens the racial equity gap in employment. Additionally, the majority of the labor positions require candidates to take the civil service exam, which requires an on-line application, registration and test preparation. We understand the City of Worcester is trying to remove the civil service designation of these labor positions, however until that is accomplished there is a racial barrier for entry level labor candidates versus non-labor positions, where the civil service designation does not exist. We suggest implementing an electronic application process for labor positions that mirrors the non-civil service positions.

The application includes a general box for laborers but not a detailed list of possible areas of work. Labor jobs can range from working in the department of water and sewer and trash collection to parks maintenance and building custodial services. The lack of specificity opens the door for discriminatory employment decisions which remain hidden since race data is not collected. If the application process listed open labor jobs by specific positions and allowed the applicant to select their areas of interest, efficiency would be injected into the hiring process, by only contacting those that indicated interest in particular positions, and the risk of inequitable job assignments and racially adverse impacts would be lessened.

A robust pool of employee race data is not available because only 50% of the new hires over the last five years provided information about their race on the voluntary self-disclosure form of the application. Of the 7% of the new employees that were categorized as "General Labor" hires, 5% identified as Black and less than 2% identified as Hispanic. There is not enough racial data of the labor workforce to determine whether there is a disparity in position assignments based on race and an indication of fear and low psychological safety in the City's work environment.

Resume Screening is problematic.

Currently, there is a decentralized screening process, where hiring managers are provided the applicant pool, without race data. As previously explained, the HR function should be centralized to avoid divisional inconsistencies.

The hiring manager presumably uses the minimum qualifications for a particular posted position to decrease the potential interview pool. However, screeners do not receive any training on equitable and objective screening processes, so it is not surprising that interview data revealed that hiring managers do not consistently and objectively apply the listed minimum qualifications in their initial review of applications, as exemplified by the following data:

- Hiring managers are reluctant to consider applicants using a job posting’s criteria that “equivalent combination of education and experience will be considered in lieu of the minimum requirements” because it would require the review of all submitted applications in much more detail.
- Since race data is not provided to hiring managers, hiring managers try to ascertain the race or ethnicity of candidates by their names or language skills.
- The pre-screening process uses a subjective rating scale instead of objective criteria leading to significant differences in conclusions reached by a pre-screener and the departmental hiring manager.

One approach to making selections equitable comes from the Code of Federal Regulations. Federal contractors are required to evaluate their selection procedures which utilize a test known as the “four-fifths rule.” Codified in 29 CFR § 1607.4, this rule dictates a process to assess any possible adverse impact of an evaluation for an employment opportunity. Clearly this regulation does not apply to the City of Worcester; however, it does offer an avenue to assess whether any of Worcester’s selection procedures are equitable.

Whether a decision is equitable or without an adverse impact is based on a mathematical formula that compares the selection rate for each particular social identity group. If the selection rate (percentage) for any particular group is less than 80% of the rate of the group with the highest selection rate, than this is an indication that the selection process may be inequitable with regard to that particular group. The next step is to determine whether the result is statistically significant. Presently, if after the initial screening process the applicant pool is not diverse, there are no additional targeted recruiting efforts. Nor is there a step for the CDO to review and approve the list of screened candidates.

Interviewing

There is no requirement for hiring managers to create a diverse interview panel to interview candidates even though the City’s “Hiring Process Guide” state that “[f]or positions that are considered senior level positions, Executive Management, Middle Management, and Technical, Professional, and Administrative, it is strongly recommended that interviews be conducted by more than one person.” Diversity in an interview panel assists with noticing and managing each others’ unconscious biases and blindspots.

Unconscious biases affect what a person notices and does not notice, and how a person forms evaluative judgments about what they notice. When Interviews are conducted by a diverse interview panel, it makes the process more equitable. Any one person’s unconscious tendencies to miss information or make sense of it in a particular way is balanced out with other people who notice different information and make sense of what they notice in different ways. This creates the condition for a robust and more objective conversation and evaluation of a job candidate’s ability to perform the functions and responsibilities of a particular job.

The HR Department provides hiring managers with a sample interview questionnaire. On occasion hiring managers provide their interview questions to HR for approval and guidance; however, this is not a requirement. Interview questions should be reviewed for potential racial bias by both the HR and the DO to ensure that interview questions do not elicit a response that could lead to discriminatory, biased decision making. To further promote a culture of inclusion and equity, interview questions may explore a candidate's perspective on the City's DEI values, mission, and vision. For example, as reported in an article in the Boston Globe in December 2021, VA Boston Healthcare System screens for "cultural humility" in interviews, seeking critical thinking about a candidate's identity.

Selection and Offer

After reference checks, but before HR reviews scoring sheets and the Budget office provides final budget approval, a hiring manager selects their first choice of person to hire and then makes a conditional offer. The current process requires a hiring manager to write a memo supporting the candidate.

A better process is for HR and the Diversity Office to approve the selected candidate before a conditional offer is made. Approval should occur in a collaborative review process with the two departments, or CHRO and CDO designates. The review process should review the resumes and scoring sheets of all the interviewed candidates and if the hiring manager wants to make an offer to anyone other than the highest scoring candidate, the hiring manager should be required to provide a rationale for choosing either the second or third scoring candidate. Then, only if the CHRO and CDO sign off on the rationale and decision of the hiring manager should it be permissible for the hiring manager to extend an offer to the selected candidate. HR should review the salary to ensure salary equity with similar positions before a salary offer is made. Once the offer is made, the hiring manager only needs to inform HR on whether the candidate accepted the position, their start date, and any other information needed for onboarding.

Ensuring racial equity in the hiring process requires the involvement of the HR and DO functions in the process from the beginning. It should be noted that the HR and Diversity office "sign-off" process should be efficient, to ensure that it does not further delay the hiring process.

Salary Review

Interview data revealed that salaries for similar positions are inconsistent across the different departments in the City with employees of color acutely aware that "pay disparities rooted in position creation ... go through HR and budget...disparities in pay work, and title begin there." Interview data further showed that hiring managers determine a candidates pay based on what their predecessor was paid, not based on objective criteria such as years of relevant experience, certifications or specifically aligned education. This lack of salary consistency further leads to racial inequity across the city and opens the door for potential complaints of discrimination.

Promotions/Regrading

Employees reported that there is no true promotional process. Instead there are inconsistent processes.

- One employee stated that job descriptions for promotional opportunities are written for the pre-selected individual, so they would be the only qualified candidate.
- Another employee stated that in some instances individuals have been provided “a pay increase and title change” without any job posting process, where others have to apply for promotional opportunities.
- Some department heads advocate effectively for their employees’ and yet HR “halts upward mobility” by failing to use knowledge, skills and abilities as a substitution for minimum qualifications in job descriptions.

If a person entered City employment as a laborer and moved up to being a foreperson, that person would be responsible for managing a team of employees. However, if that employee decided to apply for a managerial position with the City, the lack of a 4-year college degree may block them from advancing their career even if they had the requisite knowledge, skills and abilities. The lack of consistency in promotional and regrading processes creates extensive opportunity for racial inequities and at best an appearance of inequities. If a hiring manager is able to preselect a person for a promotion, or elevates some employees but requires others to go through an interview process, they are not providing equal employment opportunities.

A racial barrier exists by not allowing reclassification and elevating employees who have a proven work history, increased knowledge base, and/or furthered their education. Reclassification would enable employees from backgrounds underrepresented in the City workplace, who may not have had the same access to education prior to employment as their white counterparts, to use their knowledge, experience, and educational gains after being hired by the City as equivalencies to formal degrees. This is a potential area for improvement through equitable decision making.

Rewards and Recognition

People succeed when they feel recognized for their contributions and treated equitably. There were multiple examples where employees reported their observations of people of color being treated more critically than than white peers. In addition to reporting observations about benefits being less likely to be approved or approved in a limited fashion for people of color as compared with white employees, the quote below exemplify a repeatedly arising theme in the data.

“Some departments look at equity but it’s only putting Black and Brown people in some roles.”

“There’s no accountability when non-people of color make mistakes or errors. But if a person of color makes a mistake, they are reprimanded.”

“As a member of a minority group, I must perform a certain way. There is a burden to overperform based on capabilities. Because of my race I still don’t get the credibility, nor is my voice heard.”

LWC recommends formalizing the awarding of any benefit and also the imposition of penalties. All evaluation processes, regardless of whether they are part of a hiring or promotion decision, a performance assessment, or approving a benefit, should be analyzed carefully for racial inequities and for the appearance of racial inequities. Integrating specific, objective evaluation criteria and requiring transparency in decision-making is recommended.

Attrition

At the beginning of 2019, the City had 1,798 full time employees. At the end of 2021, the city had 1774 full time employees. HR reported that 251 full time employees “voluntarily resigned” from their positions over the last 3 years. Fifty-three people participated in exit interviews. Over 68% of the employees who self-identified as people of color explained that they left their positions with the City because of the work environment, advancement opportunities and/or poor management. Not surprisingly, of the remaining employees - those who identified as white or did not identify their race - 44% stated the same reasoning. This is significant. Also significant is that the exit interview summary shows that people of color experience a negative working environment, poor management and lack of advancement opportunities 24% more than their white counterparts do.

The City does not have data on current employees’ views on the work environment, management, or promotional/growth opportunities. The City does not have data on current employees’ intention to leave. Even when data is collected, it is not reported and used to improve the culture. For example, as explained by one HHS employee, “[w]hen colleagues who have left have an exit interview, the things they share with human resources about what is happening in the department get reported back to the director. The information is not used to change things in the department.”

There is no data to analyze the racial inequities related to promotions, working environment, or management of current employees. However, limited exit interview data show that the workplace experience has a greater negative impact on employees of color compared to their white or unknown counterparts. As another HHS employee explained, “[t]he open and private disrespect of Black, Latinx and immigrant employees is exactly why the city is notorious for losing BIPOC talent.”

Problems with a work environment speak to the culture of the workplace. A lack of advancement opportunities for employees speaks to the lack of a career ladder with promotional opportunities and appropriate rewards, recognition, and compensation. Poor management and the prior two problems are leadership issues. The City needs to improve its culture to be more equitable and

inclusive. The City needs to create a career ladder that is equitable and provides a pathway to advance within City government. The City needs to adopt a leadership development plan.

Considerable data exist on the correlation between poor leadership and high attrition. Similarly, considerable data show the correlation between excellent leadership and key performance metrics, including employee engagement, net profit (a measure of cost-savings), low employee turnover, low employee intention to quit, high customer satisfaction, and highly committed employees.³¹ There is an urgent need for leadership development, not only to improve the workplace experience for people of color, but to improve the experience for every person working for the City of Worcester and the performance of the City in the eyes of its community.³² This is one example where the changes to bring about racial equity are not a “zero-sum game,” but in fact benefit everyone.



Learning and Development

Career ladders with professional development interwoven will message to employees that there is a future for them within the City workforce. Previously in this report, we shared the exit interview data from 2019-2022, which showed that over 50% of the employees cited the lack of advancement opportunities, work environment and/or poor management as their reason for leaving their positions. Learning and Development (L&D) contributes to employee retention and turnover reduction. The financial return on investment demonstrates repeatedly across organizations and industries that leadership development is actually a cost-saver.

There are three additional reasons to invest in L&D. Employees need legal compliance training to protect the City from costly litigation related to avoidable mistakes. Leadership development programs, designed around a leadership model adopted by the City will turn poor managers into exceptional leaders and exceptional leaders improve systemic performance across all key performance metrics. Inclusive leader trainings will contribute toward developing a culture of inclusive and belonging and decision-making that is equitable to all employees and improves racial equity.

³¹ Zenger, J.H. and Folkman, J.R.. (2020). *The new extraordinary leader: Turning good managers into great leaders*. McGraw-Hill Education LLC.

³² See: Heather McGee’s book, *The Sum of Us*, for myriad examples of how racism and the “zero-sum” story hurts everyone, while leveraging commonalities builds strength, as for example, in America’s first union, the Knights of Labor, which recruited across color lines and included women. The union was successful for about ten years until the the 1890s and the birth of Jim Crow.

Presently, although HR provides some intermittent training, it is limited. See the data in the table below and the contrast between the perception of individual contributors and that of higher level managers.

Questions and Summary Responses from HR Regarding Professional Development	
Does your supervisor help you develop short and long-term career goals?	7 of the 10 employees interviewed shared that there is no supervisor-initiated discussion about their professional growth or training. Two employees explicitly stated that there is no “succession planning” and one employee stated that there is diversity at, “the lower level but we are not using professional development” to bring people up the ranks. In contrast, higher level managers (Assistant Director of HR, Labor Relations Specialist-attorney) believe that they are supporting their staff to grow professionally. Both managers identified that they have spoken to their direct reports about learning and growth.

Data showed that employees, who are interested in training and professional growth opportunities must seek out that training on their own and then approach their supervisor for approval. HR does not have an employee, let alone a group, dedicated to training and development. Employees, who were interviewed, expressed a desire for discrimination, harassment, bias, racial equity, and inclusive leader training, and training to assist in their career growth, such as basic management training.

Create a Learning and Development (L&D) group. Task the group with improving leadership, overall performance, and racial equity and inclusion. Impose collaboration responsibilities with every other department to ensure technical skills training that aligns with department needs, leadership skills that build a person’s career ladder, and the DO function to ensure development of a comprehensive inclusive leader training program. Executing its tasks, requires the L&D group to select objective criteria to measure L&Ds impact on culture and climate, employee intention to leave, departmental performance, and disaggregated data about the diversity of the Senior Leadership. A robust L&D function benefits racially underrepresented employees, who may not have had the same access and privilege to learning opportunities prior to working for the City. It also benefits every other employee interested in a career ladder within City government, and the City as a whole. This is another example of how racial equity benefits everyone, individually, and is not a “zero-sum game.”

Learning and Development for a Culture that Supports Racial Equity

Best practices for designing L&D programs intended to support culture changes focus on Senior Leadership. The “say” and “do” behaviors modeled by Senior Leaders are noticed and copied (often unconsciously) by others. Best practices also focus on identifying and training people on basic technical and compliance skills, such as defining DEI/RE terminology, eliminating unconscious bias from resume reviews and interviews and complying with legal requirements and exercising legal rights.

Further, as previously recommended, all employees would benefit from L&D on cultivating a growth mindset. This is especially valuable when a system has a significant number of newer employees. For example, the statistics from HHS indicate that 65% of the employees have been there for fewer than five (5) years. L&D programs help support the newer workforce and potentially reduce attrition as a result. HHS data also show that 55% of the employees are under the age of 39, which shows a "younger" workforce. Although, presently the City is not collected disaggregated workforce data, so we have no information on the racial makeup of newer or younger employees, mentoring and training these employees so that they can have a long and productive career with the City may be a significant opportunity for the City to increase its racial diversity at all levels of the system.

Additionally, DEI/RE values are reinforced with training and workshops on authenticity and resilience, communication and listening without defensiveness, conflict management, unconscious bias and microaggressions, problem-solving and evaluative decision-making, and how racial equity initiatives are NOT a "zero-sum game" and in fact benefit everyone. The experiences of various HHS City employees interviewed highlights this need.

"[T]o improve we need to set a baseline of understanding of what is racial equity and how it is important in our work and the connection to health equity."

"Communications and systems awareness. How to talk to each other and learn about barriers to diversity, racial equity, and inclusion. There will always be a need for this due to staff turnover. And it's the foundation from which we can do more in-depth work."

"Bringing more trainings on Equity and Inclusion to all Departments can increase diversity within each Department."

"I feel the microaggressions. Sometimes I feel like I am being watched. The leader is checking to see if I am still here, sending me emails to see if I am still in the office. These things make me feel very uncomfortable. Who are you going to address it to? They are not going to do anything about it. Why complain? You just keep moving and say, "Whatever."

"When an issue is brought to [a] supervisor it is dismissed. No matter how you identify, others are being perceived as "closer to whiteness."

"After George Floyd was killed, we wanted to protest with the rest of the people in the City, but we were told we couldn't because we worked for the City. The protest was outside of work hours but to be told I could not support something I believed in made me so angry. That was 2 years ago and I'm still angry."

“We are always met with a level of defensiveness which makes it hard for us to be authentic, to communicate our struggles and what we want to see changed.”

The methodology for designing and delivering inclusive leader trainings, in addition to best practices on content, should be grounded in: (1) the Kolb Learning model, which blends concrete learning, experiential exercises, and reflection with (2) Social Construction, a proven theory that conversations about change precede actual change. When the goal is to change culture, Social Construction theory suggests the importance of small and large group discussions about the culture, desired changes, and the application of inclusive leader training content to create an inclusive and equitable culture.

People learn new behaviors and turn them into habits by understanding the anchors of old behaviors, learning new ways of thinking to dislodge those anchors, and practicing new behaviors. That is why we recommend interactive training that is highly experiential with time for reflection.

We also recommend programs that create time for engaging discussions that are carried back into the workplace and life. In line with Social Construction theory, this supports ongoing individual behavior change followed by collective behavior and culture change. This includes book and article discussions where ideas can be extracted and applied to real workplace situations, discussion about tension-laden topics like color awareness and color blindness or the role of tenacity, resilience, and privilege in personal success, as well as discussing how to apply inclusive leader best practices to employee management.

Best practices suggest that every training is a combination of traditional and innovative learning methods and includes pre-work and post-session application. Learning should emphasize the application of theory to practice, large and small group discussions, and immediately putting into action new competencies. Leadership training should include strategy workshops where the focus is on using a leader’s formal power and position to enable continuous improvement and change toward a sustainable racially equitable culture.

Recommended topics for developing equitable and inclusive leaders and to consider in any comprehensive racial equity learning and development plan include:

- Understanding, recognizing, and counteracting unconscious and implicit bias and microaggressions;
- Embracing a growth mindset for professional development;
- Understanding the dynamics of systemic, structural racism in the United States; the myth of the zero-sum game in racial equity; and the psychology of othering and scapegoating;
- Becoming an inclusive leader, who engages employees and builds strong teams across differences;
- Understanding communication differences and employing powerful and prolific communication skills to manage self and others in difficult discussions such as: what

meritocracy means, the tension between color blindness and color awareness, and the tension between resilience and psychological safety

- Listening without defensiveness and demonstrating understanding of others
- Creating a safe environment for employees to raise concerns without fear of retaliation (including after investigations);
- Giving and receiving feedback effectively;
- Setting and maintaining a sustainable DEI strategy;
- Understanding the role of power and authority in privilege and access to opportunities and resources;
- Making decisions with equitable principles and practices; and
- Understanding and being able to define terms: diversity, equity, inclusion, belonging, structural and systemic racism, othering, scapegoating, etc.

Leaders and managers must learn basic management skills and how to be sponsors, mentors, and coaches for their team members and then develop and superimpose the skills of an equitable and inclusive leader. It is these skills that become important in supporting racial equity in developing and helping direct reports advance in their careers with the City.

Learning and Career Growth that Supports Racial Equity

Often, empowered leaders, who are well-intentioned in promoting racial equity, may be unaware that they are not perceived that way. Their actions do not match their intentions. A research study measuring manager's skills at valuing diversity and inclusion found that 17 percent of the managers received a failing rating from their direct reports.³³ Leaders who do not demonstrate in their "say" and "do" behaviors that they value diversity are also demonstrating that they do not value inclusion. As previously explained, inclusive behaviors are also adaptive, growth-mindset behaviors. Consequently, these poor leaders effectively undermine the engagement and satisfaction of all team members, inhibit the learning and career growth of people of color in the organization, and drive higher attrition rates and higher costs to replace productive employees who quit.

The importance of leaders as effective sponsors, mentors, and coaches for team members of all races cannot be overstated. Employees with mentors and sponsors are more likely to be happy and successful. Managers must become significantly more involved in the development of their direct reports and the best way to develop direct reports is for managers to provide both redirecting and reinforcing feedback regularly. Research shows that approximately 65% of employees want more feedback than they get.³⁴

Career paths and job descriptions must be clear and evaluation criteria must be objective and applied equitably. Align career paths, job descriptions, L&D programs, and evaluation processes. To promote racial equity, evaluations and descriptions must include inclusive leader

³³<https://www.forbes.com/sites/jackzenger/2017/11/02/leaders-believe-they-value-diversity-but-direct-reports-dont-agree/?sh=7b9132505a55>

³⁴<https://www.forbes.com/sites/victorlipman/2016/08/08/65-of-employees-want-more-feedback-so-why-dont-they-get-it/?sh=667d03a0914a>

behaviors and the decisions of who is on the path to becoming a leader, which is rooted in subjective decisions, can never rest with a single person.

Trainings Set the Tone: Inclusion and Equity is a Non-Negotiable Value of Worcester

Although technically outside of the scope of our contract, we reviewed and noticed concerning areas in the details provided for Worcester's training program on sexual harassment and hostile work harassment. We recommend consulting with the City's legal department or outside law firm for evaluation of all workplace policy to ensure legal compliance.

- The program defined the standard for protected class harassment as "personally offensive", but the standard of review is the "reasonable person standard".
- On Slide 37 of the Sexual Harassment Training is a "True or False" question, with the statement: " I have a right to give my political opinions to people at work." Slide 38 provides the answer, " False, work is not the place to give your political opinions and your opinions could be offensive to others, you don't know. Work is for work, not politics." Although the city can implement a formal policy prohibiting employees from wearing political clothing or displaying political posters in their workspace, it must enforce this policy uniformly, regardless of an employee's role within the organization or political point of view, and the policy should clearly state that in compliance with the National Labor Relations Act, the policy is not intended to prevent employees the right, "to self-organization, to form, join, or assist labor organizations, to bargain collectively through representatives of their own choosing, and to engage in other concerted activities for the purpose of collective bargaining or other mutual aid or protection."
- A slide states "administrative action- changing work assignments, work allocations or work locations" is not harassment. Although, factual, the training program fails to say that an adverse employment action based on a protected characteristic can be discrimination.
- Although the program discusses *quid pro quo* harassment, Slide 10 states that consensual relationships are not harassment, but they fail to specify employee-employee relationships in that slide. Slide 43 titled, " What harassment is not..." states that, consensual relationships based on mutual attraction, friendship and respect do not constitute harassment, provided the interaction is consensual, welcome, and reciprocated." The training implies that if a supervisor is in a position of power and is in what they believe to be a consensual relationship with a subordinate, than it is not harassment. However, because the consensual nature of the relationship is based on the perception of the employee in less power, it could be deemed harassment. The training needs to clearly and specifically state that if an employee is in a relationship with their supervisor, than HR should be informed to insure no reporting line conflicts. Additionally, since the city does not have an anti-fraternization policy; i.e., it has no dating policy, there is no harassment when an employee is dating another employee. The lack of specificity exposes the city to future sexual harassment claims.
- Lastly, according to Mass. General Law Chapter 151B: UNLAWFUL DISCRIMINATION BECAUSE OF RACE, COLOR, RELIGIOUS CREED, NATIONAL ORIGIN, ANCESTRY OR SEX. Section 3A: Employers' policies against sexual harassment; preparation of

model policy; education and training program, Sexual Harassment Policies/Education/Training programs must have a description of the process for filing internal complaints about sexual harassment; the work addresses and telephone numbers of the person or persons to whom complaints should be made; and the identity of the appropriate state and federal employment discrimination enforcement agencies and directions as to how to contact such agencies. The training program states that the employee can file a complaint to a manager or grievance officer, but fails to provide contact information. Additionally, the program fails to inform employees of their statutory right to file a complaint with the MCAD or EEOC and the two commissioners' contact information.

HHS-Specific Programmatic Analysis

A peer review analysis was conducted of standard operating procedures, strategy documents, and programmatic data provided by the client. The following are LWC's findings.

Veterans

There were few documents and those reviewed were unremarkable. The majority were policies and procedures on services to assist the veterans i.e., dental providers, medical and dental payments, or benefits. Various protocol and procedure memos for COVID-19 were included and unremarkable.

Strategic planning with a racial equity lens could support the division in ensuring inclusion for its services.

Youth Opportunities

There were few documents. Those reviewed included an employee handbook, goals and strategies, mission, assessment forms, cultural diversity training on empathy with feedback, calendar of events, scheduling, and a hiring equity tool preparation.

Most of the documents were unremarkable. The training and equity tool preparation indicate that the department is being intentional about racial equity given its demographic. However, there is no conceptual framework or theory to support the work.

Additional strategic planning for the organization with a racial equity lens could support their work and provide a foundation for its programming.

Elder Affairs

There were few documents and those reviewed were unremarkable. Those reviewed include, organization chart, staff listing, mission, strategic plan, performance assessment, creating a multicultural senior center document, senior center guidebook and black history program flyer.

The center is being intentional about creating spaces that are inclusive of other race and ethnicities. However, it is being done in the absence of strategy or vision.

Additional strategic planning for the organization with a racial equity lens could support their work and provide a foundation for its programming.

Human Rights

The website was reviewed and included: glossary of terms on racial equity, diversity and inclusion, fair housing documents, meeting minutes for the commission, accessibility brochures, policies on language proficiency, grievance procedures, statements on inclusivity. No findings were generated.

The website contains a plethora of basic information needed for transparency and compliance. A review of the website against other similar municipalities could assist with a redesign to make the site more user friendly.

A strategic plan for the organization that highlights accessibility, inclusion, diversity with a racial equity lens would support the offices work.

Department of Public Health

Numerous documents were reviewed to include, Discipline Specific Competencies Chart, mission statement, organizational chart, contact sheet, strategic plan, anti-racism group documents (glossary, minutes, survey, materials, racial justice plan), performance evaluation tools, hiring, staff meetings, retreats, hiring tools and trainings, staff birthdays, and coalition for a Healthy Greater Worcester, EDS plan, and job postings.

Most of the documents were unremarkable. The documents on racial equity, racial justice, and anti-racism indicate that the division is being intentional about racial equity. However, work is being done without a strategy, framework or training.

Main Office HHS

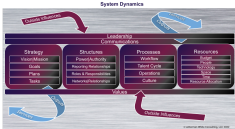
There is a vast amount of information and documentation reviewed to include: City Council items, commissioner's speaking points, trainings and presentations on racism, equity, HHS operations, HHS policies and procedures, HHS projects and initiatives, conferences, strategic plan, mission statement, staff evaluation and assessments, and developmental plans.

Most of the documents were unremarkable. There is an intentional focus on racial equity that is embedded throughout the work of this office. The work is siloed which is unsustainable long term. The work coming out of the office belongs in public health. There is a need to develop a racial equity strategy led by this office that informs the work of the entire health and human services creating a more collaborative entity.

What stood out in the findings related to the community were that:

- The Community is unclear about the hierarchy within HHS. It is siloed with each department working separately and speaking independently.
- Community members indicate that the commissioner of health has equity at the forefront of the work, however she is given limited resources and not allowed to fully do her job. This was especially obvious during the height of the pandemic.
- Community members in communities of color, instead of the commissioner, causing confusion and distrust about the information coming out of the organization.
- Community members report fewer resources being allocated to community outreach efforts to inform diverse community groups about HHS programs and services.
- Cultural and linguistic diversity continue to challenge the delivery of services to diverse communities, reportedly impacting community trust and relationships.
- Community members report that HHS can help the city coalesce around racial equity because they are dealing with multiple aspects of the person.
- Stakeholders agree that HHS did an amazing job responding to COVID-19, however it is unclear how they will continue to be responsive to the needs of communities of color post pandemic.
- There is a lack of data collection, reporting and analysis for decision making on resources to communities of color.
- The city needs to develop a dashboard of metrics to inform the city and its partners on how to allocate resources and develop programs for communities of color.
- Racial equity should be a part of all the work in the city where everyone looks at the challenges from a racial equity lens.
- Community members believe the city is not invested in racial equity and that the findings from the racial equity audit will not be publicized.
- Equity and equality are terms that are used interchangeably. There is a stark difference between the two terms that needs to be addressed city wide, beginning with racial equity.
- HHS appears culturally incompetent when showing up in the community and through partnerships, with an incomplete understanding of underrepresented groups.

LWC recommends immediate design of a racial equity implementation process that incorporates the findings of this report. It should align with the City's DEI/RE strategy, once that has been developed. General recommendations regarding divisional DEI/RE strategy design and execution provided earlier in this report are also applicable to HHS.



Resource Allocation

Resources refers to anything to make it easier or more likely that a project or task will be completed. Are there sufficient people to carry out a task or complete a project? Do those people have sufficient time or are there other demands on their time that are treated as more important? Do they have sufficient space and technology for efficient processes to carry out a

task or complete a project? Has the project been allocated sufficient funding to ensure that the other resources can be acquired as needed?

It is unclear whether the CDO's salary and the DO budget is sufficient to attract and retain the right person. On May 28, 2022, a LinkedIn job search for open positions in the Greater Boston area with "chief diversity" in the description, recovered over 1300 results. A Google search suggests that the average salary in Massachusetts for CDOs is \$135,076. Further, given the responsibilities, the CDO needs a budget to hire external consultants or highly trained internal staff to execute the extensive responsibilities of the role. Responsibilities include:

- Review and revision of policies and plans relating to DEI/RE such as the Affirmative Action Policy the Equal Employment Opportunity Plan, among many others;
- Development of a DEI/RE City strategy (if not already developed) and regular updates;
- Development and regular update of a detailed DEI/RE Implementation Plan that distills the DEI/RE City Strategy into directives for each division/department;
- DEI/RE audits of divisions and departments as deemed necessary;
- Collaboration with HR, functional departments, and the D&I Advisory Committee to design and execute implementation plans for the changes recommended in this report, including, but not limited to:
 - Review and revise job descriptions for alignment with DEI/RE values and City strategy;
 - Review and revise evaluation processes (in hiring, annual reviews, formal and informal feedback, rewards and recognition, benefit permission, and promotion decisions) for alignment with job descriptions;
 - Develop a targeted recruiting strategy to attract a more diverse pool of applicants;
 - Develop interview protocols to ensure equity in interview processes and performance evaluation of candidates;
 - Review discrimination investigations for equity;
 - Review hiring decisions for equity;
 - Provide expertise in the L&D function as it relates to developing inclusive leaders and a culture of inclusion and equity;
 - Provide expertise in the communication functions as it relates to developing and maintaining a DEI/RE positive brand;
 - Review employee data collected annually for insights into diversity goals;
 - Prepare an annual DEI/RE report of the City; and
 - Launch and support ERGs.

It is unclear whether the City has sufficient staff with sufficient time and sufficient capabilities to carry out the current and urgent needs to improve DEI/RE within City government set forth in this report. There is likely a need for immediate training and changes to promote a growth mindset culture. Refer back to the Readiness section for additional details.

It is unclear whether the City has sufficient finances and staff for needed technology to infuse processes needed with efficiency and accuracy, such as an HR system like Workday.

Appendix

HHS Data Collection Methodology

Qualitative Analysis

Using basic qualitative methods, Letterman White conducted ten employee interviews with directors, individual contributors, and managers, three employee and two external stakeholder focus groups comprised of community members. The focus groups were conducted with Black, White, and Latino employees using race-based caucusing. A total of 38 participants were interviewed.

Interviews (10)	Focus Groups (5)
Directors Managers Individual Contributors	Black White Latino External Community Stakeholders (2)

38 Total Participants
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Basic qualitative analysis

Thematic coding: 2 levels

N=15 (total number of units per qualitative analysis. Each interview and focus group equal one unit –regardless of the number of participants per focus group.)

Themes

The following themes were identified from focus groups and interviews. Percentages represent the number of times a theme was mentioned.

Leadership

Themes	Percentage	Insights
Understanding Racial Equity/Misalignment	100	Insufficient understanding of DEI. Defined business case for DEI linked to organizational strategy Leadership alignment and an understanding of DEI

Cultural Competence	100	Cultural competence requires self-awareness, awareness of others, knowledge of cultural identities (including workstyles), and application of skill to create meaningful behavior change; and engender trust.
Inclusive leadership	100	Some leaders are observed not behaving in alignment to a standard set of leadership expectations or style. Leaders are not demonstrating the behaviors they publicly promote. Some leaders' management practices do not foster an environment of empowerment or healthy opposition.
Trust/Distrust	100	Organizational trust is cultivated by well-designed processes, consistent and fair; personal trust is defined by the trust an employee has in their manager; and strategic trust is bestowed onto leaders and a confidence in their decision-making.
Incivility	100	Workplace incivility (i.e., harassment, and bullying) is reportedly experienced and observed particularly by leadership; and leaders are not held accountable for their behavior. A lack of trust and culture of fear has developed because of unchecked workplace incivility.
Lack of Accountability	100	Leaders are not observed as holding themselves accountable to workplace policies and initiatives outside of their respective job duties.

Culture

Themes	Percentage	Insights
Inclusion/Exclusion	100	<p>The organization is siloed vertically and interdepartmentally creating a culture of exclusion.</p> <p>There is an “us vs. them” mentality experienced by people of color who don’t fall in line with the <i>status quo</i> behind those in the Senior Leadership.</p> <p>An us-versus-them dynamic between departments creates a tense and un-unified workplace environment.</p> <p>An opportunity exists to develop formalized ways for groups to bridge with one another.</p> <p>Silos impact workplace culture and the ability to communicate effectively across departments.</p>
Culture of Fear	100	<p>Back-channel communication is a symptom of eroded trust, and possibly the outcome from the absence of psychological safety.</p>
Racial equity value proposition	100	<p>Employees understand racial equity and its value but need additional training and resources to implement it.</p>
Organizational cultures/microcultures	100	<p>Siloed teams and departments, run the risk of fostering differentiated value sets that dilute a unified, cohesive experience of inclusion.</p> <p>There are few opportunities for employees to connect beyond their immediate work or group; this keeps work overly transactional and impedes inclusion.</p>
Psychological safety	100	<p>Psychological safety is ensured when employees do not fear being punished or humiliated for moderate risk-taking, speaking up with questions, comments, or concerns; and do not fear making a mistake.</p> <p>Organizations with lesser psychological safety has higher degrees of us vs. them dynamics.</p>

Microaggressions	66	Microaggression, are subtle acts often hard to see and sometimes unconscious that are verbal and non-verbal; subtle messages such as gestures or tone of voice that cause individuals to be overlooked, and discounted.
Tokenism	73	The presence of minorities placed in a role of the lone authority of a minority representative group often leads to a misleading outward appearance of inclusive practices. Because of tokenism, employees may feel dehumanized, marginalized, stereotyped, and depersonalized feeling they need to work twice as hard to dispel stereotypes and assumptions leading to burnout.
Favoritism	73	Employees indicate there is favoritism in the city manager's office towards leaders that creates distrust and lack of psychological safety.

Talent

Themes	Percentage	Insights
Diverse representation	100	Employees report there is low level of dedication and accountability to employ people of color.
Recruiting	100	There needs to be a pipeline to recruit diverse candidates. As well as systems and processes that support communities of color in the hiring process.
Pay equity	73	There are inequities in pay with BIPOC employees. Create pay bands that are comparable to other municipalities to ensure equity in for underrepresented groups.
Performance management	100	Performance management is needed to retain employees' overtime. When employees have no idea of their goals or how to be promoted it contributes to low morale and attrition.
Learning and development	100	Employees report needing more learning and development opportunities to fully understand racial equity. Racial equity then needs to be embedded in current and new learning and opportunities.

Community

Themes	Percentage	Insights
Brand Community	100	Community members need to understand how the department is structured to ensure appropriate partnerships and responsible parties.
Diverse Representation	100	Community members believe better representation is needed in the department to serve the BIPOC community.