WSDOT

Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion Plan

This document was prepared in collaboration with the Washington State Office of Equity and Pro-Equity Anti-Racism efforts.

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OUR DEI PLAN

Our mission is to provide safe, reliable, and cost-effective transportation options to improve communities and economic vitality.

To achieve this, diversity, equity, and inclusion must be at the center of all aspects of our work. We have made great strides towards reaching this goal, including creating a more inclusive work culture, diversifying our spending, creating business and career opportunities for under-represented individuals and business owners, and enhancing community engagement.

We also acknowledge that we still have a lot of work ahead of us.

National protests in the wake of the murder of George Floyd in 2022 and other events provided a renewed awareness of the inequities experienced by Black Americans, Indigenous people, and people of color across our country. These longstanding inequities, coupled with the COVID-19 pandemic's disproportionate impact on these communities, created an awakening about the ongoing impacts of systemic racism.

At our agency, we are committed to actively combatting racism and strengthening our anti-racist, diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts to guarantee that our state's multimodal transportation system serves all Washingtonians.

In July 2021, I signed WSDOT Executive Order 1119.00, an Anti-Racism Policy and Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Planning document. As the steward of the statewide multimodal transportation system – and in alignment with Governor Inslee's commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion – this plan outlines some of the actions we will take as an agency to identify and dismantle discrimination and racism in our practices and policies.

As a result of the Executive Order, we formed an agency-wide workgroup made up of employee volunteers from all disciplines. Through their efforts as well as extensive collaboration with both internal and external key partners, we have focused our diversity, equity and inclusion planning efforts on the following areas:

- Internal Workforce
- Learn and Grow
- Diversity Advisory Groups
- Data Informed Decisions

- Community Engagement
- Healthy Environment for All Act
- External Workforce and Contracting

These seven focus areas are outlined in the DEI Plan, a living document that will evolve and be revised every biennium or more frequently if needed. We will also continue to work with the Office of Equity to ensure alignment with the state's Pro-Equity and Anti-Racism Plan, also known as the PEAR Plan.

The plan is designed to improve our decision-making practices, enhance access and create a culture of belonging for the community we serve and our employees. By working together, we can create a workplace that shows dignity, respect, and appreciation to everyone.

Thank you for championing this effort with me. Together we can make our agency truly reflect and respect the people we serve.

Roger Millar

INTERNAL WORKFORCE

Area Overview

Embed DEI throughout the employee experience to improve inclusion, growth, and trust. Support WSDOT managers and staff in cultivating diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging where all employees are treated with dignity and respect. This area will strengthen the agency's ability to recruit, hire, develop, promote, and retain WSDOT's talent and remove barriers to equal opportunity.

Overview of Strategies

Title	Description
Regional Hiring Goals and Annual Report Card	Capture and report on applicant demographics at each key stage of the recruitment process.
Mentor-mentee Program	Improve and augment mentor-mentee relationships and programs within WSDOT.
Reevaluate Hiring Practices	Reevaluate standard and/or commonly used hiring practices to ensure alignment with policy and increase DEI in the selection process.
Review Position Descriptions from an Equity Perspective	Establish an equity lens in the review of position descriptions and incorporate DEI competencies into position descriptions based on an employee's role in the agency.
Update Performance Appraisal Language for Inclusion Competency	Update WSDOT's performance appraisal language to better align with our efforts to be an anti-racist organization.
Annual Listening Sessions	Conduct internal listening sessions to obtain feedback from employees regarding DEI efforts.
Transgender Rights in the Workplace (e.g., Inclusive Bathrooms)	Position WSDOT to be proactive in supporting and providing an inclusive work environment for transgender and non-conforming gender (TGNC) employees.
Exit Interview for Internal Movement	Create and implement an exit interview for internal employees moving to another position within the agency.
Pay Equity and Alignment	Reevaluate commonly used salary placement practices and review existing staff salary placement to ensure alignment.
Establish a DEI Policy	All cabinet agencies need to create or update a DEI Policy for their organization in alignment with the PEAR plan.

REGIONAL HIRING GOALS AND ANNUAL REPORT CARD

Capture applicant demographics at each of the key stages of the recruitment process, from application submission to hire. Data will be provided annually to Executive Leadership for review and analysis of trends to identify successful actions and areas in need of improvement. Applicant and hiring demographic data are tracked and measured in multiple areas within HR.

In 2021, Recruitment produced its first annual "Recruitment Rollup," which included several recruitment-related measures such as *Time to Fill and Applicant Flow Demographics*, which measures the percentage of diversity at each pillar stage of the recruitment process (i.e., Application, Referral, Interview, and Selection). This strategy is intended to support the existing effort and provide for more streamlined access to recruitment and hiring data.

Outline of strategy and resources required for completion:

- Technology: Databases within HR information and applicant tracking systems, e.g., electronic Applicant Tracking System (NEOGOV) and HR Information System (HRMS)
- HR Data Team: Comprised of representation from Recruitment, Workforce Development, and HR Operations. Tasked to compile and deliver data in a manner that mitigates redundancy and provides for the most complete and accurate data available

MENTOR-MENTEE PROGRAM

Improve, promote, and augment mentor-mentee relationships and programs within WSDOT. The effort would require an assigned sprint team (a LEAN cross organizational team of individuals who work toward completing a project, in this case this effort) to work with various mentorship committees in the agency to identify opportunities for mentorship pairings between different regions, including Headquarters. The intent is to encourage wider exposure and opportunities to address aspects that may not be available in all areas of the state.

- Incorporate DEI learning moments within the current mentorship curriculum and identify measurable metrics to determine success
- Work with Regions that do not have a formal program to create mentor-mentee opportunities, with the goal of implementing a formal program

Outline of strategy and resources required for completion:

- Identify a sprint team comprised of representative(s) from the various mentorship committees across the state
- The sprint team will be responsible to:
  - Phase I - Partner with current mentorship programs to identify opportunities for cross-regional mentorship pairings and to identify efforts to incorporate DEI learning moments between mentor and protégé
  - Phase II – Advise on the successful implementation of efforts within the various programs and work to establish mentorship opportunities for areas/disciplines within the agency where a formal program does not currently exist

REEVALUATE HIRING PRACTICES

Reevaluate standard and/or commonly used hiring practices to ensure alignment with policy and increase DEI in the selection process. The agency's Recruitment Policy was completely revised and republished in December 2020. The policy was updated with the intent to increase the recruitment, selection, and promotion of diverse, qualified employees based on merit and identified competencies. While the recruitment process is largely governed by Washington Administrative Code, the practices used to navigate the process are not always aligned with the policy and best practices therein. This strategy endeavors to address this challenge.

Outline of strategy and resources required for completion:

- Identify and implement available trainings

- Review current hiring practices to ensure alignment with policy and best practices

- Possible establishment of a sprint team or Diversity Advisory Groups (DAG) to partner with the Recruitment Manager and assigned recruitment staff

- Establish training and additional guidance for employer-sponsored Visas and H1B candidates

- Develop prescribed DEI-related interview questions with assessment guidance

- Monitor participation in "Recruitment Training for Hiring Managers," which is currently provided once quarterly at a minimum

REVIEW POSITIONS DESCRIPTIONS FROM AN EQUITY PERSPECTIVE

Establish guidance for reviewing and evaluating position descriptions from an equity perspective. Identify a sprint team to create an equity tool to remove artificial barriers that exist within current position descriptions. This strategy also aims to incorporate DEI competencies into position descriptions based on an employee's role in the agency.

Outline of strategy and resources required for completion:

- Training on how to apply an equity lens and remove artificial barriers

- Create an equity tool (e.g., evaluation rubric, IT application, etc.) and relevant resources

- Replace WSDOT-specific language and jargon with more generic terms that are more widely understood by potential qualified external candidates

- Define DEI competencies and add to position descriptions based on the role in the agency

UPDATE PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL LANGUAGE FOR INCLUSION COMPETENCY

Update "Values Diversity" competency within employees' performance management plan to align with our efforts to be an anti-racist organization. Develop materials needed to help supervisors evaluate how staff will meet expectations for inclusion. These materials should provide examples of proactive goals staff can establish at the beginning of the annual review period. Hold appointing authorities, division directors, managers, and supervisors accountable for completing performance reviews and making this competency meaningful.

Outline of strategy and resources required for completion:

- Define different competencies based on the employee's role in WSDOT
- Engage with Office of Equity to comment on proposed language
- Update language in Performance Management Program (PMP) system for WSDOT staff based on literature review and stakeholder engagement
- Develop materials and training to aid supervisors and staff in setting expectations and evaluating performance for the inclusion competency
- Conduct focus groups with a sample of managers and supervisors to assess whether new approach is resulting in staff being more inclusive

ANNUAL LISTENING SESSIONS

Conduct annual listening sessions to provide WSDOT leadership and executives a way to directly hear from employees on how they feel about the level of inclusion and belonging within their work environment. This effort aims to create a platform and space where employees feel safe and comfortable in sharing their individual feelings about their experience working for WSDOT. These sessions will provide valuable feedback to help ensure WSDOT is impactful in setting and accomplishing goals in the realm of diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts.

Outline of strategy and resources required for completion:

- Identify executive leaders who will host the conversation
- Identify dates for multiple offerings to accommodate various schedules
- Identify the most effective venue(s)/platform(s) to host the event(s) (e.g., Microsoft Teams, In-person, etc.)
- Create a list of questions to guide the conversation between leadership and employees
- Create a survey to offer those who cannot attend the event or who feel more comfortable responding to the questions in a survey format
- Following the event, coordinating teams will report on the outcomes of the Listening Sessions and offer recommendations to the DEI Workplan Core Team and Strategy Leads. The DEI Work Plan and other efforts and materials will be updated accordingly

TRANSGENDER RIGHTS IN THE WORKPLACE

This effort will assist WSDOT to be proactive in supporting transgender and gender non-conforming (TGNC) employees to feel comfortable, welcome, and accepted at work. This effort will provide awareness about TGNC rights and how to lay the foundation for a safe and inclusive work environment.

Outline of strategy and resources required for completion:

- Sprint team(s) will partner with Human Resources and enterprise business resource groups, such as the Rainbow Alliance and Inclusion Network (RAIN) to explore and make recommendations in the following areas:
    - Current policies and practices to support TGNC employees, including that related to gender affirming care
    - Expansion of current Discrimination Policy
    - Enhanced protection from discrimination
- Develop a toolkit covering topics such as leave benefits, restroom use, communications with supervisors and co-workers, and the transitioning employee's pronouns and names
- Identify a sprint team that can partner with Facilities to assess the access to inclusive, gender-neutral bathrooms

EXIT INTERVIEW FOR INTERNAL PROMOTIONS, DEMOTIONS & TRANSFERS[1]

Create and implement an exit interview process for internal employees moving to another position within the agency for a promotional opportunity, voluntary demotion, or lateral transfer. This will be an opportunity for employees to provide feedback and offer suggestions to help WSDOT identify improvements that can be made within specific areas of the agency and reduce future turnover.

Outline of strategy and resources required for completion:

- Create a team to partner with HR staff to develop survey questions and an internal process to be implemented statewide
- Develop a communication plan to explain the importance of this data collection and training on how to properly use this tool
- Develop an effective method to share survey information with leaders in an effort to identify areas for improvement within the agency

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[1]   This effort will not compete with the Statewide Exit Interview survey that is currently offered only to employees who are leaving the agency and is the main data collection method for over 100 state agencies, boards, commissions, and some higher education institutions, administered by the Office of Financial Management, State Human Resources.

PAY EQUITY AND ALIGNMENT

Reevaluate commonly used salary placement practices and review existing staff salary placement to ensure alignment with Equal Pay and Opportunities Act (EPOA) and ensure equity amongst existing staff. The EPOA took effect on June 28, 2019, and the agency's Recruitment Policy was completely revised and republished in December 2020. The goal of these updates is to ensure historically inequitable salary setting practices do not continue. While this information is included in hiring manager training, long engrained processes behind salary setting are difficult to transform. Additionally, no agency-wide review of existing salary equity has been completed to ensure equity and alignment for existing employees. The intent is to ensure our staff is confirmedly paid equitably and to ensure the retention of diverse, qualified employees.

Outline of strategy and resources required for completion:

- Review existing employees' current salary placement to ensure alignment – possible establishment of a sprint team to partner with the Classification & Compensation team and assigned HR staff to determine gaps in salary placement of existing employees by job classification and group for further review by executives and appointing authorities

- Develop criteria to conduct the review

- Develop prescribed equity and alignment best practices for consideration of salary setting to ensure equity continues after review and assessment

- Develop a communication plan

- Incorporate and monitor participation in "Recruitment Training for Hiring Managers," which is currently provided once quarterly at a minimum

ESTABLISH A DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION POLICY

The Governor's Executive Order 22-02, requires all cabinet agencies to create or update DEI Policy for their workforce. Policies should meet the guidance in the State HR Directive 20-03. The policy should also include any expectations we will have for our workforce to support the Agency's Executive Order 1119.00.

Outline of strategy and resources required for completion:

- Create a diverse team or committee to draft the policy

- Committee will review associated executive orders and directives to ensure its draft policy aligns with the guidance and direction of the agency

- The draft should be shared with requested feedback to HR & Safety, Diversity Advisory Groups, and Executive Leadership

- Create a communication plan to share the policy with agency workforce

- Work with agency PEAR team(s) to incorporate or update the DEI Policy given PEAR team guidance

LEARN AND GROW

Area Overview

Develop, promote, and implement guidelines and benchmarks for educational materials, trainings, and events to inform, educate, and shift the agency's culture to inclusive and equitable organization. This team will support and educate the DEI Plan core team as well as WSDOT staff.

Overview of Strategies

Title	Description
Culture of Belonging	A voluntary training program for any interested WSDOT staff to be trained in creating a welcoming and inclusive culture.
Train the Trainer for Creating Internal DEI Workshops and Training	Six-month course on how to design and facilitate DEI workshops and training programs.
DEI Staff Meeting Resources	List of resources and activities for use in staff meetings to increase DEI awareness.
DEI Moments "DEI Take 2"	DEI Moments for Meetings (like a DEI "Take 2").
Developing DEI Best Practices	Best practices that can be accessed by all employees to develop and strengthen their inclusion and equity lens.
Enterprise Mandatory DEI Training	Mandatory training per Executive Order.
DEI Communication Plan	A comprehensive strategy for communicating DEI strategies to the agency workforce.

CULTURE OF BELONGING

Culture of Belonging is an organic initiative developed in Olympic Region to ensure that its workplace was welcoming and inclusive to all identities. A small team of three with support from the Region Leadership Team developed a program format based on a "road trip", with multiple stops, roadside attractions, and facilitation resources.

Outline of strategy and resources required for completion:

- COB is based on the premise that transformation of the culture of the agency is only possible when employees are engaged. COB utilizes a train the trainer method of delivery. A team develops content which is reviewed and approved by the leadership team; content is delivered to organization managers (with script and notes for facilitation), followed by delivery to their respective employees. Each stop utilizes the following formula:

  1. Ground rules for engagement/expectations (Rules of the road)

  2. Introduction to the why/what is in it for me

  3. How content relates to previous content (stops)

  4. Information sharing/content delivery with opportunities for discussion

  5. Activity to allow the content to become personalized for each employee

  6. Summary and prompt for the next stop

- Roles

  ○ Working group: Designated leader to coordinate content, meetings and communications for each stop, content creators and editors. Diversity Advisory Group members may be utilized but a path must be cleared for their participation by their supervisors. May develop complementary and optional agency wide events for employees who wish to dive deeper into topics.

  ○ Agency leadership: Provides support to working group, setup expectations, clears obstacles, approves content before delivery.

  ○ Facilitators: Organization managers and designees (supervisors, lead techs, etc.). The stops were best delivered in small groups with multiple facilitators. Approximately a 10:1 ratio ensures that all employees are engaged and participating. Facilitators participate in a feedback session to discuss the highs and lows of delivery at the end of each delivery period.

- Agency Delivery

  ○ Content has been created and is available, however, there is a need for review and adjust the developed content to reflect that this is an agency initiative and to align with enterprise DEI standards. Recommend consultation with Office of Equity, Business Resource Group, and Diversity Advisory Groups before implementing agency wide.

  ○ Development of an onboarding plan so that new employees have an opportunity to participate in the workshops.

  ○ Designated facilitator training to include advanced facilitation skills and advanced training in DEI concepts.

  ○ SharePoint resources and migration to main intranet.

  ○ Communication plan.

- Description of Culture of Belonging "Stops":
  - ° The order of the stops on the road trip are strategic.
  - ° Stops one through four: Interpersonal Skills.
    - – Stop One: Curiosity and growth mindset
    - – Stop Two: Empathy and perspective
    - – Stop Three: Active listening
    - – Stop Four: Having difficult conversations
  - ° Stops five through seven: Self-Awareness
    - – Stop Five: Individual values exploration
    - – Stop Six: Identity exploration
    - – Stop Seven: Clean your lens
    - – Stop Eight TBD: Inclusion;
    - – Stop Nine TBD: Diversity; and
    - – Stop Ten TBD: Equity.

TRAIN THE TRAINER FOR CREATING INTERNAL DEI WORKSHOPS AND TRAINING

Create an opportunity for DEI leaders, change agents, organization leaders, and HR professionals to participate in a course on how to design and facilitate DEI workshops and training programs. The goal of this strategy is to create more subject matter experts in the agency that can create and facilitate DEI training.

Outline of strategy and resources required for completion:

- Target Audience: Current trainers and facilitators; DAG members; HR Professionals; Organizational Leaders and Change Agents; and anyone wanting to develop the capacity to design and facilitate powerful DEI workshops

- Develop evaluation methods and tools to measure and demonstrate the impact of the strategy

DEI STAFF MEETING RESOURCES

Create and maintain a list of resources such as videos, activities, and topics to use as conversation starters in meetings related to diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Outline of strategy and resources required for completion:

- Provide a list of free resources managers should include in their staff meeting agendas. The videos and activities should be between 5 to 10 minutes to easily include them in regularly scheduled meetings.

- A working group will need to be established to create, market, and maintain these resources. If an FTE is identified for Learn & Grow strategies, this could be combined with their position.

DEI MOMENTS "DEI TAKE 2"

Develop DEI Moments for Meetings (similar to safety "Take 2"). Leaders will take a few minutes in staff meetings to review a learning moment. Starting a meeting with a DEI Moment is a simple but effective way to create a structured space for safe conversations about diversity, equity, and inclusion. This is an expansion on the "Equity 5" in the Northwest region, which is a monthly publication to introduce a DEI topic and provide ideas on how to dig in further. It encourages staff to take 5 minutes to consider how the monthly topic applies to a person and translate the idea or concept into real-life application.

Outline of strategy and resources required for completion:

- Develop a toolkit of sample ideas with a template to use that would be provided to help meeting organizers facilitate the DEI moment

- Promote the idea and identify early adopters to begin using materials, including existing DAG members, HR professionals, organizational leaders, and other interested parties

DEVELOPING DEI BEST PRACTICES

Develop DEI best practices to be used as guidelines within the agency. These documents will be shared with WSDOT staff and updated on a regular basis.

Outline of strategy and resources required for completion:

- Determine the baseline of work that has already been completed

- Obtain approval from the OEO Director of documented best practices

- Develop DEI best practices that cross relate to business practices (e.g., hiring, vendor/contract hiring, promotional opportunities, communications, etc.)

Identify existing processes and/or best practices that require modification to incorporate newly developed practices (training materials, documentation, reference materials, meetings, training sessions)

Examples of DEI best practices:

- Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Best Practices

- Measure and Analyze Current Efforts

- Attract and Recruit Diverse Talent

- Eliminate Bias During Interviews and Hiring

- Facilitate Inclusive Onboarding

- Lean on Learning and Development

- Use DEI to Boost Retention

- Make Offboarding Count

- Use Analytics to Measure Efforts

ENTERPRISE MANDATORY DEI TRAINING

A Culture of Engagement: Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in the Workplace Series is Washington state's foundational learning experience for growing the workforce's diversity, equity, and inclusion competence. The Department of Enterprise Services' DEI training team has developed, tested, and revised the curriculum since its inception.

This training series focuses on the emerging level of the state's DEI competencies. When employees complete the series, they will build their knowledge, skills, and awareness for a more diverse, equitable, and respectful workplace. Five modules and twenty hours of instructor-led delivery are expected.

As of July 2022, these courses remain under development, with additional pilots being delivered. As soon as these training are finalized, WSDOT will collaborate with partner agencies to deploy this training program.

Several pre-requisite eLearning courses are in development. The series is still being finalized. As revisions are completed, DES will run additional pilots through Spring 2022 in preparation for a robust launch.

Outline of strategy and resources required for completion:

- Finalization of course through DES

- Determination of schedule (course offerings) and timeframe to complete

- Determination of employee availability to complete training (i.e., staffing coverage for vessels while crews complete training)

DEI COMMUNICATION PLAN

The DEI Communication Plan is a comprehensive strategy for communicating about DEI efforts to the agency workforce. The goal of the communication plan is to make DEI a fundamental agency and employee cornerstone that positively impacts and benefits every individual and every aspect of WSDOT.

Outline of strategy and resources required for completion:

- Components of the plan include:
  - Create timely, relevant, and meaningful messages regarding the agency's DEI efforts
  - A variety of strategies to effectively reach employees
- Related components:
  - Create a DEI communication guide for all employees, including accessibility guidelines (updated regularly), an inclusive language guide, speaking point, as well as tracking and highlighting messaging on a shared calendar
  - Existing communication strategies to incorporate
    - DAG Monthly Observances
    - Equity5
    - Recognition/certification upon completion of required courses and training

DIVERSITY ADVISORY GROUPS

Area Overview

Diversity Advisory Groups (DAG) serve as advisory bodies to employees in supporting diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts throughout the agency. They promote and sustain a working environment at WSDOT that values diversity, equity, and inclusion by integrating the principles of respect and inclusion throughout the agency. DAGs are crucial to leading and supporting the focus, development, and continuous progress towards diversity throughout the agency.

Below is an outline of how enhancing DAGs will assist in the agency's diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives. Many strategies may overlap with each other.

Overview of Strategies

Title	Description
Establish Consistent DAG Roles and Structure	Formally define the role of DAGs and define consistent processes.
Training for DAG Members	DAG members are given more training opportunities and become Certified Diversity Professionals to ensure their capacity and efficacy in creating and facilitating brave spaces for our workforce.
Identify Committed Funding for DAGs each Fiscal Year	Create sustainable funding for DAGs to ensure the quality and quantity of educational materials, programming, events, etc..
Communications of DAG Information and Marketing	A comprehensive strategy for communicating DEI strategies to the agency workforce so communications are easily accessible, transparent, and consistent.
Increase Interest and Participation in DAG Membership	Maintain strong and active DAGs across the agency to increase effectiveness.
Add DAG Duties in Classified Position Descriptions	Include DAG duties in position descriptions to recognize the efforts and time associated with the performance of DAG activities.
Establish DAGs as an Entity to Align with Other Professional Groups	The diversity of our workforce can enrich our community and the work we do together. Creating a robust DAG that collaborates with local professional groups that align with the DAG's (and DAG members') core values will ensure a high level of work output.
DAG Introduction to New Employees	Introduce DEI efforts and opportunities within the agency within the first month of a new employee's hire date.

ESTABLISH CONSISTENT DAG ROLES AND STRUCTURE

One of the primary challenges facing DAGs is the lack of formally defined roles. Typically, the tasks assigned to DAGs are vague, and up until recently, regional DAGs have had to define their own roles in their respective regions. The agency needs to clearly define the role of the DAGs and where and how that role fits into the existing and future DEI landscape at WSDOT. It is also important to define consistent processes for the DAGs, including but not limited to recruiting members, budget and funding requests, communications review processes, and activities.

Outline of strategy and resources required for completion:

- Engage OEO, HR, executive management, and DAG members to understand:
  - The initial intent of the DAGs at their inception
  - The roles DAGs fill now
  - The DEI gaps that can be filled by DAGs
  - Areas outside of the DAG responsibilities
- Identify and develop standard, yet flexible, guidelines for critical DAG processes including but not limited to reviews of written communications and policies, member recruitment, and chair appointment
- Establish clear, tangible, and specific goals for DAGs, but also allowing autonomy
- Determine how those goals will be translated into roles with specific parameters
- Establish communication between DAGs, particularly regarding ongoing efforts and opportunities for collaboration

TRAINING FOR DAG MEMBERS

The DAGs serve as an advisory body to regional and executive leadership to support the strategic DEI efforts throughout WSDOT. They also play a key role in promoting culture change in the agency's commitment to be an anti-racist organization. With this responsibility, it is imperative to equip our DAGs with the training to support this work.

Outline of strategy and resources required for completion:

- Review current training available from the Department of Enterprise and Business Resource Groups
- Review WSDOT Learn – DEI Training available
- Determine whether there are other training opportunities specific to certain divisions or regions that can be expanded to DAG members
  - To include training in bias, ableism, and intersectionality
  - Committed funding for Enterprise Annual DEI Summit for all DAG members
  - See strategy DAG Funding
- Identify and provide Certified Diversity Professional Training and training on facilitating DEI conversations
- See Learn and Grow Train the Trainer strategy

IDENTIFY COMMITTED FUNDING FOR DAGs EACH FISCAL YEAR

A large barrier to executing DEI events and initiatives is the lack of funding committed to DAGs. Although DAGs have been able to successfully develop in-house educational materials and programs, the lack of dedicated funding remains a barrier to robust and timely program development and delivery. The DAGs are not allocated a dedicated budget but are tasked with creating, promoting, and incentivizing participation in events and resources for employees. Designating funding sources with a clearly defined request or use process will reduce the labor and time in completing their work and enhance their ability to provide more quality services in a timely manner.

In addition, DAG participation is volunteer based. Often, DAG members do not have any DEI-related duties outlined in their classified position descriptions, which restricts the time that members are able to allocate to DAG efforts. Similarly, there are positions within WSDOT without which don't have a funding source to charge this type of work to, who are left ineligible for DAG participation. The creation of a charge code with clear conditions of use may help alleviate this issue.

Outline of strategy and resources required for completion:

- Explore the feasibility of funding structures – like any robust organization within WSDOT, different sources of funding with different avenues for use are necessary. Consider evaluating the following:
  - Discretionary fund for each DAG
  - Dedicated funding for high-cost requests, following appropriate procedures
  - DAG Member training fund
- Evaluate the feasibility of charge codes for certain employees
- See Add DAG Duties in Classified Position Description strategy
- Funding source and administration: explore where funding will be housed by use-case: state level, regional level, etc.
- Establish rules around DAG spending, aside from what is outlined in the ethics training

COMMUNICATION OF DAG INFORMATION AND MARKETING

The DAGs have made efforts to deliver consistent messages around the state by creating flyers, articles, shared email content, and MS Teams' backgrounds to celebrate monthly observances. However, improved internal communication and marketing are key to enhancing staff engagement in DEI topics, especially in our hybrid workforce. Therefore, it is important to share information that is easily accessible and timely.

Outline of strategy and resources required for completion:

- Develop consistent communication for use by the DAGs, Communications, and HR
- Assess opportunities to leverage current resources and evaluate barriers to access:
  - Work with the Web Team regarding how DAG information is shared on InsideDOT
  - Identify other spaces where information and updates to staff can be given about DAG and DEI work
  - Make diversity articles more easily accessible from WSDOT webpages
- Evaluate DAGs' capacity to continue to support communications efforts, develop publication and web content, and support accordingly
- Identify employee engagement incentives for DAG publications

INCREASE INTEREST AND PARTICIPATION IN DAG MEMBERSHIP

To ensure that employees are interested and engaged in increasing individual and organizational DEI awareness, knowledge, and growth, it is necessary to strategically promote the DAGs across the agency.

Outline of strategy and resources required for completion:

- Evaluate how the DAGs are currently promoted and identify areas for improvement
- Reach out to current DAG representatives to determine how many participants there are in each DAG in each regional group to establish a baseline
- Develop methods to ensure active outreach to all demographics and job classes within our workforce
- Identify and involve sponsors in promoting and recruiting to increase the level of interest and volunteers as well as involvement in activities performed by DAG
- Identify desired skillsets and a variety of voices and perspectives
- Communicate and highlight meaningful activities for DAG members
- Target involvement from under-represented organizational units (e.g., maintenance, ferries, and shop personnel)

ADD DAG DUTIES IN POSITION DESCRIPTIONS

Create a standardized approach for including DAG duties in position descriptions to recognize the efforts and time associated with the performance of DAG activities. This includes evaluating the feasibility, appropriate extent, and sustainability of this measure. This also includes evaluating the feasibility of adding DAG duties within position descriptions as this item which may complicate supervision, service, and business delivery.

Outline of strategy and resources required for completion:

- Determine if and how this is currently being done
- Evaluate, at minimum the following two approaches:
  - Position descriptions are updated for employees when they become DAG members to formalize the commitment and time for DAG duties and ensure supervisor and organization manager buy-in
  - The option for DAG participation is added to all WSDOT CPDs through standardized language that does not need to be updated (e.g., definition of other duties as assigned).
- For either option, pursue the following:
  - Create standardized language for managers and/or supervisors to use for position descriptions of DAG members
  - Identify where language should be captured in the position description. This may need to be increased if someone is required to charge all time to project funding (or create a charge code for performance of DAG duties, see strategy DAG Funding).
  - Connect with HQ Classification and Compensation for the review of language and additional insight

ESTABLISH DAGs AS AN ENTITY TO ALIGN WITH OTHER PROFESSIONAL GROUPS

WSDOT's workforce is multifaceted and diverse, with individuals who bring unique knowledge and perspectives that makes them assets. Many WSDOT DAG members participate in other organizations such as Business Resource Groups (BRGs), professional organizations, and trade organizations. DAGs should collaborate and work with these organizations to ensure that the highest level of research, inclusion, and creativity can be committed to executing events and resources. Formalized processes for collaboration should be clear and mutually beneficial.

Outline of strategy and resources required for completion:

- Create lines of communication with BRGs, local community groups, professional development organizations, state commissions, and partner agencies
- Investigate and create partnerships with preferred community groups in each region based on demographic information
- Foster an environment of belonging for DAG members looking to be more involved in their local community
- Continue to promote BRG events through email, InsideDOT, etc.
- Update BRG information regularly at DAG meetings
- Encourage and enhance partnerships with other BRGs, other agencies, and local community groups
- Establish relationships with other offices (e.g., OEO, OFM, etc.)
- Ensure WSDOT has the most up-to-date resources and communications available
- Collaborate or promote community programs and groups (e.g., event collaboration for Pride, Juneteenth, etc.)

DAG INTRODUCTION TO NEW EMPLOYEES

Ensure new employees are introduced to DEI efforts and opportunities within the agency within the first month of hire. Since new employees are presented with a large amount of information during their first day of HR New Employee Orientation, adding this information during that time may be of little value. Instead, conducting a once-a-month DEI session for new employees agency-wide is recommended. This DEI presentation should include DAG, DEI, and BRG opportunities.

Outline of strategy and resources required for completion:

- One to two hours a month of DAG members' time to present at DAG/DEI orientation
- Create a working group to review and update orientation as needed
- Create a video or flyer to introduce employees to DEI efforts and region DAGs

DATA INFORMED DECISIONS

Area Overview

Develop, lead, and implement guidelines and benchmarks for collecting, analyzing, and reporting on comprehensive demographic data. This will ensure our decisions, policies, processes, and procedures are informed by data and centered on our values. These strategies are aimed at evaluating the benefits and limitations of data, as well as our relationship to data that may not be available.

Overview of Strategies

Title	Description
Develop Data Collection and Analysis Best Practices	A guide of best practices to ensure data integrity, including methods to understand data bias, reliable methods to reduce data bias, etc.
Diversity Dashboard	Create and maintain a virtual dashboard on WSDOT's website to visualize our DEI progress supported by demographic data.
Community Impact Analysis Report	Develop a report that will track, evaluate, and report out, using easy-to-understand visual representations, the economic and equity-related impacts of a specific project or program. To gain public trust, this report must be designed to represent both positive outcomes and negative outcomes.
Equity Information Warehouse	A central location where equity-related qualitative and quantitative studies, including DOH and OFM and collections, are located.
Training: Designing Equitable Survey Tools	Create training on various collection tools, limitations, the importance of disaggregating geographic and populations data, how to best avoid data gaps, and how to discern if there is bias in your data. This training will also include using an equity lens to evaluate and understand data-based studies. It should also address differences between qualitative and quantitative data.
Equity Awareness in Data Visualization	Create and initiate design standards with an equity lens in colors, graphics, mediums, and accessibility to represent and share information or data.

DEVELOP DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS OF BEST PRACTICES

Historically, bias in data collection and analysis has led to inequitable decisions. At best, this can be attributed to a lack of skill, and at worst, data can be intentionally manipulated to justify inequitable decisions. The methods used to collect data, or the processes used to determine the validity of data can introduce unwanted bias. For example, reporting bias takes place when an unfounded selection of results is presented from a data set, like when vehicle counts are extrapolated to reflect all commuters. Data bias can also come in the form of poor collection methods, like surveying in only English, thus discounting data from non-English speakers.

As an organization that strives to make data-informed decisions at all levels, it is imperative that WSDOT does not ignore these risks. Bias and discrimination resulting from poor data etiquette are perhaps one of the most insidious threats to equity because it often goes unnoticed and unchallenged. Data users at WSDOT need to be able to effectively evaluate data quality and accordingly caveat its use with context.

These best practices will primarily focus on utilizing data, with special attention to that which is provided by external entities. By creating and distributing a best practice guide or reference, we can better ensure data integrity, educate staff on methods to identify and reduce data bias, reduce survey bias, and develop practices to optimize collection methods.

This list will be developed with industry experts and academic research and applied to both qualitative and quantitative data. This document should be useful for data specialists and WSDOT employees in general.

Outline of strategy and resources required for completion:

- Inventory existing departmental guidance from WSDOT, Federal Highway Administration, Federal Transit Administration, as not to duplicate efforts.

- Evaluate guidance for contradictory information and evaluate relevancy

- Identify areas of greatest need and specify areas of highest impact and/or value

- Develop expertise to research academic and industry practices

- Define key metrics of success and the datatypes that can measure progress

- Establish a workgroup to ensure agency-wide input is considered and senior and executive leadership input is incorporated

DIVERSITY DASHBOARD

The creation of a diversity dashboard would allow DEI practitioners, both internal and external, to track progress made toward increasing the diversity of WSDOT's workforce. This tool would draw on data reflected in the OFM Workforce Diversity Dashboard and the Washington Workforce Metrics Dashboard and integrate data from Human Resources Recruitment Round-up (see: Internal Workforce).

WSDOT can provide visual representation regarding the demographic make-up of agency employees while cross-referencing regional and division demographic data. Ideally, we would model our dashboard after the Washington State Department of Health's County Demographic Dashboard.

By pairing agency external workforce data with OFM's regional demographic data, we will see how each region is doing at employing the community they serve.

Outline of strategy and resources required for completion:

- Access OFM demographic data from current DOH and OFM datasets
- Access State HR employment data
- Create visual representations similar to OFM Workforce Diversity Dashboard and the Washington Workforce Metrics Dashboard, and the County Demographic Dashboard of the Washington State Department of Health
- Link demographic data to an interactive dashboard in an easy to use and understand manner
- Use diverse sources of data (e.g., employee engagement survey data, turnover rates, exit survey data, and employee demographic data) to ensure all issues are evaluated on a multi-dimensional basis
- Continue to track and update data on a regular basis to discover possible trends

COMMUNITY IMPACT ANALYSIS REPORT

The Washington Legislature recently passed the Healthy Environment for All (HEAL) Act to ensure improved outcomes for overburdened communities and vulnerable populations. The Community Impact Analysis Report will be a data backed analysis and report showing the impact of individual agency projects on affected communities with special interest in the impact on vulnerable populations.

WSDOT will develop a public-facing report that will track, evaluate, and report out, using easy-to-understand visual representations, the race, mobility, and economic and equity-related impacts of a specific project or program. A major goal of this effort is to improve public trust, so that project evaluations will be balanced and impartial, accessible, and transparent. Do-nothing scenarios should be included in establishing benchmarks. If deemed necessary, this effort may also include the development of an equity evaluation tool or process to inform reporting and enhance project evaluation.

Outline of strategy and resources required for completion:

- Work with appropriate internal and external stakeholders to establish relevant reporting criteria, and develop templates accordingly

- Inventory and assess available data, and identify needs

- Establish a process or tool that will help those producing these reports track, evaluate, and report the overall racial/mobility/economic and equity-related impacts of specific projects or programs

- Review existing mandated equity processes and standards, including HEAL, National Environmental Policy Act, State Environmental Policy Act, Complete Streets, etc. to identify gaps in evaluation and as not to duplicate efforts

EQUITY INFORMATION WAREHOUSE

Because many different parties – public or otherwise – publish data and research other information related to DEI, WSDOT employees often need to access multiple, decentralized sources when pursuing coherent and relevant DEI resources. This process is often laborious, not due to scarcity of resources but rather the difficulty in locating and accessing them. The creation of an Equity Warehouse will help mitigate the time spent locating, vetting, and accessing this information. Relevant topics may include but are not limited to equity in policy, design, development, outreach, legislation, and rulemaking.

Improved access to current DEI-related content would benefit employees in all disciplines but would be of particular benefit to those with less experience in DEI-related work or with less familiarity with existing resources. In addition, once established, the warehouse can act as an ongoing repository for future DEI work produced by the state. This online Equity Warehouse may include integrations with the WSDOT and State Library services, existing databases like Google Scholar, ITE, ASCE, and various other state, federal, academic, and industrial sources. The Warehouse should include not only internally produced reports and information, but also peer-reviewed academic research and well-vetted content produced by private industry. It may also help to streamline and maximize the utilization of information that currently exists behind paywalls. A successful warehouse will:

- Receive support from IT, Human Resources, and Library Staff

- Receive regular monitoring to ensure to content is kept up to date (Models for this include the current Plan and Document Archive and Enterprise Content Management Portal)

- Receive contribution and advisement from department decision-makers

Outline of strategy and resources required for completion:

- Develop a workgroup to determine appropriate data, updates, server location, and programming needs

- Inventory existing internal and external resources and determine the framework for vetting

- Involve Library Services, Human Resources, and IT in these discussions

- Determine where this would be hosted and who would be involved in maintaining up-to-date data

- Designate a curator of data, research and other related resources

TRAINING: DESIGNING EQUITABLE SURVEY TOOLS

Currently, the agency has minimal internal standards regarding the design of surveys or data collection tools. As mentioned in thethe Data Collection and Analysis Best Practices section, data bias is often at the source of inequitable decision-making, and bias in data analysis begins with bias in data collection. Poorly designed surveys can easily miss relevant cultural, economic, or mobility-related nuances, leading to inaccurate and inequitable conclusions. In some cases, surveys have been intentionally designed to elicit certain results.

To mitigate this risk, it is important that decisions on *how* surveys are conducted are informed by *who* is being surveyed; decisions on how to survey are as important as choosing who and where to survey. While we may not always be starting from scratch with new surveys, when we do have the opportunity to collect our own data, it is critical to identify and pursue the most equitable and inclusive methods, particularly if the survey results have an immediate bearing on decision-making.

This training will examine various data collection tools and discusses their limitations. There is ample research in the field of survey design, and this training will explore topics such as question order, quantitative versus qualitative surveying, online formats, and multiple-choice in comparison to open-ended responses. When paired with the measures detailed in the Community Engagement area and the Data Collection and Analysis Best Practices strategy, this training can help employees to design more equitable surveys and more effectively utilize their results.

The theme of the training is equity and inclusion: how to use an equity lens to design and evaluate studies. It will emphasize how a poorly designed survey or data collection tool can lead to conclusions that produce inequitable outcomes.

Outline of strategy and resources required for completion:

- ° Locate resources to develop the curriculum, identify the time needed to create the training, and identify staff to implement the training
- ° Identify possible external vendors to conduct the training in case internal resources are not sufficient
- The training could be for outward-facing departments who design surveys (Design, Environmental, Communications, or any other construction-based projects) or provided agency-wide (potentially through LMS)
- This training should be required for all executives, managers, and decision-makers

EQUITY AWARENESS IN DATA VISUALIZATION

Data representation can have an unintended bias in their visualizations. Often this is subtle, such as when vulnerable populations in a graphic is represented by an aesthetically unappealing color. These representations need to incorporate equitable awareness into the data they use and the products they create. Data practitioners need to be aware of how systematic discrimination can be perpetuated by presenting, representing, or misrepresenting our data.

Development and incorporation of Accessible Data Visualization standards into all designs will increase awareness of how design can add to systemic discrimination and benefit users with visual impairments.

The development of these best practices will include a review of existing standards, seeking the most equitable outcome (going above and beyond minimum standards), and adding accessibility and equity awareness lenses to colors, graphics, mediums, and accessibility to represent and share information or data.

Outline of strategy and resources required for completion:

- Research and identify best practices regarding equitable representation – internal resources include Business Resource Groups and the Office of Equity.
   - Identify possible external vendors who can provide expertise regarding best practices
- Research and identify best practices to improve accessibility in all communications
   - Identify possible external vendors who can provide expertise regarding best practices
- Establish new standards and apply them to all WSDOT communications

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Area Overview

Create and proactively pursue strategies to improve outreach and engagement with under-represented or under-served groups. These strategies will encourage better stakeholder engagement practices and incorporate diversity, equity, and inclusion practices into discussions between project teams, community members, and other stakeholders.

WSDOT aims to move communications and community engagement from a project-oriented approach, in which communities are contacted only when a study or project is underway, to a community-based approach, where regular communication contributes to better-informed projects and increased community trust.

Overview of Strategies

Title	Description
Coordinate and Communicate New Community Engagement Practices	WSDOT will need to examine its current business practices related to community engagement across regions, teams, and disciplines as both standalone concepts and as a part of a more coordinated community engagement framework. Following robust evaluation, implement changes to outreach and engagement policies and practices.
Continuous Improvement of Outreach Engagement Activities	It is necessary to evaluate how stakeholders perceive community outreach, engagement, and opportunities to provide input into the project development process. WSDOT will regularly survey community members to determine how successful they believe community engagement is.
Strengthening Partnership & Coordination Efforts	WSDOT will explore and identify new partnership opportunities with a focus on the under-represented groups to help ensure all voices are heard. Partnership with traditionally underserved groups will ensure that all affected individuals have opportunities to participate in community engagement processes.
Integrate Community Feedback with Product and Service Delivery	Getting community feedback is only one piece of the process. WSDOT will examine and improve upon the processes related to integrating community feedback with its services and projects to ensure that community feedback influences agency decisions.
Develop Outreach and Engagement Methods to Improve Access and Address Community Need	A successful community outreach plan shall contain multiple ways to contact the community. Outreach efforts should focus on the local community needs to help achieve full and fair participation by the affected communities. Adjusting outreach methods to a local community's needs will help ensure meaningful participation and build trust in the process.
Increase Accessibility and Disability Inclusion	WSDOT will work to make agency tools, programs, and services more accessible to individuals with disabilities.
Community Engagement Training	Implementation of WSDOT's Community Engagement Plan can best be completed by reinvigorating WSDOT's Community Engagement Training Program and E-Learning Courses.

COORDINATE AND COMMUNICATE NEW COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PRACTICES

At WSDOT, community engagement occurs at various phases of transportation disciplines: planning, design, permitting, environmental mitigation, operations, etc. Similarly, engagement is often organized across geographic areas of varying granularity (region, county, city, community).

While partitioning outreach and engagement based on phase and location may lead to better tailored engagement efforts, it can also lead to siloed engagement schedules, methods, and standards across teams, projects, and communities. Currently there are no community engagement leads or managers to help coordinate these efforts.

WSDOT will need to examine its current business practices related to community engagement across regions, teams, and disciplines as both standalone concepts and as part of a more coordinated community engagement framework. Methods of integrating said intra-agency communication and mechanisms will also need to be evaluated.

From this survey and evaluation, WSDOT will identify structures and practices that work well, areas in need of new or improved practices, and the staffing needs associated with implementing the practices deemed necessary, both in the immediate and long term, with the end goal of establishing consistent and equitable engagement throughout the state. Successes should be measured with a demographically informed lens.

Outline of strategy and resources required for completion:

- Internal Review: work with internal divisions, region staff, and internal SMEs to identify and evaluate existing practices and policies, and identify areas for improvement

- External Review: work with and/or research other agencies' community engagement policies and practices. Conduct policy and literature reviews to supplement discussions.

- Community Review: work with established community organizations and utilize public-facing surveys to identify impediments to robust engagement

- Employ a diversity of outreach tactics so as not to further exclude under-represented communities. Perform a Strength, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) evaluation of community engagement policies, trainings, and resources

- Produce a summary report and develop an action plan to address the outcomes of SWOT analysis, survey, workshop(s), such that all staff are equipped to employ contextually appropriate and consistent engagement practices

- Provide training to staff and resources to identify and understand the new practices and when and how to implement them

- Collaborate with efforts in the Data Informed Decisions area to ensure new and existing outreach is informed by best practices for surveying and data collection

CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT OF OUTREACH ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

While the previous section proposes an intensive re-evaluation of the state's community engagement practices, it is limited to a single period of revision. As the demographic, socioeconomic, and infrastructural landscape of our communities continually changes (as do our resources), WSDOT will need to continue to re-evaluate and improve upon its engagement practices based on community, partner, and internal feedback.

Outline of strategy and resources required for completion:

- Develop an evaluation plan which outlines timeframe and method with which to evaluate WSDOT outreach and engagement activities and implement changes

- Establish regular check-ins with partners, communities, and stakeholders to verify contact information, assess partnership needs, and solicit feedback on WSDOT outreach and engagement practices

- Continuous, mutually beneficial collaboration with other agencies (city, regional, county, state) to discuss public outreach practices, improve upon internal practices, and provide more cohesive engagement with the government

- On-going literature review to inform policy development with emerging research

- Collaborate with efforts in the Data Informed Decisions strategy to ensure new and existing outreach is informed by best practices for surveying and data collection

STRENGTHENING PARTNERSHIP AND COORDINATION EFFORTS

WSDOT will identify and examine its existing relationships and review relevant communications to date to the maximum extent reasonable to move toward a community-based approach to outreach and engagement. WSDOT will develop a comprehensive or centralized list of the existing WSDOT community relationships as well as those that are nonexistent as communication with communities is currently fragmented across project offices, divisions, and locations. The list will be a starting point and is intended to be dynamic and will be evaluated regularly.

WSDOT will explore and identify new partnership opportunities with a focus on the under-represented groups so that all voices are heard. Partnerships with traditionally underserved groups will help ensure that all affected individuals have opportunities to participate in the community engagement process.

WSDOT regional and project staff will work on developing and enhancing relationships with the local community, business, and trade-based organizations with a focus on the traditionally underserved communities. This includes attending meetings, transportation and non-transportation related, to build and maintain community trust.

Outline of strategy and resources required for completion:

- Inventory and review existing relationships and communications with community outreach partners. Include communicators in various regions, modes and programs in the review process

- Identify community organizations of varying levels (501c3 non-profits, grassroots community groups, community centers, library systems, etc.) by location, or create guidelines for identifying relevant parties for ongoing engagement

- Create a uniform statewide partnership contact list and update on a regular basis

- Make partnership contact list available to divisions and regions

- Identify WSDOT staff responsible for regular updates

- WSDOT outreach teams and communicators in various regions, modes and programs will use the existing community representatives in their responsible area as a starting point

- Use key local community members to identify and determine under-represented groups in the area

- Once the existing partnership list is created, use the list to seek partnerships outside of the traditional partnership groups and communities

- Identify and add new partners to the existing community outreach partnership contact list

- Identify staffing needs for these efforts; these needs should include those of communicators, planners, engineers, and other relevant parties

INTEGRATE COMMUNITY FEEDBACK WITH PRODUCT AND SERVICE DELIVERY

WSDOT has a genuine commitment to community engagement, but too often, the results of the community engagement are not well integrated with project or service delivery. Theoretically, community feedback informs our work at all levels of decision-making. But just as community feedback should be incorporated at many levels, failure to do so can be attributed to many factors as well: constrained resources, lack of formalized processes, etc.

Community feedback should influence agency decisions, the built environment, and/or transportation services offered. It should not be treated as inventorying public opinion. Rather, input from the community should be weighted in decision making at all levels and engaged parties should be considered subject matter experts for their given communities.

WSDOT will examine and improve upon the processes related to integrating community feedback with its services and projects to ensure that community feedback influences agency decisions.

Outline of strategy and resources required for completion:

- Evaluate the current transportation decision-making process at multiple levels and identify at what point community engagement formally and informally influences these processes
- Identify barriers to community member input shaping decisions regarding transportation needs, projects, and services to fund, what projects and services look like, what areas are served, project timing, prioritization, etc.
- Develop a plan to increase community influence on the transportation system and services we deliver
- Work in tandem with changes to decision-making detailed in the HEAL Act

Externally mandated deadlines:

- As part of the HEAL Act, beginning on or before July 1, 2023, WSDOT must, where practicable, take the following actions relating to connecting communities to decision-making, particularly when making expenditure decisions or developing budget requests to the office of financial management and the legislature for programs that address or may cause environmental harms or provide environmental benefits.
- Create opportunities for overburdened communities and vulnerable populations to meaningfully participate in agency expenditure decisions
- Clearly articulate environmental justice goals and performance metrics to communicate the basis for agency expenditures
- Consider a broad scope of grants and contracting opportunities with environmental justice principles, including:
  - Grants focused on building capacity and providing training for community scientists and other staff;
  - Making technical assistance available for communities that may be new to receiving agency grant funding; and
  - Education and work readiness youth programs focused on infrastructure or utility-related internships to develop career paths and leadership skills for youth.

DEVELOP OUTREACH AND ENGAGEMENT METHODS TO IMPROVE ACCESS AND ADDRESS COMMUNITY NEEDS

A successful community outreach plan shall contain multiple ways to contact the community. Additionally, many people in underserved communities have traditionally been missed by conventional outreach methods.

Not everyone has the time or ability to travel to and attend engagement activities. Providing access where people are and in formats more feasibly attended ensures that we are getting quality and accurate community involvement.

Outline of strategy and resources required for completion:

- Explore, at minimum, the following methods of improving access. Document existing implementation and evaluate effectiveness to date. Expand or introduce relevant strategies wherever appropriate:
  - Advertise engagement activity invitations in local community-based media outlets such as print and television in various languages and cultures
  - Use social media outreach on multiple platforms (e.g., Instagram, Twitter, Facebook, TikTok, etc.) to advertise evens or solicit community feedback
  - Mail surveys to rural areas with limited internet access and/or far distance to travel to open houses
  - Hold virtual open house and/or surveys/videos in different languages
  - Require that engagement activities have varying time frames and dates, with translation and ADA services available at each
  - Provide opportunities for impacted community members to provide input in various formats if unable to attend the engagement activity and/or open house
  - Provide activities for younger children to engage in while parents learn about the happenings in their communities
- In addition to the ideas already listed, future efforts will need to explore other viable formats and options for outreach to meet the needs of the affected communities
- Establish a framework to evaluate how various strategies improve community response and equality of data

INCREASE ACCESSIBILITY AND DISABILITY INCLUSION

WSDOT will work to make agency tools, programs, and services more accessible and inclusive to individuals with disabilities. This will be accomplished via additional staff training, applying universal design principles, enhanced processes and procedures, and the implementation of national best practices. WSDOT must ensure that it is improving access in as many capacities as possible, including but not limited to sensory difference, physical disability, mental disability or neurodivergence, etc.

Outline of strategy and resources required for completion:

- Future sprint teams will need to conduct a thorough literature review of existing laws, policies, and best practices regarding accessibility. Sprint team members should have a familiarity with relevant ADA/accessibility strategies and identify areas in which implementation is lacking or inconsistent
- Future sprint teams will need to make accessible this gathered information, whether through training, best practices memos, or other educational/reference material
- Future sprint teams will need to engage with subject matter experts, both internal and external, to improve existing best practices or policies. This may include but is not limited to OEO, DAGS, BRGs, education consultants, community groups, and WSDOT communicators

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT TRAINING

Implementation of WSDOT's Community Engagement Plan can best be completed by reinvigorating WSDOT's Community Engagement Training Program and E-Learning Courses. This existing training consists of a day-long presentation taught by WSDOT trainers, however, the program has not had ongoing funding or management, so there is a lack of supported trainers. Over time, trainers move to different positions or leave the agency and are not replaced. There should be an ongoing training/learning program to maintain trainers in relevant organizations and ensure they are up to date on current practices and new innovations/best practices.

Outline of strategy and resources required for completion:

- Hire and manage consultant to support training development
- Review existing training materials (presentation & guides) and update them consistent with the current plan, processes, priorities, and evaluation
- Identify and train WSDOT trainers, and manage WSDOT trainers and classes
- Redevelop e-learning using the new materials

ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE – HEALTHY ENVIRONMENT FOR ALL ACT

Area Overview

On May 17, 2021, Governor Inslee signed the Healthy Environment for All Act (HEAL Act) codified in the Revised Code of Washington (RCW) 70A.02, Environmental Justice. Effective July 25, 2021, Washington Legislative Senate Bill 5141, HEAL Act, is a historical step that is intended to address the disproportionate exposure of Black Americans, Indigenous people and communities of color r, along with low-income communities, to environmental hazards in Washington neighborhoods. Due to this exposure, there is a higher risk of adverse health outcomes for those communities, which is further amplified for communities with pre-existing economic barriers and environmental risks.

The HEAL Act defines Environmental Justice (EJ) as "…the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, national origin, or income with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, rules, and policies. Environmental Justice includes addressing disproportionate environmental and health impacts in all laws, rules, and policies with environmental impacts by prioritizing vulnerable populations and overburdened communities, the equitable distribution of resources and benefits, and eliminating harm."

Please note, throughout this section, the terminology used is not aligned with the OFM DEI - Glossary of Equity-Related Terms as this section is derived from state law.

Overview of Strategies

Title	Description
Community Engagement Plan Update	WSDOT Community Engagement Plan; adopt new strategies for meaningful involvement with vulnerable populations; etc.
EJ Implementation Plan	Adopt WSDOT Environmental Justice Implementation Plan; Incorporate EJ principles into WSDOT strategic plan; etc.
EJ Interagency Workgroup Support	Participate and advise interagency workgroup; collaborate in the elaboration of strategies and guidelines; etc.
EJ Assessments and Significant Actions	Identify Significant Actions in consultation with communities; Develop an Environmental Justice checklist (template) for future EJ assessments; etc.
Equitable Budget Development	Develop an EJ Assessment for future budget development to incorporate EJ principles into budget & expenditure decisions, etc.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PLAN UPDATE

Create and adopt an updated Community Engagement Plan. This also includes developing a comprehensive Community Engagement Plan Toolkit to aid in the utilization of the enhanced Community Engagement processes.

Outline of strategy and resources required for completion:

- Create and adopt an equitable community engagement plan in consultation and consideration with under-represented and under-served populations and federally recognized Indian tribes, among others. The Community Engagement Plan will include a set of tools for WSDOT staff to use during community engagement activities to meaningfully involve and engage with vulnerable and overburdened populations. These tools will include training, continuous education, and collaboration with divisions and staff to improve community engagement activities during under-represented and under-served assessments. This plan is separate from the strategies listed in the Community Engagement Area but will be in coordination with them.

ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

Create, implement, and include an Environmental Justice implementation plan within WSDOT's strategic plan in consultation with Indian tribes.

Outline of strategy and resources required for completion:

- Incorporate Environmental Justice implementation plan into other significant agency planning documents. The plan must describe:
  - How WSDOT plans to apply the principles of environmental justice to the agency's activities and must guide the agency in its implementation, specific goals, and actions to reduce environmental and health disparities and for otherwise achieving environmental justice in the agency's programs;
  - Metrics to track and measure accomplishments of the agency goals and actions;
  - Methods to embed equitable community engagement with, and equitable participation from, members of the public into agency practices for soliciting and receiving public comment; and
  - Strategies to ensure compliance with existing federal and state laws and policies relating to environmental justice, including Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE INTERAGENCY WORKGROUP SUPPORT

The HEAL Act created an EJ Council and an interagency workgroup and required the Washington State Department of Health, Ecology, Agriculture, Natural Resources, Commerce, and Transportation, along with the Puget Sound Partnership, to incorporate EJ in their strategic plans or other planning documents. WSDOT needs to provide constant consultation to the interagency workgroup composed of all covered agencies. The advice and consultation with the interagency workgroup consist of monthly and weekly meetings with the different sub-groups or teams to address the different requirements under the HEAL Act.

Outline of strategy and resources required for completion:

- The requirements and tasks include but are not limited to:
  - Community engagement plan
  - EJ assessments
  - Budget EJ assessments
- These guidelines intend to help agencies have a framework to follow for each of the tasks under the HEAL Act

ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE ASSESSMENTS AND SIGNIFICANT ACTIONS

After public comment, WSDOT must periodically publish on its website the types of agency actions that the agency has determined are significant agency actions (including additional significant actions) that require an EJ assessment. "Significant agency action" means the following actions as identified at the beginning of a covered agency's consideration of the significant agency action or at the time when an environmental justice assessment would normally be initiated in conjunction with an agency action:

- The development and adoption of significant legislative rules as defined in RCW 34.05.328;

- The development and adoption of any new grant or loan program that a covered agency is explicitly authorized or required by statute to carry out;

- A capital project, grant, or loan award by a covered agency of at least $12,000,000 or a transportation project, grant, or loan by a covered agency of at least $15,000,000;

- The submission of agency request legislation to the office of the governor or the office of financial management for approval; and any other agency actions deemed significant by a covered agency consistent with RCW 70A.02.060

Outline of strategy and resources required for completion:

- Develop a process and adopt a "checklist" for conducting EJ assessments for significant agency actions

- Begin conducting EJ assessments on significant agency actions using a checklist developed by WSDOT

EQUITABLE BUDGET DEVELOPMENT

There are guidelines issued by the Environmental Justice Council, and in iterative consultation with the EJ Council, WSDOT must incorporate environmental justice principles into its decision processes for budget development, making expenditures, and granting or withholding environmental benefits.

Outline of strategy and resources required for completion:

- Beginning on July 1, 2023, WSDOT must, where practicable, take the following actions when making expenditure decisions or developing budget requests to the Office of Financial Management and the legislature for programs that address or may cause environmental harms or provide environmental benefits and focus applicable expenditures on creating environmental benefits for historically overburdened communities. WSDOT must also identify goals for vulnerable populations, including reducing or eliminating environmental harms, creating community and population resilience, and improving the quality of life.

- Create opportunities for overburdened communities and vulnerable populations to participate in WSDOT expenditure decisions meaningfully.

- WSDOT will clearly articulate environmental justice goals and performance metrics to communicate the basis for agency expenditures.

- By July 1, 2023, WSDOT must publish on its website the types of decision processes for budget development, making expenditures, and granting or withholding environmental benefits for which WSDOT will take the actions listed.

EXTERNAL WORKFORCE AND CONTRACTING

Area Overview

Develop programs and revise contracting language to ensure our contractors' workforce is reflective of the communities we serve. Additionally, ensure all WSDOT spending is equitable by quantifiable measures.

Overview of Strategies

Title	Description
New Disparity Study	Determine availability versus utilization of minority and women-owned firms.
State-Funded Diversity Roadmap	Continue to increase diverse firm participation in state-funded contracts.
Capacity Building Mentorship Program	Grow the capacity of diverse firms to increase participation in state-funded contracts.
CWA and Priority Hire	External workforce goals for the highway construction workforce.
New Diverse Business Support Services Tools	Implement new mechanisms to increase diverse firm participation in state-funded contracts.
COMPASS Program	Diversify the Washington State Ferries System through pre-employment training opportunities.
Meet Overall DBE Goal	Implement disparity study recommendations and additional race-neutral measures to meet an established goal.
Enhance Title VI	Perform more training with expanded roles and responsibilities agency-wide.
Pro-Equity Anti-Racism Plan Alignment	Align the WSDOT DEI Plan efforts with the Washington State Office of Equity Pro-Equity Anti-Racism Plan.

NEW DISPARITY STUDY

As a requirement for receiving federal aid (from USDOT Federal Highway, Federal Transit, and Federal Aviation Administration), WSDOT manages a Disadvantaged Business Enterprise Program. The DBE program is intended to create a level playing field for socially and economically disadvantaged business enterprises on federal-aid projects.

WSDOT is starting a new DBE Program Disparity Study to determine if WSDOT has the scientific and legal evidence for continuing implementing a race- and gender-conscious contracting goals program on Federal contracts. This study analyzes the availability and utilization of DBEs on WSDOT's state and federal contracting programs. WSDOT is required to maintain a current Disparity Study as the legal basis for its DBE program.

This study will:

- Analyze all Federal Highway Administration, Federal Transit Administration, and state-funded construction and consulting contracts, including contracts awarded by local agencies and other jurisdictions, between October 1, 2017, and September 30, 2021 (Federal Fiscal Years 2018 through 2021)

- Include data received from local agencies, prime contractors, and subcontractors

- Provide WSDOT with sufficient information to implement its DBE Program and assist the agency in determining overall program goals on Federal and state-funded contracts

Outline of strategy and resources required for completion:

- The contract for this study is currently being finalized

- Local agencies, divisions, programs, as well as prime and subcontractors will need to comply with data requests and participate in stakeholder interviews or focus groups

STATE-FUNDED DIVERSITY ROADMAP

To increase minority, small, veteran, and women's business enterprise (MSVWBE) participation in WSDOT contracting and consulting, the department developed and implemented the State-Funded Contracts – Diversity Roadmap. As many small businesses are minority-, veteran-, or women-owned, increasing their ability to work with WSDOT and public contracting experience will expand the availability and utilization of diverse businesses.

In early 2021, in a further effort to meet the Governor's goals, the agency advanced to step two of the Diversity Roadmap and began implementing a Small- and Veteran-Owned Business Enforceable Goals Program. WSDOT believes that expanding race- and gender-neutral measures on State contracts will result in additional availability of women- and minority-owned firms, as many small businesses are also diverse firms.

Outline of strategy and resources required for completion:

- WSDOT has implemented phase I of the roadmap. This includes the voluntary goals, capacity building mentorship program, inclusion plans, community engagement, and technical assistance

- Effective January 2022 for design-build and April 2022 for design-bid-build, WSDOT implemented phase II of the roadmap, the enforceable small and veteran's business program

- In 2023, Secretary Millar will evaluate WSDOT's state-funded participation and determine if an enforceable Minority, Veteran, and Women's Business Enterprise Program is necessary

CAPACITY BUILDING MENTORSHIP PROGRAM

Since 2017, as part of the Department's State-Funded Contracts – Diversity Roadmap, WSDOT has been implementing the Capacity Building Mentorship Program. This program is delivered in partnership with Sound Transit and the Minority Business Development Agency and works to grow the capabilities of Minority, Small, Veteran, and Women's Business Enterprises to work on state-funded projects. This program has grown to include Sound Transit and the Minority Business Development Agency.

The mentorship program enhances the capabilities of Minority, Small, Veteran, and Women Business Enterprises to perform work on transportation-related projects. In this program, successful prime contractors and consultants are paired with Minority, Small, Veteran, and Women Businesses Enterprises who wish to work in the transportation construction and consulting area.

Outline of strategy and resources required for completion:

- This effort is currently underway with 68 mentors with 86 protégés since the program's launch in 2017
- WSDOT continues to partner with Sound Transit, the Minority Business Development Agency, the Association of General Contractors, American Council of Engineering Companies, and the minority and women's business community to develop programmatic enhancements

COMMUNITY WORKFORCE AGREEMENT AND PRIORITY HIRE

A Community Workforce Agreement is a Project Labor Agreement designed to benefit under-represented and under-served communities' access to capital construction investments made in their communities. These benefits include access for local workers to participate in projects, opportunities for local contractors to engage in these construction opportunities, and the expansion of qualified local workers contributing to regional economies.

WSDOT is committed to ensuring equity in the hiring of our external contracting workforce. Through a collaborative partnership with contractors, labor organizations, and community organizations, WSDOT will work to implement a Community Workforce Agreement and Priority Hire Program. This program will set geographic hiring preferences from economically depressed zip codes. These zip codes will be determined by:

- Poverty rates
- Education levels
- Unemployment rates

WSDOT has pre-apprenticeship programs for socially and economically disadvantaged individuals to gain the skills needed to obtain employment in the highway construction trades. WSDOT would like to place priority on hiring apprentices it has assisted through a pre-apprenticeship program.

Outline of strategy and resources required for completion:

- WSDOT has hired a consultant to assist in the policy development of the CWA
- WSDOT will work to negotiate a CWA with labor, the agency, the contracting community, and minority contractors
- WSDOT has hired a consultant to assist with the program development, monitoring, and oversight of the CWAs

NEW DIVERSE BUSINESS SUPPORT SERVICES TOOLS

To increase Minority and Women Business Enterprise participation in our state-funded efforts, WSDOT has implemented numerous voluntary initiatives (e.g., voluntary goals, inclusion plans, outreach, Capacity Building Mentorship program, etc.). To continue meeting the maximum portion of our goal through voluntary means, additional measures are necessary.

Additional funding from the legislature has allowed WSDOT's Office of Equal Opportunity to extend Minority and Women Business Enterprise assistance through the implementation of the following programs:

- A newly designed Minority and Women Business Enterprise Supportive Services program will assist Minority and Women Business Enterprises businesses in gaining market share in the highway construction industry
- A Trucking Consortium is being created to allow Minority and Women Business Enterprise trucking companies a structure for collaborating to better compete in the highway construction industry

Outline of strategy and resources required for completion:

- The MWBE/SS Program's contract was executed in late 2021. This program is underway and being monitored to maximize service delivery and support to under-represented businesses
- The Request for Proposals for the Trucking Consortium is currently under development and will be re-advertised in the Fall of 2022

COMPASS PROGRAM

WSDOT Office of Equal Opportunity and the Washington State Ferry division are working to ensure the maritime highway industry staff are representative of the communities they serve.

These divisions are in a partnership to create a maritime preparation program for under-served and under-represented individuals. This preparatory program will work to create a skilled, diverse workforce in the maritime highway industry, including at WSDOT. This program will provide technical education, sea time, employment readiness skills, as well as supportive services to aid underserved and underrepresented individuals to gain meaningful, family-wage jobs with WSF.

Outline of strategy and resources required for completion:

- WSDOT is currently developing the Request for Proposals for an educational institute to develop the training materials and outreach to implement the above program by July 1, 2023

MEET OVERALL DISADVANTAGED BUSINESS ENTERPRISE GOAL

WSDOT's Office of Equal Opportunity is in the process of completing a new Disadvantaged Business Enterprise Program Disparity Study. Upon completion of the updated disparity study, WSDOT will establish a new overall DBE goal. As a requirement for receiving federal aid (from USDOT Federal Highway, Federal Transit, and Federal Aviation Administration), WSDOT implements a Disadvantaged Business Enterprise Program. This program is intended to create a level playing field for socially and economically disadvantaged business enterprises on federal-aid projects.

WSDOT will continue to meet with its Disadvantaged Business Enterprise Program Advisory Group as well as the Association of General Contracts to create additional strategies, programs, and services to meet the established overall DBE goal - currently, 19 percent of Federal Highway Administration financial aid spent on construction and consulting.

Outline of strategy and resources required for completion:

- WSDOT will continue to work with subcommittees, community, trade, and other organizations to enhance its DBE Program implementation
- WSDOT will review national best practices and attend peer exchanges and conferences to stay current and ensure we are implementing a best-in-class DBE program

ENHANCE TITLE VI

WSDOT's Title VI Program is foundational for the agency's diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts. WSDOT Office of Equal Opportunity will work with internal and external stakeholders to broaden the department's understanding and implementation of the Title VI nondiscrimination requirements. This will be done through comprehensive compliance reviews, in-depth program training, and required position description language for all WSDOT staff performing Title VI responsibilities.

Outline of strategy and resources required for completion:

- WSDOT's Title VI staff will develop and offer the following trainings:
  - Introduction to Title VI, limited English proficiency, and environmental justice which will be mandatory for all staff effective October 1, 2022
  - Title VI program training for Liaisons – offering more in-depth training for practitioners and will include topics such as vital documents, limited English proficiency requirements, environmental justice, collecting demographic data, and Title VI best practices
  - WSDOT's Title VI staff will work with Senior Managers and Regional Administrators to ensure sufficient staff are dedicated to Title VI within each region and program. Currently, one individual per region or office assist with Title VI functions. The one individual with these responsibilities needs to have the authority and program knowledge to fully implement and monitor the division/program/regions Title VI compliance. WSDOT needs to dedicate individuals with sufficient authority to implement change and monitor Title VI

PRO-EQUITY ANTI-RACISM PLAN ALIGNMENT

The Washington State Office of Equity will be publishing the Pro-Equity Anti-Racism (PEAR) Plan. This Plan will outline the steps the agency needs to undertake to become a more equitable organization. WSDOT will need to modify programs, services, and activities as well as the DEI plan, to ensure alignment with the Washington State Office of Equity. This work will be developed and implemented as the PEAR Plan is implemented and evolves.

Outline of strategy and resources required for completion:

- Published PEAR Plan and Guidance

For more information on the terms used throughout this document, please refer to the OFM Definition of DEI Terms.