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TRANSFORMING MISSOULA: CENTERING BIPOC SOLUTIONS AND ACTION STRATEGIES

Research Project Report

Abstract

LEARN Missoula used a mixed method approach to accomplish its two primary goals of a) generating data informed practical and applied knowledge directly from Black Indigenous People of Color (BIPOC), which was inclusive of BIPOC-centered solutions and action strategies focused on social transformation in municipal, community, and business systems, and b) scrutinizing the nature of municipal departments' practices, policies, information, and data using antiracism audits and interviews with departmental representatives informed by a critical paradigm that incorporated a racial justice and equity lens.

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Laurellé C. Warner, PhD, MSW, LCSW
LEARN Missoula

Acknowledgement

LEARN Missoula appreciates and acknowledges the historical and contemporary stewardship of this land by Indigenous people groups. We name the fact that we are settlers and recognize the significant loss of life, labor, and way of living that unwillingly occurred for us to be here. Our voices are in harmony with theirs for the preservation of cultural practices and traditions. It is, therefore, our commitment to come alongside Indigenous communities as partners and co-collaborators in the fight to ensure that they have needed resources and access to opportunities.

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Abstract

A mixed method approach nesting quantitative research within a primary qualitative design was used by LEARN Missoula to invite residents who self-identify as ethno-racial, linguistic, and culturally diverse, inclusive of Black, Indigenous, Asian & Pacific Islanders, Latinx/Hispanic, resettled refugees, and other people of color including those who immigrated from South America, Africa, and South Asia etc., (BIPOC) residents and stakeholders to narrate and describe stories about their lived experiences noting how they connect their social reality in Missoula to systemic marginalization, disenfranchisement, and inequity in irrefutable and measurable ways. Without these conversations, BIPOC thoughts, ideas, and solutions might otherwise be lost, ignored, or marginalized. Crucial to this process was inviting BIPOC residents to envision and design a just, safe, inclusive, and equitable Missoula where they can experience an ongoing sense of safety, place, belonging, and well-being. From these storied conversations and descriptions, data driven comprehensive social transformative action strategies derived directly from BIPOCs were formulated. The formulation elevates and privileges BIPOC-generated solutions and strategies that can be used by local leaders. Thus, the process was action-oriented and participatory. Additionally, municipal departments practices, policies, information, and data were scrutinized, which included interviewing departmental representatives using a critical paradigm incorporating racial justice and equity lens.

Key words: BIPOC, structural inequality, injustice discrimination, participatory action-oriented

Organization of Report

This report is organized into the sections outlined below. Each section provides relevant information beginning with an introduction and overview of the project and its processes followed by the presentations of findings from the initial audits, City employee survey, and BIPOC engagement respectively. Please note that the engagement process with BIPOCs as experts on what is necessary for their sense of belonging, place, safety, and wellbeing is an ongoing process.

Section I: Introduction and Conceptual Framework of the Project

Section II: First Set of Findings - Initial Audits

Section III: Results from Surveying City Employees *The Nested Quantitative Component*

Section IV: BIPOC-Generated Knowledge and Transformative Solutions and Action Strategies Derived from Engagement



Section I

Introduction & Conceptual Framework of Project

Introduction and Conceptual Framework

BIPOCs Expertise

BIPOC residents are supremely eligible, imminently qualified, and in the best position to offer valuable and relevant action strategies for creating a

Purpose

The purpose is to transform Missoula by centering Black, Indigenous, Asian & Pacific Islanders, Latinx/Hispanic, resettled refugees, and other people of color including those who immigrated from South America, Africa, and South Asia, etc., (BIPOC) data derived solutions and action strategies in dismantling systemic oppression, structural inequity and exclusion. The fundamental premise of LEARN Missoula's research is that BIPOC residents, groups, and community-based organizations in Missoula are confronted with structural and institutionalized inequalities and exclusion; and, they encounter systemic oppression, injustice and discrimination as they interface with municipalities, community structures, and the business sector. All of which impact their daily lives.

Given these experiences, BIPOC residents are supremely eligible, imminently qualified, and in the best position to offer valuable and relevant action strategies for creating a more just, inclusive, unbiased, and equitable Missoula. They know what matters most to their wellbeing. Thus, the primary purpose was to obtain BIPOC-generated knowledge and solutions gained through rigorous research methods that will be instrumental and integral in the process of dismantling oppressive and inequitable community structures and bring about social transformation in municipal and business systems.

Problem Statement

BIPOC residents, groups and community-based organizations in Missoula encounter systemic oppression, injustice, and discrimination as they interface with municipalities and the business sector that impact their daily lives. Additionally, they often are confronted with structural inequalities and exclusion as they navigate public and private spaces, which have deleterious effects on their lived experience, sense of place and safety.

Project Description

LEARN Missoula invited residents and stakeholders who self-identify as BIPOC to narrate and describe stories about their lived experiences noting how they connected their social reality and lived experiences in Missoula to systemic marginalization, disenfranchisement, and inequity in irrefutable and measurable ways. A crucial aspect of engagement was inviting BIPOC residents to envision and design a just, safe, inclusive, and equitable Missoula where they can experience an ongoing sense of safety, place, belonging, and well-being. From their stories and descriptions, data-informed action strategies privileging BIPOC-generated knowledge and solutions were formulated. These conversations were indispensable because without them BIPOC thoughts, ideas, and solutions might otherwise be lost, ignored, or marginalized.

The project also included scrutinizing and assessing the nature of municipal departments' internal practices and policies, information and data as well as interviewing departmental representatives using a critical paradigm that incorporated racial justice and equity lens. In essence, LEARN sought to determine the level of municipal systems' awareness of structural and institutionalized racism, implicit and explicit biases and inequities toward BIPOC residents and how they use data to make changes. Embedded and inherent in this evaluation was the completion of anti-racism/ discrimination audits.

Project Approach

The project used a mixed method approach of quantitative nested in a primarily qualitative methodology and was informed by the following four aims:

- 1) To actively engage BIPOCs who historically have been forced to the margins of the research process by using a transformative paradigm, which embodies a human rights, social justice and critical approach to research (Mertens, 2009).
- 2) To cultivate and form research partnerships with BIPOCs. In forming research partnerships with BIPOCs, for whom the research matters on practical levels, this research became participatory and action-oriented. The primary aim was not simply to listen and engage but to serve as a call to justice through social action (Krai & Allen, 2016).
- 3) To center BIPOC voices on issues of structural inequity, marginalization, and systemic oppression by bringing their lived experiences to the forefront through an ethically well-designed research process that is placed-based and ultimately inform transformative social action strategies.
- 4) To scrutinize the nature of municipal departments' policies, procedures, and practices in order to gain a depth of understanding of implicit and explicit patterns of interactions, communications, and responsiveness to BIPOC residents. To develop this understanding, LEARN Missoula conducted anti-racism/discrimination audits.

The choice of this methodological approach was guided by the fact that it is difficult to argue against personal experience (especially lived experiences of

Power of Narratives

it is difficult to argue against personal experience (especially lived experiences of those directly impacted by systems of oppression). People may debate viewpoints on a range of topics or issues but when an individual tells a deeply personal lived experience even skeptics are impacted by the power of the narrative.

those directly impacted by systems of oppression). People may debate viewpoints on a range of topics or issues but when an individual tells a deeply personal lived experience even skeptics are impacted by the power of the narrative. LEARN sought to facilitate the narrating, describing, and substantiating lived experiences (currently seen as anecdotal) through its research process; and, ultimately, giving power to and elevating BIPOC experiences in epistemically credible ways.

Project Goals and Outcomes

There were two goals of the project. A central goal was to engage actively stakeholders and collaborators who self-identify as BIPOC in research conversations where they qualitatively describe and narrate stories about their lived experiences of marginalization, inequity, injustice, and oppression as they navigate public and private spaces in Missoula in irrefutable and measurable ways. Essential features of these research conversations were: a) gaining stories and descriptions as well as insights into the meaning and impact of these encounters, and b) centering data informed BIPOC-generated solutions and social transformative action strategies in the struggle to dismantle institutionalized injustice and structurally oppressive and biased systems.

The second important goal was to conduct antiracism/discrimination audits within the City of Missoula. The audits, as noted previously, scrutinized the level of municipal systems' awareness of structural and institutionalized racism, implicit and explicit biases and inequities toward BIPOC residents through analyses of their internal practices, policies, procedures, data and information.

Project Outcomes

In addition to the overall goals, four key outcomes were sought. They included:

- 1) The generation of data informed practical and applied knowledge directly from BIPOC residents, collaborators, key informants/stakeholders.
- 2) The acquisition of BIPOC-centered solutions and strategic actions steps (gained through rigorous analytic methods) that is intended to inform the transformative process of dismantling

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structural inequity and systemic oppression in private and public spaces inclusive of Missoula City.

3) The privileging of data informed BIPOC-generated knowledge and strategies so that they play an instrumental role in the process of bringing about social transformation in municipal and business systems.

4) A deeper understanding of the nature of municipal departments' practices and policies by obtaining objective and quantifiable information in order to offer specific transformative recommendations.

Project Team

The research project team known as LEARN Missoula (Listening, Engaging, Action, Reflection Network) is BIPOC led and directed. Each member comes with a repertoire of knowledge, skills and professional value base, and with a history of engaging in equity and diversity work. The project team includes lead researcher, Dr. Laurellé C. Warner, who is a licensed clinical social worker and holds a PhD in Social Policy and Social Research from Loma Linda University School of Behavioral Health and associate researcher, Dr. Brad Hall, who has a Doctorate of Educational Leadership (EdD) from Montana State University-Bozeman. As a collective, they are committed to centering and elevating local BIPOC voices, (their knowledge and solutions) in the process of transforming community structures, municipal systems, and business institutions in Missoula.

Significance and Benefits

Benefit

BIPOC viewpoints and perspectives are positioned to play an important role in shaping and influencing current and future policies, procedure, initiatives, processes, etc.

LEARN's research has been beneficial and significant for three reasons. First, the voices, experiences, and viewpoints of BIPOCs often have been absent or marginalized in research (Marten, 2009) seeking to address structural inequities and systemic oppression. Historically, the empirical and theoretical literature have represented dominant western cultural perceptions and conceptualizations (Brodsky et. al., 2016; Ungar, 2012). However, with LEARN's project, BIPOCs were seen as uniquely qualified to provide germane and significant insights on effective ways to create just and equitable communities and municipal systems because of their lived experiences as ethno-racial minorities.

Moreover, BIPOCs stratified location, position, and social identities which intersect in synergistic ways were vital to the process. They were understood as experts, supremely eligible, imminently qualified, and in the best position to offer valuable and relevant action strategies and recommendations on creating more just, inclusive, unbiased, and equitable societies. Thus, LEARN Missoula actively engaged with, invited and is centering BIPOC thoughts, ideas and action strategies.

Second beneficial outcome is that as a result of LEARN's research, BIPOC viewpoints and perspectives are positioned to play an important role in shaping and influencing current and future policies.

Ungar (2012) has noted that the voices and perspectives of

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disadvantaged and marginalized individuals tend to go unheard when it comes to the development of policies and services that matter most to their wellbeing. LEARN seeks to ensure that the solutions and recommended action strategies of diverse BIPOC groups, which have emerged from the data will be integrated in policy development or modification, creation of initiatives, etc.

Finally, LEARN's research findings, rooted in data informed BIPOC-generated knowledge and solutions, can be seen as fiscally responsible. The findings are significant because they can contribute potentially to improved quality of life and well-being for BIPOCs in Missoula; thereby, reducing the overall cost attached to managing and responding to the deleterious effects of systemic oppression, institutionalized injustice, structural inequality, and discrimination.

Research Methodology and Rationale

As noted, a mixed method was used to accomplish the previously stated goals and aims. The specific type used was quantitative nested in a qualitative design. This involved using a qualitative method as primary and nesting a quantitative component (Anderson, 2016; Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

Qualitative Methods

The most important rationale for LEARN's choice of a qualitative method was that it offers one of the best ways to honor and value diversity as well as facilitate active collaboration between researchers and BIPOC stakeholders, key informants/participants throughout the research process (Jason & Glenwick, 2016; Leavy, 2017). Additionally, LEARN was fully cognizant of the need for research to actively resist the hegemony of Eurocentric dominant culture's universalizing narratives relating to ethno-racial groups and the injustices and inequalities they experience (Brodsky et. al., 2016; Ungar et al., 2008).

LEARN recognized that this active resistance can occur most effectively through engagement in qualitative approaches (Ungar et al., 2008). This has been corroborated by Brodsky et. al. (2016) as they unequivocally stated that qualitative methods can be central in efforts to reframe dominant narratives given

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that these methods encourage a focus on both the individual and community-level, responding to and changing systemic, broad-based issues (Brodsky et. al., 2016).

LEARN's has had an unwavering commitment to actively resist the domination and supremacy of Eurocentric narratives and to center, leverage and privilege BIPOC voices and lived experiences of navigating difficult life realities. Hence, the choice of a primary qualitative methodology that was participatory and action

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 EXPERIENCES

Laurellé C. Warner

oriented (Leavy, 2017), grounded in narrative and phenomenological traditions and informed by the transformative paradigm (Mertens, 2009). An important rationale for using the transformative paradigm is that it intentionally centers the voices and viewpoints of BIPOCs who are usually kept at the perimeter of the research process (Mertens, 2009). More importantly, the two hallmarks of the transformative paradigm were congruent with LEARN's goals: a) forming partnerships with BIPOCs for whom the research has practical applicability, and b) instituting and implementing transformations.

Within the context of these research partnerships, LEARN engaged in the process of soliciting BIPOC-generated knowledge through storytelling. (Boyd, 2016). Envisioning and designing an equitable and just Missoula were crucial to the process. Additionally, LEARN sought direct description of experiences through BIPOC participants/collaborators' own lens and perspectives which were key to gaining access to their lived, everyday lifeworld as they intersect with community structures and systems (Daly, 2007).

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In summary, this process was necessary and required because premature, uniformed, and untimely assessments, judgements and actions have resulted in unfruitful efforts toward improving intercultural relationships, communications, and interactions between BIPOC and community structures.

Quantitative

For the nested quantitative component, LEARN evaluated, examined, scrutinized and “interrogated” City departments through a critical lens informed by racial justice. In addition to the aforementioned anti-discrimination audit, LEARN interviewed representatives from various municipal departments using the survey method to determine the level of municipal systems’ awareness of implicit and explicit biases and inequities toward BIPOC residents and how they use data to make changes. Surveying City employees afforded LEARN the opportunity to obtain quantifiable information about departmental knowledge, responsiveness, and practices relating to equity, diversity, justice and inclusion.

LEARN’S PROCESS IS NECESSARY

LEARN’s process was necessary and required because premature, uniformed, and untimely assessments, judgements, and actions have resulted in unfruitful efforts toward improving intercultural relationships, communications, and interactions between BIPOCs and community structures

Sampling, Recruitment, and Data Collection

Data collection, sampling and recruitment strategies leveraged LEARN team members relationships with BIPOCs. Moreover, additional partnerships were formed with other BIPOC residents and stakeholders who were willing to share personal experiences and insights into issues of marginalization, inequity, injustice and oppression in community and municipal structures through a chain-linked referral process. This strategy of snowball sampling was used because it is known to mitigate against inherent barriers and obstacles associated with inviting people who have been marginalized and disenfranchised to become involved in research studies (Heckathorn, 2016; Sadler, Lee, Lim, & Fullerton, 2010). Furthermore, Sadler et al. (2010), noted that snowball

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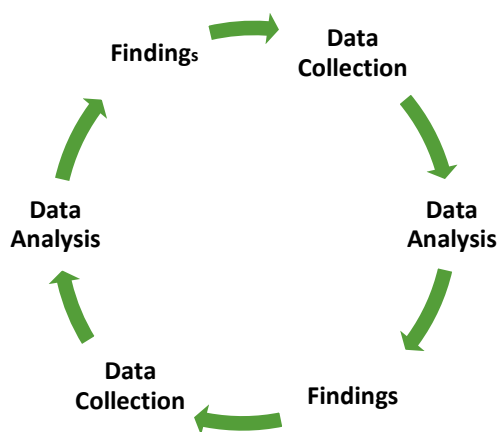
sampling is culturally competent, and engenders trust among potential participants/collaborators. Being referred by familiar, trusting individuals increase the likelihood of engagement with researchers and the research process. In addition to snowball sampling, purposive and simple random sampling were used.

Data Analysis

Data collection and analyses were recursive processes, meaning that collection and analysis were not independent of each other but dynamically influenced and shaped how each unfolded. More importantly, analyses offered a powerful venue to codify a collection of repeated and corroborated BIPOC experiences. As these repeated lived experiences and stories of injustice, marginalization, exclusion, and inequity are combined and codified through the analytic process, they become elevated and imbued with epistemic credibility and legitimacy that cannot be refuted, dismissed or ignored easily.

Furthermore, analyses of the collection of BIPOC stories and descriptions are the source/foundation from which data-informed BIPOC transformative solutions emerge. In essence, the analytic process produces BIPOC-generated knowledge, solutions, and action strategies that fully center BIPOC voices on what is necessary for their sense of safety, place, belonging, and wellbeing.

Recursive Process





Section II

Findings: Initial Audits

Findings: Initial Audits

QUESTIONING

A valuable equity skill, important to equity-based practice and decision-making is asking critical questions. BIPOC residents noted that questioning allows for “reflection and creates opportunities to become open.”

As part of the recursive collection and analysis process, the first sets of results submitted included antiracism audits of certain of the City’s documents, procedures and processes. The audits focused on examining, scrutinizing, and “interrogating” each area through a critical framework informed by racial justice and equity lenses. Specifically, LEARN sought to evaluate the degree to which they incorporated equity, justice, inclusion and diversity content and processes. Important to the audits was rating language/content for the frequency and substantive nature of diversity, equity, inclusion and justice terms (see appendix for rating scale). An outcome was to raise awareness of congruence between City’s stated commitment and what it actually articulated and presented in writing or process.

A valuable equity skill, important to equity-based practice and decision-making, is asking critical questions. LEARN used this equity skill while engaged in scrutinizing and “interrogating” processes, procedures, policies, and documents. The value of using questions was corroborated by BIPOC residents who noted that using the skill of questioning “helps them [Whites] understand motivation and intentions.” Moreover, questioning allows for “reflection and creates opportunities to become open.” This skill was embodied in their descriptions of “calling out” communications and interactions that were inequitable, racialized, or culturally insensitive.

Therefore, LEARN asked critical questions to raise awareness of taken-for-granted, inherent or implicit assumptions or conventions as well as to heighten City’s ability to reflect on privilege, implicit biases while thoughtfully considering the voices & definitions that have been unwittingly ignored or marginalized.

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The purposes of the questions were twofold:

- 1) to facilitate reflexivity, i.e., thoughtful reflection, and
- 2) to offer potential recommendations without conveying that these are the *only* alternatives.

Furthermore, questioning is crucial to innovation because questions help to develop insights and critical thought and they invite new possibilities, dimensions, and perspectives. More importantly, questions function as an incentive to act.

Of greater value, questions stimulate change and inspire transformation, which is an outcome sought—transforming Missoula so all people, including ethno-racial, linguistic and culturally diverse people groups and communities, can have a sense of safety, place, belonging, and wellbeing.

City of Missoula Strategic Plan Audit

As stated, the audits used the technique/skill of equity-based questioning. Below is a table that invited City representatives to reflect on crucial questions related to diversity, justice, equity, and inclusion. The table is followed by an overview and summary of findings and transformative social action recommendations respectively.

Why the Equity-Based Skill of Questioning?

Questioning is crucial to innovation.

Questions help to develop insights and critical thoughts.

Questions invite new possibilities, dimensions and perspectives.

Questions stimulate change and inspire transformation

Questions function as an incentive to act!

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Table 1 City of Missoula Strategic Plan Evaluation

Key Documents	Rating	Evaluation of Language and Content
Mission in Strategic Plan	2	<p>Reflecting need & values of residents: How came to know needs & values of residents? Whose & which needs & values? In what specific ways are BIPOCs with intersecting social identities needs and values reflected? What needs & values are most important to these diverse groups?</p> <p>Enhancing opportunity: What specific opportunity and for whom? How do you know what opportunities are most needed and valued by various residential groups? Who & how determine success?</p>
Vision in Strategic Plan	4	<p>Inclusive city...; Where all people can live/celebrate meaningful, purposeful, fulfilling lives: How would City come to know that all people lives meet these criteria? Does this change over time? What are important aspects of living a meaningful, purposeful, fulfilling life for BIPOCs with intersecting social identities? How would the City know what this looks like/means for diverse groups?</p> <p>Offering cultural opportunities: what kinds of cultural opportunity? Whose cultural opportunity are included, privileged, or ignored? Who decides what kinds of cultural opportunity and when? How know if cultural opportunities are meaningful and for whom? What cultural opportunities are offered for BIPOCs with intersecting social diversity dimensions?</p>
Guiding Principles in Strategic Plan	4	<p>All people should have...; Full & equal access to opportunities, power, resources...; Dismantle systems of privilege & oppression...; Engage and seek guidance from CSKT: With whom, when, & how engage and sought? How frequently? What guidance is actually sought and how? What role do CSKT play in creating a community...? CSKT sought with intersecting social diversity dimensions?</p> <p>Respect & nourish native people & culture: what does a community of respect & nourish look like? Whose definition is privileged? How is this community created?</p> <p>Diversity and fairness in revenue; wage parity: what does this mean and how measured? Whose meaning/definition privileged? How is this created, implemented and by whom?</p>
Operating Principles in Strategic Plan	3	<p>Commitment to equity & social justice as a practice: what metrics used to measure commitment? Do departments have an equity and social justice plan with evaluation processes? Who developed & contributed to the plan? Which BIPOC voices/perspectives were sought, included, or valued? What do these practices look like? Who is responsible to implement and how determine if effective?</p>

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		<p>Community engagement & inclusion fundamental: What do engagement & inclusion look like? How, when, and by whom is the community engaged and included? How will measure if engagement & inclusion are effective and working?</p> <p>Tools to increase accessibility & communication with community: How do know it is working? What outreach/communication to diverse community?</p> <p>Provide inclusive...work environment: What does this look like? What does inclusive mean? Whose definition is privileged?</p>
Strategic Plan Areas & Goals	1	<p>1st Safety and Wellness: ...high level of public safety and wellness that reflects a thriving community in which to live, work and play.</p>
	1	<p>Goal 1 Provide lifesaving services for Missoula’s vulnerable pops</p>
	4	<p>Goal 2 Design and create programs, facilities and spaces that promote equity.</p> <p>Who will be participating in the design creation? What role will diverse groups such as BIPOCs with intersecting social diversity dimensions play in design & creation of programs? How will their opinions, recommendations and ideas be solicited? What does it mean/look like to promote equity in programs, facilities and spaces?</p> <p>Work with community partners to define disparities... identify most promising solutions toward advancing social, economic and racial equity. Which community partners? What does “working with” look like? What role will diverse groups such as BIPOCs with intersecting social diversity dimensions play? Whose definition and solutions will be privileged, acknowledge, used?</p> <p>Create pro-equity policy agenda that will advance racial and social equity in the areas... Who will be participating in creating the policy agenda? What role will diverse groups such as BIPOCs with intersecting social diversity dimensions play? How will their opinions, recommendations and ideas be solicited? Whose policy agenda will be privileged, acknowledge, used? What does it mean/look like to advance racial and social equity in the areas designated? How will success be measured and evaluated? What processes will be used? Who will design and monitor the evaluative processes? How will the data inform continuous improvements?</p> <p>Create an equity and social justice strategic plan</p> <p>Who will be participating in creating the plan? What role will diverse groups such as BIPOCs with intersecting social diversity dimensions play? How will their opinions, recommendations and ideas be solicited? Who will design and monitor evaluative processes? How will the data inform continuous improvements?</p> <p>Engage neighborhoods to identify and understand needs and promote pro-equity policies and programs.</p>

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Which neighborhoods? What will engagement look like? How & by whom will engagement occur? Frequency of engagement? How will information obtained through engagement be collected, analyzed, used? Who defines what are pro-equity policies & programs? How and who will engage BIPOCs with intersecting social diversity dimensions? What accountability process will be in place to ensure pro-equity policies & programs are being promoted and that they are successful?

...invest in parks, trails and open space opportunities in currently underserved areas.

...Missoula Community Center centrally located in McCormick Park...provide access to a multi-generational, year-round, affordable public facility.

Who determines what is affordable? How will BIPOCs with intersecting social diversity dimensions come to know of this resource? What plans are in place to track usage and by whom? How will underutilization by BIPOCs be addressed? What is the process for gaining access to use?

MCPS...to create neighbor community center... providing multigenerational opportunities, programs and services...

Who determines/decides what kinds of opportunity, program & services? How will know that opportunities, programs & services are improving outcomes in designated areas? How know if opportunities, programs, & services are meaningful and for whom? Are the opportunities, programs & services planned linguistically and culturally diverse? For example, what specific opportunities, programs & services will be offered that are meaningful for BIPOCs with intersecting social diversity dimensions?

3 Goal 3 Design and implement transportation infrastructure to support a safe, healthy and active community

...accessible for people of all ages & all abilities

...provide equitable access to parks, trails and recreation opportunities for healthy, active lifestyle

What does “providing equitable access” look like?

Extend access to transportation networks in currently underserved neighborhoods

3 Goal 4 Maintain public-safety services commensurate with city growth.

...comprehensive police training strategy...that includes additional training in ...implicit bias

From whom is input and guidance sought re. trainings relating to implicit bias? Will members of diverse BIPOC community organizations, groups or leaders be consulted regarding the development of the training strategy? Is this training part of an ongoing learning process? How will the effectiveness of trainings be assessed? What performance or behavioral outcomes will be evaluated and by

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whom? Will these performance outcomes be an explicit part of your performance evaluations? How will their knowledge and skills on implicit bias be evaluated formally? What mechanisms will be instituted to assess the degree to which their knowledge and skills are deepening?

...equal delivery of services in all areas of the city

...in all district throughout the city

- 1 **Goal 5 Enhance collaboration to improve efficiency, increase preparedness and achieve better individual and community outcomes.**

- 3 **2nd Community Design and Livability: create policy and support development that leads to equitable, responsive and adaptive growth that reflects our community values.**

- 3 **Goal 1 ...infrastructure development that promotes equitable growth...**

Who determines/decides what does “equitable growth” looks like? How will this be assessed and measured, by whom, when, & how often? What role is envisioned BIPOCs with intersecting social diversity dimensions in the development of infrastructure? Will members of diverse BIPOC community organizations, groups or leaders be consulted?

- 3 **Goal 2 Create understandable and reasonable regulation that supports sustainable and equitable development**

Conduct zoning audit, assess...how zoning prevents dev of inclusive, diverse and equitable housing in all neighborhoods.

- 2 **Goal 3 Support sustainable growth initiatives**

...improve access and mobility...

...provide access to affordable, reliable and efficient transportation

- 2 **Goal 4 Reinforce the identity of the community through support of historic preservation and planning**

Whose identity will be reinforced?

Create an incentive program for the preservation of existing historic resources and culturally significant sites

- 1 **3rd Environmental Quality: Missoula will maintain and improve our natural environment to support individual and community health**

- 3 **Goal 1 Promote health and social equity through policy and decision-making.**

...promoting health equity and providing opportunity for environmental learning and connection

Who determines/decides what health & social equity looks like? Whose definition is privileged, centered or ignored? What role is envisioned for BIPOCs with intersecting social diversity dimensions? Will members of diverse BIPOC community organizations, groups or leaders be consulted regarding

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policy and will they participate in decision-making? What strategies will be used in promoting health equity? Will they be linguistically and culturally relevant/meaningful? What evaluative or accountability processes will be used to measure if outcomes are achieved and how will be used as a CQI feedback loop?

1 **Goal 2 Implement adopted Energy Conversation and Climate Action initiatives.**

4 **4th Economic Health: Missoula will maintain and grow a diverse economy through partnerships and innovation...while providing employment opportunities for all residents**

With whom will City partner? Who determines/decides what employment opportunities looks like? What role is envisioned for BIPOCs with intersecting social diversity dimensions in shaping economic health? Will members of diverse BIPOC community organizations, groups or leaders be consulted regarding types of employment opportunities and on evaluation processes?

1 **Goal 1 Support economic growth through the implementation of “A Place to Call Home**

2 **Goal 2 Provide leadership for tax reform in the Legislature**
...achieve tax reform, including a local-option tourist tax and tax fairness measures.

3 **Goal 3 Partner with the Missoula Economic Partnership to engage in strategic business development, create pathways for people to realize their potential and foster a culture of diversity and innovation**

What specific pathways will be created for BIPOCs with intersecting social diversity dimensions? Will members of diverse BIPOC community organizations, groups or leaders be consulted on potential pathway options? How will the City know if the pathways decided on are meaningful and significant for diverse groups? How will success of pathways be evaluated and used as a CQI feedback loop? What accountability system will be in place?

1 **Goal 4 Partner with our learning institutions to deploy talent and labor to mutual benefit.**

1 **Goal 5 Support livable wages and workforce development**

1 **5th Organizational Excellence: Missoula will foster a transparent, nimble organization of employees challenged to provide high quality, responsive and innovative services efficiently and effectively**

1 **Goal 1 Standardize a results-driven management model in all departments**

3 **Goal 2 Develop a plan that identifies future leaders... recruit and retain an engaged, innovative and diverse staff at all levels**

Engage in recruitment and hiring practices aimed at creating diverse teams.

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What does “diverse teams” means? What does it look like? This has a great degree of ambiguity. Diverse teams could be service specific teams, project or initiative specific teams, etc. What role envision BIPOCs with intersecting social diversity dimensions will play in creating diverse teams? Will members of diverse BIPOC community organizations, groups or leaders be consulted on ways/strategies to create diverse teams? How will success be measured & monitored and by whom?

Complete a pay study in all City of Missoula departments to address any existing inequities, utilizing data from comparable cities and employers

Encourage employee growth and improvement by providing regular training opportunities

What content will be included in the training opportunities? What areas of growth and improvement are considered valuable and important? To what degree are trainings re equity, justice, diversity, inclusion seen as needed and crucial? Will part of the regular training be a commitment to an ongoing learning process to support individual and collective learning related to equity, diversity, inclusion, white privilege, white dominant culture, antiracism, etc.? How will employee growth through trainings be evaluated and used as a CQI feedback loop?

Create systems that promote mentorship and the exchange of experience and knowledge

What specific mentorship programs will be created for BIPOCs with intersecting social diversity dimensions? Who will function in the role of mentor? Will members of diverse BIPOC community organizations, groups or leaders be consulted on the development & evaluation of culturally relevant mentorship programs and processes?

- 1 ***Goal 3 Solve space needs across departments to better serve residents. Consider new ways to conduct work, such as formal work-from-home policies***
- 1 ***Goal 4 Review and realign organizational structure to support collaboration and effective delivery of service***
- 1 ***Goal 5 Address workplace safety concerns***

Specific Terms or Language of Equity, Justice, Diversity, Inclusion, etc.

Frequency

Racial, social & economic equity, health equity, equitable, equal access	18
All – all people, every aspect, all ages, abilities, all areas of city/all neighborhoods, etc.	12
Provide access to, accessible for all	6
Inclusive, inclusion	4

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Diversity, diverse	4
Culture, cultural, culturally	4
People groups – Native, CSKT	3
Fairness	2
Social Justice	2
Inequities & disparities	2
Implicit bias	1
Dismantle systems of privilege & oppression	1
Parity	1

Strategic Plan: Overview and Summary of Findings

Findings are presented based on the various sections of the strategic plan. First, an overall mean rating with equivalent percentages is presented for each component of the plan. Then thoughts about what the ratings may suggest or represent follow.

Mission, Vision, Operating and Guiding Principles

The overall mean rating for the mission, vision, operating and guiding principles is 3.25 out of 4.0 (equivalent to 81.25%), suggesting that there are significant amounts of terms and language of equity, diversity, and inclusion mentioned and used. This represents the City's commitment to articulate with clarity and precision its missional intentions of being guided by and operating from a position of inclusivity, diversity, and equity. Of these four aspects, the City's vision and guiding principles received a perfect rating of 4.0 (equivalent to a 100%) because they explicitly used equity, justice, diversity, and inclusion language and terms that are definitive and substantive. In essence, these two aspects were *diversity-permeated and infused*

Strategic Areas

There are five strategic areas. Each area was evaluated and results presented in a hierarchical order based on strength of the overall rating. Areas one and two both received an overall mean rating of 3.25 out of

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4.0 (equivalent to 81.25%). The City clearly recognizes the importance and value of integrating equity, justice, diversity, and inclusion in safety & wellness as well as in community design & livability. The ratings in these two areas, however, contrast sharply with the remaining three. For example, the areas of economic health and environmental quality received overall mean ratings of 2.0 (equivalent to 50%) and 1.67 (equivalent to 41.75%) respectively. The final area, organizational excellence, received the lowest rating of 1.50 (equivalent to 37.5%).

The rating of 2.0, suggests that terms or language of racial equity, social justice, diversity, and inclusion are implied. There are implicit references but language and terms are not directly used nor stated in a straightforward/forthright manner. Thus, in the area of economics, the City's language must demonstrate explicitly its recognition and commitment to a healthy, equitable, inclusive, and just economic reality.

Furthermore, the overall mean rating of 1.50 in the area of organizational excellence seems to indicate that there is very limited or an absence of terms or language relating to racial equity, social justice, diversity, and inclusion. As the City strives for distinctiveness and quality in its organizational structures, its language must be infused with and convey that equity, justice, inclusion, and diversity are crucial elements in achieving the excellence it hopes to achieve in its departments or programs. Consequently, the City must evaluate how it plans to intentionally integrate diversity of people groups in its structures as well as inclusive and equitable processes, procedures, and policies.

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Figure 1. Comparison of Five Strategic Areas

Finally, the overall strategic plan has a mean rating of 2.13 indicating that, in its totality, the language and use of terms relating to equity, diversity, justice, and inclusion are primarily implied rather than directly used or stated. This summative rating is affected by the limited references, language or terms of diversity, equity and inclusion in areas of economic health, environmental quality, and organizational excellence. Economic health and organizational excellence need to have diversity, equity and inclusion terms permeating their goals and activities in explicit and intentional ways.

Common Themes and Transformative Questions to Consider

There are four themes that emerged in evaluating the content and processes within the strategic plan using a critical paradigm and racial justice & equity lens.

- I. Engagement and involvement with BIPOCs with intersecting social diversity dimensions are required for meaningful participation, decision-making, and consultation on program, services, and planned opportunities

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- II. It will be important for the City to consider, whose definitions and meanings will be invited/solicited, included, privileged, ignored or marginalized whether unintentionally
- III. Integrating linguistically and culturally relevant/meaningful programs, services, and opportunities need thoughtful planning and implementation
- IV. Incorporating evaluative, monitoring, and accountability processes are essential, that is, data that serve as continuous quality improvement (CQI) feedback loops

Social Transformative Actions

There are two main transformative action recommendations.

- I. Re-engage on a deeper level with the strategic plan while reflecting on the questions raised and the ratings received. Allow the questions to stimulate change and innovation as well as inspire transformation.
- II. Actively engage with the strategic plan and explicitly include diversity and inclusion goals and deliverables with indicators of progress and processes for monitoring and evaluation in the following two areas.
 - **Strategic plan economic health area:**
 - Develop short and long-term goals regarding the economic health and wellbeing of BIPOCs with intersecting social diversity dimensions and have regular assessments of progress.
 - **Organizational excellence area:** develop goals and objectives that--
 - Acknowledge explicitly the value of employees having knowledge and experiences in working with diverse communities and people

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- Incorporate into competencies: a) racial justice knowledge, b) intercultural skills & practices c) knowledge of and experience with diversity, and d) cultural literacy & cultural intelligence
- Use explicit and clear rather than ambiguous language such as, “*engage in recruitment and hiring practices aimed at creating diverse teams.*” This has ambiguity because diverse teams could be subject or issue specific, project or area focused. Need to convey directly the goal of integrating diverse people groups with intersecting identities and social diversity dimensions in the employee pool, i.e., commitment and a process that focus on hiring to address conspicuous racial and ethnic inequities, addressing the hiring of employees who represent communities of color, immigrants, and refugees within the confines of current law.



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City Council Rule 33 Appointments Audit

The focus was on evaluating appointment processes and procedures through a critical framework and a racial justice and equity lens. Similar to the strategic plan, an important component of the audit was asking crucial questions to raise awareness of taken-for-granted or inherent assumptions, biases, norms, expectations, or conventions that may unwittingly give privilege or create obstacles/ hardships for certain citizens. In addition, the questions are designed to encourage the City to engage in its own scrutiny and consider potential ways to improve its processes.

Also, of importance, was the degree to which current processes support or inhibit the stated goal of achieving *greatest citizen involvement & participation*. Ultimately, the hope is for the City to reflect on traditional and non-traditional alternatives for obtaining the greatest citizen involvement and participation.

The table below outlined transformative questions and it is followed by an overview and summary of findings then transformative social action recommendations are offered.

Table 2 City Council Rule 33 Audit

Key Documents	Section	Evaluation of Written Appointment Procedural Process
Rule 33 Appointments Purpose	A	<p>...to assure the greatest citizen involvement and participation How does the City “assure” greatest involvement & participation? What does this look like? Who determines/ decides what <i>greatest citizen involvement</i> is and how it is achieved? What standard, evaluative criteria, or benchmarks are used? How often is greatest citizen involvement & participation assessed & by whom? How and who assure involvement of BIPOCs with varying intersecting social diversity dimensions? What might be creative ways to assure their involvement & participation? With whom might you partner in the community to assure involvement & participation? Might this be one form of participation & involvement?</p> <p>...achieve competent and qualified appointments What standards, evaluative criteria, or benchmark are used to determine competence and qualifications? Whose definitions or voices are privileged? How often are these standards or criteria for competence & qualifications reviewed, modified, updated and by whom?</p> <p>Are there specific competencies related to cultural knowledge, humility, intelligence, & skills including diversity, equity, justice, inclusiveness? With whom</p>

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Key Documents

Section

Evaluation of Written Appointment Procedural Process

might Council consult with in the community to gain input on deciding and assessing what it means to be competent and qualified?

Definition of Citizen Participation

Sherry R. Arnstein

- The **redistribution of power** that enables the have-not citizens to be deliberately included in the future.
 - "A Ladder of Citizen Participation," *Journal of the American Institute of Planners*

James V. Cunningham


- The **process of exercising power** on decision making in the regional community by non-experts/citizens
 - "Citizen Participation in Public Affairs" *Public Administration Review*

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Key Documents	Section	Evaluation of Written Appointment Procedural Process
Designated Council Committees	C	<p>...designated committee will interview and assess applicants</p> <p>What standards, evaluative criteria, or benchmark are used in the assessment? By whom and how are assessment criteria developed? Are assessments inclusive of equity, justice, diversity and cultural knowledge, intelligence, & skills? How often are assessment criteria reviewed, modified, updated & by whom? With whom might Council partner in community to offer insights and recommendation on assessing applicants?</p> <p>Are assessments completed independently by committee members as a form of interrater reliability? What monitoring and accountability processes are in place to ensure effectiveness and enhanced objectivity?</p> <p>To what degree does the committee’s composition represents the intersection of ethno-racial, cultural and linguistic identity with other social diversity dimensions? If this composition is non-existent, are there other ways to involve diverse people groups and communities? For example, could they be engaged to offer their recommendations on the assessment process? Might this be one way to conceptualize the goal of greatest citizen involvement & participation?</p>



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Key Documents	Section	Evaluation of Written Appointment Procedural Process
Council Appointment s, Notice of Vacancy	E	<p>...the City Clerk issues a press release advertising</p>  <p>What media platform or sources are used for the press release? How does Council determine if the media source(s) is reaching a wide group of individuals? What use currently & historically to assess effectiveness of press release in informing diverse people groups? What other avenues could explore for advertising?</p> <p>What is the average number of applications? What is the stated numeric goal? How frequently is the desired number of applications received? What is the process if there is only one applicant?</p> <p>To what degree is the current advertising process supporting or inhibiting the stated goal of achieving greatest citizen involvement & participation? How do you ensure that BIPOCs with varying intersecting social diversity dimensions are aware of openings? Are press releases known in these diverse communities?</p> <p>...specify any qualifications or requirements for the position</p> <p>How are qualifications determined & decided? Are there specific knowledge, skills, and value-based qualifications? Whom do the stated qualifications privilege and whom do they automatically disqualify? Do they include goodness-of-fit as well as mentoring capability if applicant shows promise? Could mentoring be another avenue to ensure greatest participation & involvement?</p> <p>How often are qualifications reviewed or assessed and updated/modified and by whom? How do interested citizens come to know what are the qualifications?</p> <p>.... applications accepted by City</p> <p>How do interested citizens know where can obtain or retrieve application? Is there a standardized application for all appointments? Are there multiple ways to apply and submit application?</p> <p>To what degree does the application process supports or creates barriers to achieving the stated goal of greatest citizen involvement & participation? How often is the application process evaluated to determine its effectiveness and how it contributes or impedes the goal of greatest participation & involvement? Are there unintended obstacles or privileges for some citizen groups? Which groups find the process relatively easy and which ones find it difficult or onerous? Where can feedback about the application process be made?</p> <p>Is demographic information solicited? How frequently are applications reviewed, modified or updated & by whom?</p>

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Council
 Appointment
 s, Committee
 Review of
 Applicant

- F
- ...committee shall establish questions**
 What is the focus and nature of questions? To what degree are the questions related to or correspond with established eligibility criteria, qualifications/ requirements? Are there specific knowledge, skills, and value-based questions? Are there questions relating to equity, inclusion, justice, diversity & cultural knowledge, skills, or values?
 What is the decision-making process for determining which questions are included or excluded? Who screens the questions? Who in the community might be consulted about the questions to obtain feedback and recommendations? Could this potentially be one way that greatest participation & involvement be met?
- ...schedule individual applicant interviews**
 When are interviews usually scheduled? Are there a range of available time options to accommodate citizen's schedules? Or are the times set with limited flexibility? To what degree does the goal of greatest citizen participation & involvement guide the scheduling process? How often evaluate the impact of times for interviews on goal to achieve greatest citizen involvement & participation? Does timing unwittingly privilege some citizens while creating hardships for others?
- ...decision to reschedule, consider applicant's paper or drop applicant**
 What criteria are used to determine/decide which of the above options are implemented? What is the decision-making process?
- ...a set of the same questions to insure equitable evaluation**
 What does equitable evaluation look like? What does it entail? Is there a standardized process for determining the quality level or appropriateness level of interviewee responses? For example, is there an objective rating scale or measurement process? Is there a standardized assessment process for determining if interviewee responses support their suitability & competence for the role? Are the responses evaluated independently to reduce risks of bias then discussed?
 Who in the community could be consulted regarding the equity of the evaluation? Could this potentially be one way that greatest participation & involvement be met? How often is the equitable evaluation process reviewed & by whom? How would you know if the evaluation process is equitable or not? What would you look for, what evidence or measure would you seek? With whom might you partner in the community to review and assess the process? Could this also be another opportunity to ensure greatest involvement?
- Committee make its recommendations**
 What is the decision-making/deliberation process used by the Committee to come to readiness to make a recommendation? What criteria are used? Are there unexplored inequities, inherent or implicit assumptions & biases in the deliberation/decision-making process? When making recommendations, to what degree are decisions guided by the goal of achieving greatest citizen participation & involvement?

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Key Documents	Section	Evaluation of Written Appointment Procedural Process
Mayoral Appointments	H	<p>...review nominee’s qualifications as it sees fit and & recommendations</p> <p>What objective measures or criteria are used in the review? What does “as it sees fit” means? Is there a standardized assessment process for determining if nominee qualifications support their suitability & competence for the role? When making recommendations, to what degree are decisions guided by the goal of achieving greatest citizen participation & involvement?</p>
Criteria for Appointments	I	<p>Particular needs or area of expertise required...</p> <p>How are needs of Boards and Commissions assessed & by whom? Where are the clearly articulated descriptions of the areas of expertise for the various Boards and Commissions? Who developed the descriptions and how often are they reviewed, modified or updated?</p> <p>Are there inherent or taken-for-granted assumptions & implicit bias in descriptions? To what degree do the stated areas of expertise unwittingly exclude or ignore classes or groups of people? Are the needs and areas of expertise inclusive of knowledge, skills, value-base relating to equity, justice, diversity, cultural intelligence, etc.?</p> <p>What evaluative criteria are used to assess whether an applicant or nominee has the needed areas of expertise? Are there unexplored inequities in the evaluative and decision-making process? If an applicant show promise, are there mentoring opportunities? What opportunities exist for ethno-racial, diverse individuals with intersecting social identities who have a growing body of knowledge, skills, values as well as leadership potential?</p> <p>What is the process for informing applicants who were not selected?</p> <p>Council commitment to encourage broad City participation</p> <p>What is the definition of “broad City participation”? How inclusive is it of multiple ways of participating? How is this used as a criterion in the appointment process? How and in what ways is this commitment actualized? What metrics, benchmarks, etc. inform the Council in determining that progress is being made toward broad City participation or that it has been achieved? What monitoring and accountability processes are used?</p> <p>How is “to encourage” understood and defined by Council? What historical and current steps, specific activities, mechanisms, etc., has Council engaged in to “encourage” broad City participation? How effective or successful have been the efforts? What evaluative criteria are used to assess effectiveness and success? With whom in the community could the Council partner so that this commitment become a conjoint effort? Could this be considered another way of participating?</p>

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Overview and Summary of Findings

The Council has created thoughtful procedures for appointments to various boards, agencies, and commissions. These processes are guided by the stated purpose and embedded goals of: 1) assuring the greatest citizen involvement and participation, and 2) having competent and qualified appointments. This is a worthy endeavor and the Council must be commended.

To achieve success in its goals, Council needs to evaluate implicit assumptions and norms as well as taken-for-granted ways of operating in its established procedures, which is the reason for the questioning technique used in the audit. Using the strategy of questioning is intended to facilitate a deeper level of active re-engagement with Rule 33. Furthermore, questioning is crucial, as noted previously, to innovation, equity-based decisions and practices. Furthermore, questions help to develop insights and critical thought and they invite new possibilities, dimensions, and perspectives. More importantly, questions function as an incentive to act in equitable, just, and inclusive ways. When questions are asked painstakingly and thoughtfully, they stimulate change and inspire transformation.



Themes of Transformative Questions

There are several categories of transformative questions that emerged as outlined below. This is not an exhaustive list.

- I. Invitation to reflect on definitions and meanings –whose definitions are inherently privileged and whose are unwittingly ignored, marginalized, or excluded?
- II. Broadening ways for participation & involvement—Partnering or consulting with diverse community groups around various processes. Could this be considered another way of participating?
- III. Eligibility –could applicants that show promise, emerging knowledge, skills, and value-base as well as leadership abilities be considered and allowed to participate through mentoring?

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- IV.** Evaluating announcement/press release, application, scheduling, assessment processes, etc., that have been used historically and currently. What ways do they support or inhibit, privilege or disfranchise participation & involvement and for whom?
- V.** Considering objective measures, criteria, benchmarks –what are used?
- VI.** Degree guided by goal of achieving greatest citizen participation & involvement; how does this inform and guide procedures explicitly & intentionally?
- VII.** Ensuring BIPOCs with intersecting social diversity dimensions involvement & participation –are there multiple avenues for involvement traditionally and non-traditionally?

Social Transformative Actions

- I.** Re-engage on a deeper level with the Rule 33, while reflecting on the questions raised. Allow the questions to stimulate change and innovation as well as inspire transformation.
- II.** Define and operationalize, ensuring that there are multiple perspectives, “*greatest citizen involvement and participation.*”
- III.** Grapple with and assess the historical and current steps, specific activities, mechanisms, benchmarks, etc., that have been used to “encourage” broad City participation. Has the encouragement been active or passive? Identify what needs to change and consider how will determine if efforts have been effective or successful.
- IV.** Delineate specific involvement opportunities desire for BIPOC with intersecting social diversity dimensions. Consider some non-traditional avenues for participation.
- V.** Incorporate evaluative, monitoring, and accountability processes/data for all procedural processes, (e.g., press release, application process, interviewing & assessment, etc.) that will serve as continuous quality improvement (CQI) feedback loops.

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- VI.** Invite Council members and diverse individuals to go through the application, interviewing, & assessment processes to obtain honest and authentic feedback and solicit recommendations.

Missoula City Website Audit

The website and webpages are important communication vehicles where residents and visitors learn, both explicitly and implicitly, what is valued, important, or significant to the City and its departments. Moreover, people perceive and grasp the City's commitments based on what is featured, highlighted, and presented. Thus, part of the audit process was to examine the City's website and departmental webpages to determine whether their espoused commitment to equity, diversity, inclusion, and justice is visibly prominent and explicitly conveyed.

A diversity and inclusion statement, (whether stand-alone or integrated in mission, vision, guiding/operational principles, and value statements), demonstrates an active commitment to building inclusive, diverse, and equitable spaces or places that are welcoming to & affirming of the varied needs, opportunities, services, etc., required by diverse people groups with intersecting social identities. These statements should be, ideally, more than just for promotion and public image.

Therefore, the City's website and departmental pages were evaluated on the following: Is a diversity, inclusion, equity and/or nondiscrimination policy visible and prominently posted on webpages e.g., do departments publicly articulate clear statements of diversity, justice, equity and inclusion, either standalone or integrated in its mission, value or vision statement that are noticeable and observable? Are any aspects or information on website or webpage sensitive or responsive to linguistic diversity in its geographical area?

This section follows a similar pattern. There is a table that with transformative questions, followed by a summary of findings and concludes with transformative action recommendations.

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Table 3 City Website & Departmental Webpages Audit

Department Webpage Terms, Language or Imagery when Applicable	
Parks & Recreation	<p><i>Guiding Mission: Missoula Parks and Recreation is essential to the quality and way of life for individuals, families, community, and the environment. Our guiding mission is to enhance the quality of life in our community by...</i></p> <p><i>Ensuring that all people feel safe, welcome and valued in parks and recreation facilities and programs.</i></p> <p><i>ADA Compliance and Non-Discrimination: Parks and Recreation does not discriminate against or exclude anyone from participation in any programs or services on the basis of his or her actual or perceived <i>race, color, national origin, ancestry, religion, creed, sex, age, marital or familial status, physical or mental disability, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression or economic status.</i></i></p> <p><i>Land Acknowledgement crafted in partnership with Séliš-Qłispé Cultural Committee. The City of Missoula acknowledges that we are in <i>the aboriginal territories of the Salish, Kootenai, and Kalispel people.</i> Today, we honor the path they have always shown us in caring for this place for the generations to come.</i></p> <p><i>Social Equity in Parks & Recreation – articulated position statement and explanation on equality & equity with imagery. Missoula Parks and Rec works to ensure all residents have equitable access to programs and services, regardless of <i>ethnic origin, socioeconomic level, color, language, abilities, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, race, or age.</i></i></p>
Parks & Recreation webpages featured commitment & position in a clearly evident & observable manner.	
Public Works & Mobility	<p><i>Part of its <u>welcome statement</u>: The Public Works Department strives to ensure a high quality of life for Missoula’s citizens, visitors, and businesses by providing services essential for safe, healthy living and working environments as well as safe travel on local roadways</i></p>
Public Works & Mobility mission, vision, or value statement with equity, justice, diversity & inclusion position was <u>not</u> identifiable or evident on webpages.	
<p><i><u>Statement on initial page</u>: Community Planning, Development, & Innovation promotes equitable growth and a resilient, sustainable community through the</i></p>	

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Department Webpage Terms, Language or Imagery when Applicable

Community
 Planning,
 Development,
 and Innovation

creation of innovative programs, policies and planning, and the efficient and responsive application of code and delivery of development services.

Creating a **Diverse** and Vibrant Missoula: Increase housing options that are affordable to **all levels** of our community; Ensure a strong **safety net** for those living in poverty...; Support economic development opportunities...; ...engage **all** Missoula residents through their Neighborhood Councils

*Emergency winter shelter handout in **English & Spanish***

CPDI mission, vision, value statement with equity, diversity & inclusion position was not identified on webpages

Missoula Police
 Department

Mission statement & organizational vision link --Mission: We are a community-oriented agency committed to delivering professional police service to Missoula. We strive to improve the quality of life of our citizens and the livability of our community.

Values: ...We embrace **diversity** and the **dignity** of **each person**. We respect and protect **human rights**.

Vision: Members of the Missoula Police Department are committed in preserving a high quality of life and feeling of **safety** for the City's **diverse** population. The Department balances quick responses to all crimes with community problem solving and crime prevention approaches. We will interact with the public as our partners and as customers worthy of our best service. We will constantly evaluate and improve our efforts to enhance public **safety** with the goal of improving the quality of life while at the same time maintaining respect for individual **rights** and human **dignity**.

GLBTIQ Community Liaison Stop Bias: Crime Prevention Officer, Ethan Smith, acts as a liaison to many **different groups** in the community including the **GLBTIQ** (gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, intersex and queer community) The Missoula Police Department has recently worked with the **GLBTIQ** to launch a public campaign to report **bias based** crimes. Stop Bias was created to help victims of **bias crimes** report these incidents directly to the Police Department, as well as the traditional reporting methods.

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Department Webpage Terms, Language or Imagery when Applicable

MPD mission, vision, & value statement with diversity & inclusion position was available *only* by clicking a PDF document link rather than being prominent or visibly posted on webpages.

Human Resources *Job page: We invite and encourage **all** people to join us in our pursuit to make a difference in your life and our community. We believe that **all** people should have full and **equal access** to opportunities, power, and resources.*

*Missoula has a variety of careers for people of **all** experiences and backgrounds whom **all** come together with a singular purpose—to serve the residents, businesses, and visitors.*

HR did not identify a mission, vision, or value statement with equity, justice, diversity & inclusion position infused or stand-alone. Not articulated nor visibly prominent on webpages

Missoula Animal Control *Mission: Missoula City-County Animal Control is dedicated to the protection and care of **all** domestic animals and the **safety** of the public. through enforcement, education and sheltering, Missoula Animal Control strives to care for Missoula County's lost, injured, and abused animals.*

Missoula Redevelopment Agency *Mission Statement: MRA partners with public and private entities to help improve economic vitality, create jobs and encourage investment in the Districts*

Fire Department *Mission Statement: Save lives, protect property, ease pain and suffering.*

Parking Commission *Mission Statement: Our mission is to work with government, businesses, and citizens to provide and manage parking and parking alternatives.*

City-County Health *Mission Statement: The Missoula City-County Health Department's mission is to build conditions that support the health of people, environments, and communities.*

Above departments' webpages had clearly identifiable mission statements. Language of equity, inclusion, diversity, justice was not infused nor were there any evident stand-alone statements of commitment

City Attorney

City Clerk

Financial Services

No position or commitment

Municipal Court

articulated nor visibly prominent

GIS Services

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Department Webpage Terms, Language or Imagery when Applicable

Above departments did not have a posted mission, vision, or value statement with or without the language of equity, justice, diversity & inclusion.

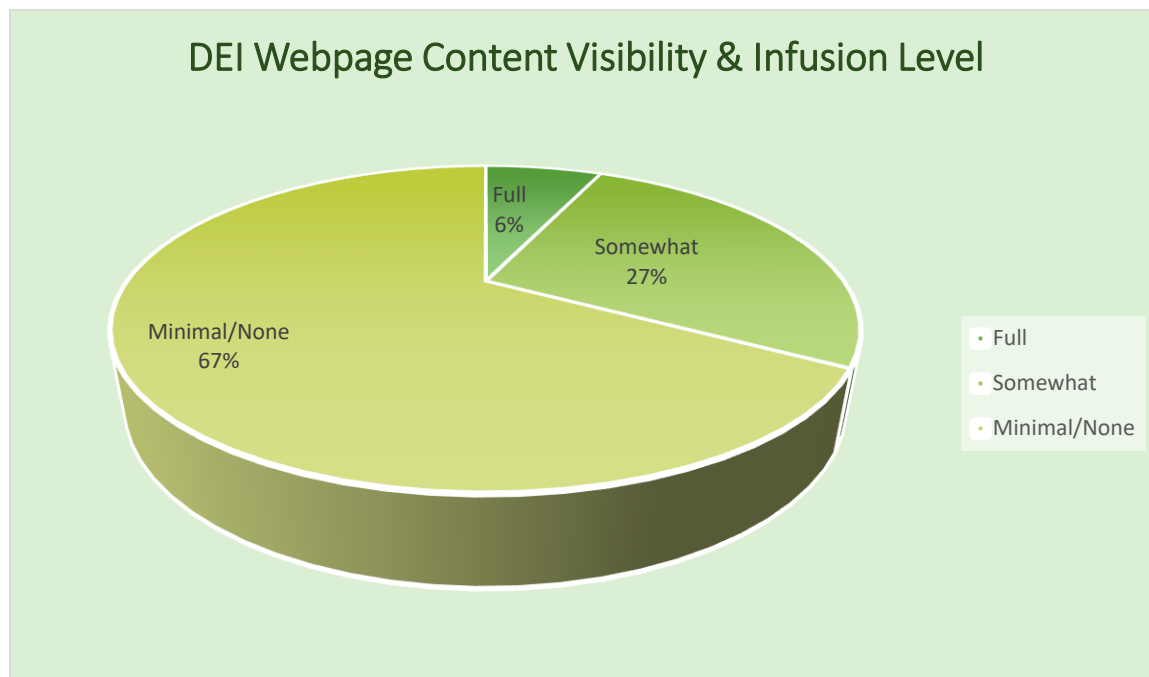
Specific Terms or Language	Frequency
Safe, safety	7
All, everyone, each person	5
# of diverse people groups identified	5
Equitable or equal access	3
Diverse/diversity	3
Diversity dimensions list/categories	3
Bias	3
Human/individual rights	2
Human dignity	2
Valued	1
Discriminate/exclude	1

Overview and Summary of Findings

The exploration and examination of Missoula City and departmental webpages revealed that statements infused with language of equity, justice, diversity and inclusion were limited. In fact, a significant portion of departments' webpages (67%) contained minimal to no key equitable, inclusive, justice, or diversity terms nor language. Moreover, several departments with articulated mission or vision statements, such as, Missoula Redevelopment Agency, Fire, Parking Commission, and City-County Health did not infuse explicit equitable or diversity content nor did they have a stand-alone position or commitment statement. Additionally, there were departments, (i.e., City Attorney, City Clerk, Financial Services, Municipal Court, & GIS Services) without any missional or diversity statements, language or content.

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The pie chart below captures pictorially the aforementioned statistics about the level of visibility and infusion related to diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) content evident on City departments' webpages. Three broad categories were used to rate content—fully visible & infused; somewhat visible & infused; and minimal to not visible nor infused.



An exception to this consistent pattern was Parks and Recreation with webpages having a visible and prominent ADA compliance and non-discrimination policy as well as a land acknowledgement developed in partnership with Séliš-Qłispé Cultural Committee, and a social equity position statement with explanations. When evaluating terms used, the most frequent was *safe* or *safety* followed by *all*. Two departments, Parks and Recreation and MPD *identified important diversity dimensions and named diverse people groups*.

Overall, the webpages language and terms of equity, justice, diversity, and inclusion were not definitive, explicit, substantive, or visible. An important and relevant question is, does this matter? Experts confirmed the importance of having visible and prominent DEI declarations especially for entities that espouse a commitment to such standards and principles. Visible and obvious statements that declare and articulate equity, justice,

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diversity and inclusion positions with explanations were important vehicles/avenues for reminding residents and visitors (in concrete & tangible ways) about the City's missional aspirations, objectives, and intentions. The saying, "*seeing is believing*" expresses the crucial nature of having optically discernible evidence.

Furthermore, the visible prominence of these statements can act as a unifying sentiment or mindset that shows everyone what is most important to the City. Thus, there is power in summarizing values relating to diversity, justice, inclusion, nondiscrimination, equity, etc., even if it is only a few succinct sentences and posting for all to see.

Social Transformative Actions

The social transformative actions recommended encompass an admixture of general for all departments and specific ones for particular departments. The social transformative actions are not directives nor mandates but areas for consideration, intending to stimulate change and inspire change.

General Social Transformative Actions

Every department needs to put its equity, justice, diversity, and inclusion position into words and make it public, explicitly demonstrating to *everyone* {especially ethno-racial, linguistic, and culturally diverse people groups} the City's commitment to "*walking the walk*," as well as "*talking the talk*." There is value in accomplishing this task. Beyond "*walking the walk*, and *talking the talk*," such a statement or position has been found to increase accountability, trust, and belief. Remember, "*seeing is believing*."

**Equity, justice, diversity, and inclusion position or statement
would express that the City & its departments:**

Are devoted to making a positive difference for all people including ethno-racial, linguistic, and culturally diverse people groups

Have established firm commitments and obligations to ensure that they are working towards fulfilling diversity and inclusion goals as well as strategic plans in these areas

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The statement would be a verbal and visible representation of the City's determination to ensure that everyone, regardless of the intersections of social identities enjoys & experiences just and equitable treatment, services, considerations, opportunities, and protections within municipal systems and structures.

The itemized list below has delineated specific transformative actions for every department.

1. Departments might benefit from a review of Parks & Recreation webpages.
2. Statements that use “all,” “all citizens,” “everyone” or the broader Missoula community could be strengthened by specifying communities or groups of people in Missoula that will or are benefiting from department’s commitments, services, equity, justice, diversity, and inclusion efforts, programs, initiatives, etc.
3. Identify specific initiatives attached to equity, justice, diversity, and inclusion statement: what programs, policies, planning, services, etc., are departments engaged and how know if they are effective and working well? What monitoring and accountability processes exist?
4. It is important for all departments to:
 - a) “Advertise” their commitments to equity, justice, diversity, and inclusion
 - b) Share about their willingness to contribute to equitable spaces, and
 - c) Honor the land occupy; commit to the life and labor associated with it
 - d) Offer and describe specific departmental actions or initiatives that accurately reflect, in practice, their departments’ *advertised commitments*
 - e) Commit to and actualize the importance of reaching out and partnering/working with diverse groups and report about efforts and results on webpages

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- f) Honor linguistic diversity, if not currently. They may want to follow the example of Community Planning, Development, and Innovation and translate relevant/crucial information or materials into languages of diverse people groups who use services or programs and/or reside in department's geographical area.

Specific Transformative Actions

There were two departments with a range of diversity, equity, justice and inclusion content and a few areas needed consideration.

Social Transformative Actions for Parks & Recreation:

- Add the pronoun, "their," in list itemized in the phrase, "on the basis of his, her, or their..." to convey pronoun inclusivity.



Remember, "seeing is believing."



- Reflect on highlighted commitment to equity for all Missoula citizens, and consider *how* department is achieving or actualizing this commitment.
- The inclusion of a land acknowledgement on the website was helpful, but it is important to go beyond and consider/articulate *how* the department commits to honoring the land, life and labor of Indigenous people.
- Explaining the difference between equity and equality seen an important pre-cursor to stating the department's commitment to providing equitable access to their services. Articulate explicit programs

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or initiatives Parks and Recreation have designed to address social equity. Presenting and publishing this information strengthens and gives credence to stated position.

Social Transformative Actions for Missoula Police Department:

- At a minimum, add a meaningful sentence or two to preface its mission & organizational vision link as is the practice for other information on webpages.
- MPD webpage included information for a crime prevention officer dedicated as the community liaison to the GLBTIQ+ community, but not for any identified or explicitly named ethno-racial, linguistic, and culturally diverse people groups, that is, BIPOC communities. This seems like something MPD needs to revisit given that the primary focus is to prevent and report bias-based crimes.
 - It clearly reported MPD *“has recently worked with the GLBTIQ to launch a public campaign to report bias based crimes. Stop Bias was created to help victims of bias crimes report these incidents directly to the Police Department.”* To what degree is this *Stop Bias Initiative* inclusive of stopping, preventing, or reporting racially driven bias? Consider what this major oversight may be communicating.
- The department should consider making the electronic form to report bias and hate crimes more readily accessible, noticeable, and available.
- Consider strengthening department’s stated belief in *diversity and dignity of all people* by adding in *how* this belief is actualized. This would involve a deeper and more explicit outline of *how* and *what* is being done as well as specific monitoring and accountability processes.

Human Resources Orientation PowerPoint Audit

New employee orientation could be classified as an important opportunity to acclimate employees to the City’s values and perspectives relating to equity, inclusion, justice, and diversity. It can be a time to inspire, influence, and orient employees to what is important to HR and to the City as a municipal system.

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Throughout orientation, new employees perceive and grasp the City’s commitments based on what is featured, highlighted, and presented. Given its significance, the orientation presentation has been evaluated noting areas of strengths and offering transformative action recommendations relating to equity, inclusion, justice and diversity.

As with previous audits, the assessment and evaluative technique of asking critical questions, followed by a summary of findings, and specific recommendations were used. To reiterate, questioning is purposeful as it raises awareness of taken-for-granted or implicit assumptions or conventions. Additionally, this technique was intended to heighten City’s ability to reflect on implicit biases, voices, or definitions that may be unwittingly ignored or marginalized. Furthermore, questioning is crucial to innovation because questions help to develop and invite insights, critical thought, new possibilities, dimensions, and perspectives.

The table below is followed by a summary of findings and transformative action recommendations.

Table 4 HR Orientation PowerPoint

HR Orientation PPT
Terms, Language or Imagery (when applicable)

We share a commitment across departments to equity and social justice as an ongoing practice to measure effectiveness.

What does “*sharing a commitment*” means, looks like, and how is it actualized in practice? Are these discussed & explained? Are storied examples given of how sharing a commitment across department has occurred?

How are the terms “*equity & social justice*” understood and defined? In what ways are equity & social justice an ongoing practice? What are specific storied examples of ongoing practice across departments? Are specific definitions offered as well as storied examples of the ongoing practice of equity & social justice?

How is effectiveness measured, by whom, and how often? What specifically is measured? What assessment methods, metrics, and tools are used? Are specific storied examples offered to new employees? To measure effectiveness of what specifically?

HR Orientation PPT

Terms, Language or Imagery (when applicable)

City's mission, vision, guiding & operating principles

Review evaluative comments and questions about mission, vision, & guiding principles outlined in Strategic Plan audit.

Does HR have mission and vision statements that build on or extend the City's yet integrate important aspects of human resources? Are these shared and discussed?

Missoula City Demographics

Data on Black/African residents are conspicuously missing. This is an opportunity to share about all the ethno-racial, cultural and linguistic groups & communities that reside in Missoula, including resettled refugees and people of color that immigrated. Consider partnering with members of diverse communities to obtain rich highly textured content

Video – Goal: make Missoula the best place to work and live

A nice range of specific diversity dimensions with visible diverse images of people was included.

During or after video is there designated time for discussion and reflection? In addition to the video, what other diversity, inclusion, and equity training and discussions could be incorporated in new employee's orientation process?

Are diversity & inclusion discussed beyond specific discrete diversity dimensions to, perhaps, intersectionality, intercultural skills, etc.?

What metrics, benchmarks, and indicators for measuring diversity knowledge and understanding are used during the orientation? What is HR's short and long-term goals towards diversity, inclusion and equity and how regularly assess progress? Are HR goals shared during orientation?

Human Resourced Policy Manual

Discrimination & Harassment

Does HR have its own diversity, inclusion, justice, & equity policies or statements? Anti-discrimination policies or statements? How are they shared during orientation?

HR Orientation PPT

Terms, Language or Imagery (when applicable)

Specific Terms, Language, or Images Reflecting Diversity

Slide 6: City of Missoula Strategic Framework	Slide 7: Our Purpose with City's Mission & Vision
Slides 8-10: City's Guiding Principles	Slide 11: Missoula City Demographic Report
Slide 13: Video	Slide 15: Discrimination & Harassment

Overview and Summary

The new employee orientation PowerPoint has information that focused on inclusion, equity and social justice. This was a strength as it featured several areas relating to social justice, equity, and inclusion. A few will be highlighted. First, the presentation stated the City's strategic framework that outlined a shared commitment across departments to equity and social justice. Second, it presented the City's mission, vision and guiding principles. As previously noted in an audit of the City's strategic plan, the vision and guiding principles explicitly used equity, justice, diversity, and inclusion language and terms that were definitive and substantive. In essence, these two aspects are *diversity-permeated and infused*. Finally, the presentation included a video that visually captured the issue of inclusion with a range of diverse people groups with varying diversity dimensions.

Social Transformative Action Recommendations

There are four transformative actions recommended. As noted in previous audits, the recommendations are not directives nor mandates but areas for thoughtful consideration intending to stimulate change and

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inspire transformation so all people, including ethno-racial, linguistic and culturally diverse people groups and communities, can be valued and appreciated while having a sense of safety, place, belonging, and wellbeing.

Outline of Transformative Actions

1. Brief History:

- ❖ This is an opportunity to weave in precise historical information about the tribal nations of Missoula.
 - Incorporate a land, life, and labor acknowledgement developed and crafted in consultation with tribal groups. For example, Parks and Recreation webpage has a land acknowledgement developed in partnership with Séliš-Qłispé Cultural Committee. There is also an acknowledge written by the University's Native Law Student Association
 - Acknowledgement must go beyond perfunctory and performative statement
- ❖ Additionally, an opportunity to share Missoula's history of welcoming diverse refugee groups.
 - Resettled group from Asia (Hmong who has been in Missoula for over 40 years).
 - Resettled groups from various parts of the continent of Africa.
 - Resettled groups from other regions, such as Central and Southwestern Asia etc.
- ❖ Sharing these short yet powerful snapshot of historical information can convey, as nothing else can, the City's values relating to diversity and inclusion in demonstrable action.
- ❖ Sharing also could demonstrate inclusiveness and a recognition that diverse people groups have enhanced Missoula in immeasurable ways.

2. Equity & Social Justice Terms

- ❖ Establish and share definitions of equity and social justice that is consistent across departments.
- ❖ Share storied examples of the "ongoing practice" of equity & social justice across departments as well as storied examples of how it has been being measured and outcomes to date.

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3. Missoula Demographic Report

- ❖ Incorporate data on Black/African American population in Missoula. This information was conspicuously absent from the data chart.
 - Ensure that all ethno-racial, culturally, and linguistically diverse groups and communities are identified, e.g., Blacks, African groups who have immigrated (different from resettled refugees), Latin/Hispanic, Indigenous people groups & communities, diverse Asian and Pacific Islander groups, people of color who have immigrated from India, South America, etc.
- ❖ In fact, consider the value of doing more than listing them, meaning identify their contributions and share important cultural knowledge about them. This might be an opportunity to partner with diverse groups to ensuring the enhancement of cultural humility and cultural intelligence
- ❖ The following sources has information that may be helpful. However, cannot confirm or speak to the credibility of data.
 - <https://worldpopulationreview.com/us-cities/missoula-mt-population>
 - <https://suburbanstats.org/race/montana/missoula/how-many-black-or-african-american-people-live-in-missoula-montana>

4. Training Video on Inclusion:

- ❖ Consider integrating an initial and follow-up assessments that measure diversity knowledge and understanding based on training(s) during orientation.
- ❖ If not a current practice, consider integrating trainings or discussions that go beyond a focus on just the specific discrete diversity dimensions to, perhaps, intersectionality, privilege, systems of oppression, etc.
- ❖ Outline HR's short and long-term goals towards diversity, inclusion and equity and how regularly assess progress.
- ❖ Integrate and link initial new employee orientation assessment of diversity & inclusion knowledge, skills, and practices into performance objectives and appraisals/evaluation for employees.

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- Consider the value and power of performance appraisals/evaluations that close the proverbial loop and include progress on racial equity, diversity, inclusion, equity, and cultural intelligence goals.



Questions invite insights, critical thoughts, new possibilities, and perspectives

Parks & Recreation Activity/Recreation Guide Audit

Parks and Recreation activity guide outlined a range of programs and services that residents of all ages can participate in and enjoy. It was an opportunity to showcase the City’s commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion in tangible and specific ways for all its residents. The guide stated unequivocally, *“Equitable access to parks and recreation cultivates community ties and connects people more deeply to the fabric of our community—making Missoula a better place to live, work, and play.”* Given the recognized importance of parks and recreational opportunities to a deepen sense of community, the activity guide was evaluated noting areas of strengths and offering transformative action recommendations relating to equity, inclusion, justice, and diversity.

As with previous audits, this one followed the same rhythm and pattern. First is the assessment and evaluative technique of asking critical questions outlined in the table below, followed by a summary of findings concluding with specific transformative action recommendations. To reiterate, questioning was purposeful as it raises awareness of taken-for-granted or implicit biases, assumptions, or conventions. More importantly,

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questioning is seen as crucial to innovation because questions inevitably invite insights, critical thought, new possibilities and perspectives. Ultimately, questions can spur/induce transformative action.

Table 5 Parks & Recreation Activity Guide

Parks & Recreation Department Recreation Guide
Terms, Language or Imagery (when applicable)

Equity, Diversity, Inclusion at Parks & Recreation. Missoula Parks and Recreation, believes it is a right, not a privilege...We strive to ensure Missoula's parks and recreation facilities and services are equally accessible to all.....

What does “equally accessible to all” look like? Whose definition, viewpoint, or description was privileged vs. whose may be marginalized albeit unintentionally? How and in what ways do P & R strive to ensure equal access to all? How, by whom, and with what frequency do you measure if your process is effectiveness? What specifically is measured? What assessment methods, metrics, and tools have been used historically, currently?

Consider the following: are programs and services equally accessible to residents from ethno-racial, culturally, and linguistic diverse people groups and communities? Additionally, are programs and services equally accessible to individuals whose intersecting social identities include being differently abled with varying mobility levels or capabilities? How will you monitor evaluate, assess and measure equality of services for the aforementioned groups?

What specific service equity goals have been identified and what is the timeline? What specific results/outcomes are P & R seeking to achieve that will demonstrate equality of access?

City's mission, vision, guiding & operating principles

Review evaluative comments and questions about mission & vision outlined in Strategic Plan audit.

Consider integrating P & R's mission and vision statements stated on website

Quick and Easy Registration.... online at missoulaparks.org/register, in person at Currents in McCormick Park, or phone 721-PARK (7275) to register with Mastercard or Visa.

Kudos for offering multiple points to access and complete registration process. The varied points of access seem responsive to the range of resources, circumstances/ situations, and preferences of residents. To what degree have these points of access been monitored or evaluated to ensure that services are “equally accessible to all”? Are there also multiple options for payment?

Share the Fun Youth Recreation Grants Call 721-PARK for more information or download a request at www.missoulaparks.org.

Parks & Recreation Department Recreation Guide

Terms, Language or Imagery (when applicable)

How do people learn or come to know about the grants? What do your data tell you about who have been taking advantage of and benefitting from the grants? To what degree are ethno-racial, culturally, and linguistically diverse people groups and communities including immigrants & resettled refugees aware of this resource? And, to what degree have they benefitting from them?

Kudos for having web-based and telephone access points. To what degree have these points of access been monitored or evaluated to ensure that services are “equally accessible to all”? Can residents also come in person to apply for the grants? Are there other points of access that might be considered or ones that have not been used?

ADA Compliance and Non-Discrimination Parks and Recreation... Make ADA accommodation requests at least 14 days in advance. Department information is available in alternative formats.

For what programs or services might a resident make an accommodation request? Where should they be requested? What alternative formats are available? How might a person gain access to these alternative options?

What is Equity in Parks and Recreation?

What does equity look like for people with intersecting social identities that include being differently-abled? The images represent people with limited to no mobility issues nor challenges.

What was written is great! Consider, however, detailing the specific procedures or process that are in place to create inclusive and equitable environments for everyone including those with a range of ability and mobility levels

... Missoula is a city rich with open spaces and lots of places to run, walk, hike and play

Consider ways to make the language more inclusive of diverse differently-abled people groups and less ableist.

Recreation for all and Inclusive Recreation. We strive to create opportunities where we can all recreate together as a community.

What does all recreating together as a community look like? Whose definition or perception has been privileged? What opportunities are valued by various groups? How do you come to know what are the needs, values, desires and preferences of individuals whose intersecting social identities include being differently-abled with varying mobility levels or capabilities? Similarly, how do you come to know the needs, values, desires, and preferences of ethno-racial, culturally & linguistically diverse people groups and communities? What do they think recreating together as a community means and look like?

Overview and Summary of Findings

The Recreation Guide focused on diversity and inclusivity “right out the proverbial gate.” It used explicit diversity, equity, justice, and inclusion language in the first few pages that outlined the department’s commitment to addressing these ideals. This is an area of strength. Additionally, the guide offered several points of access to register for programs and services bearing witness to its inclusivity and dedication to equitable practices.

There were, however, some areas for consideration. First, although Missoula prides itself on offering “*unparalleled recreational, cultural and entrepreneurial opportunities,*” when browsing the recreation guide there was limited to no explicit options pertaining to culture specific activities. Given the various cultural and ethno-racial communities in Missoula, it would have been impressive to see specific offerings of classes, activities or camps on Indigenous & cultural arts, cooking, music, and much more.

Second, it would be crucial for Parks and Recreation to consider whose definitions, viewpoints, and perspectives were being privileged in their pledge to ensure services are “*equally accessible to all*” and in their commitment to create “*opportunities where we can all recreate together as a community.*” The department would need to monitor and assess the degree to which they know and understand the perspectives of individuals whose intersecting social identities include being differently-abled (with varying mobility levels or capabilities) as well as the viewpoints of ethno-racial, culturally, & linguistically diverse people groups and communities including immigrants & refugees.

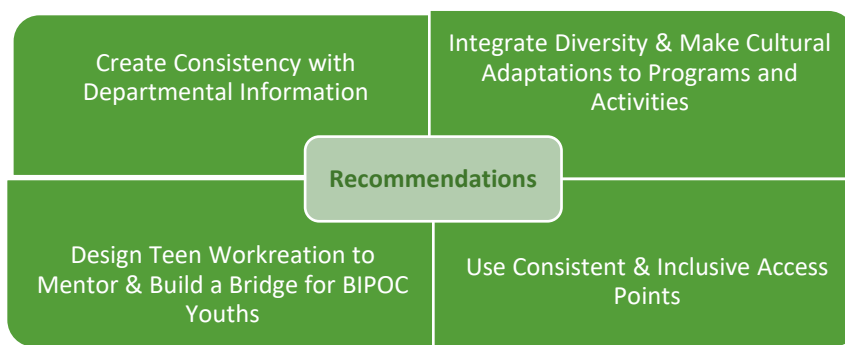
Finally, Parks and Recreation would need to re-evaluate the process of choosing images/pictures to display in the guide. The current ones did not portray, in an adequate manner, a range of visibly diverse ethno-racial people groups. The old adage, “a picture is worth a thousand words,” has relevance.

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Social Transformative Action

Transformative action recommendations, as noted previously, are neither directives nor mandates but areas for thoughtful consideration that are intended to stimulate change and inspire transformation so all people, including differently-abled, ethno-racial, linguistically, and culturally diverse people groups and communities, can be valued and included.

There were four main transformative action areas that emerged from the audit.



Detailed Outline of Four Areas for Transformation

1 Departmental Information and Commitments

- ❖ Create consistency among the information available on the website, published in the guide, and in any other materials. For example, consider aligning statements (mission, vision, values, etc.) across all publications. Additionally, consider using the land acknowledgement from the website on all publications, including the recreation guide to demonstrate cultural intelligence and respect for Missoula's Indigenous/Native populations.

2 Make Initial Steps to Integrate Diversity & Cultural Adaptation in Programs/Activities

- ❖ The Zootown Olympics that helped participants appreciate and celebrate the culture of the host nation, Japan, could be a model for other programs & services. This would take some creativity and planning; but beginning the process of permeating and infusing cultural knowledge would help with goal of inclusiveness.

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- For example: during animal-focused camps and activities P & R could integrate comparisons of animals---
 - a) during the time when Indigenous groups had stewardship of the land to now
 - b) from various places where Missoula's ethno-racial, cultural, & linguistic people groups may have originated

- ❖ Similar infusion could occur in arts & crafts activities, guided nature walks, nature-focused camps, & nature activities (again exposing participants to, celebrating, and appreciating the various arts/crafts & natural environments from the places where Missoula's ethno-racial, cultural, & linguistic people groups may have originated
 - These would be valuable opportunities to consult with and/or invite representatives from the various diverse groups to partner with the department. What a living, breathing example of inclusiveness and *recreating together as a community*.

- ❖ Develop service equity goals for specific activities and programs.
 - For example, soccer is one of the most popular sports in Africa, Latin, & Asian countries, and for Pacific Islanders. Consider planning and implementing intentional outreach targeting Missoula ethno-racial, cultural, & linguistic people groups and communities with origins from these areas to increase participation in this activity. Is this activity covered by the scholarship or recreation grant program?
 - Another potential target could be Missoula Movers walk or other similar activities. Not sure to what degree the planned time on Mondays at 9am would be feasible. But activities such as these could be potential opportunities to make linkages from Missoula ethno-racial, cultural, & linguistic people groups places of origins to Missoula natural environment.
 - The aforementioned would be additional living, breathing examples of inclusiveness and recreating together as a community

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3 Use Teen Workrecreation as a Mentoring Process & Bridge

- ❖ This could be another area to develop service equity goals. The program is an invaluable opportunity to develop and mentor youths of color (including immigrants and refugees) then use volunteer mentoring program as a bridge to actual employment, which would be one avenue to help achieve the goal of diversifying the City's workforce.
 - According to departmental data, how many ethno-racial and culturally diverse youths have participated in this opportunity?
 - Consider creating goals with timeline, ensuring the implementation of monitoring/evaluation processes to track/measure the actual increase of BIPOC youth participation and employment.

4 Maintain Consistent & Inclusive Point of Access Options

- ❖ The guide had variability in how to contact department with questions/concerns or how to access services and resources. On different pages of the guide, residents were directed to either email, apply online or at website, call a general number or call specific manager, call/text to request lessons, can come in-person, etc.
 - Consider the value of maintaining a consistent range of choices/options for communicating, applying, registering, requesting, etc., that are equitable and inclusive, keeping in mind that not everyone has access to a smartphone, computer, internet/Wi-Fi. Thus, the options would need to be inclusive of web-based, phone, in-person, paper, etc.
 - The range of options would indicate quite clearly the department's commitment to equity, inclusion, justice, and diversity.
- ❖ It might be useful to monitor and assess how often the various options have been utilized and their effectiveness from a programmatic and customer-focused perspective.

Missoula Redevelopment Agency (MRA) Audit

This audit scrutinized key documents of MRA.

Table 6 MRA

Key Documents	Rating	Terms, language (or imagery when applicable) used or implied
Downtown Master Plan	3	Vision: “Affordable living and rentable building spaces for everyone” Historical Acknowledgement: Missoula sits on aboriginal land. For centuries, the region was home to the Salish, Kootenai, Pend d’Oreille, Blackfeet and Shoshone tribes. The name “Missoula” came from the Salish name for the Clark Fork River, “nmesuletkw”, which roughly translates as “place of frozen water”.
Riverfront Triangle Urban Renewal	3	Historical Acknowledgement: Historic use of the District has centered around travel. Native Americans traveled for many generations along the north shore of the Clark Fork River through the Missoula valley on their way from points west and north to hunt bison east of the continental divide.
Hellgate URD	3	Historical Acknowledgement: “The first inhabitants of the Missoula area were American Indians from the Salish tribe. They called the area "Nemissoolatakoo," from which "Missoula" is derived. The word translates roughly to "river of ambush/surprise," a reflection of the inter-tribal fighting common to the area. The Indians' first encounter with Euro-Americans came in 1805 when the Lewis and Clark expedition passed through the Missoula Valley.
Budget Allocation	2	Relocation Payments: Relocation Payments: assistance for any person displaced by redevelopment activity
Front Street URD	2	Vision: Maintain a sense of neighborhood and promote a diverse population, emphasizing the importance of the district as a location for students, and University and Downtown employees.
URD II	2	Racial Composition of URD II graph: discussing higher % of Native residents.
	2	Preserve and enhance the diversity, integrity, and unique values of neighborhoods, communities, and rural areas
URD III	2	Comprehensive Plan: Preserve and enhance the diversity, integrity, and unique values of neighborhoods, communities, and rural areas

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Key Documents	Rating	Terms, language (or imagery when applicable) used or implied
North Reserve URD	3	The first inhabitants of the Missoula area were American Indians from the Salish tribe. They called the area "Nemissoolatakoo," from which "Missoula" is derived. The word translates roughly to "river of ambush/surprise," a reflection of the inter-tribal fighting common to the area. The Indians' first encounter with Euro-Americans came in 1805 when the Lewis and Clark expedition passed through the Missoula Valley.
	2	Community Goals & Objectives: <i>Preserve the diversity, integrity, and unique values of neighborhoods, communities, and rural areas.</i>
	2	Economy Goals & Objectives: <i>Manage growth to maintain and enhance the economy of Missoula County to support a diverse population, strong community, and healthy environment.</i>
Program Materials	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tax Increment Financing: none • MISSOULA REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY PROGRAM APPLICATION PROCESS: none • MISSOULA REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY FAÇADE IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM: none <p>URBAN RENEWAL DISTRICT II COMMERCIAL REHABILITATION LOAN PROGRAM: none</p>
Newsletters	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General MRA Brochure: none • URD Recap: none • URD III Brochure: none <p>TIF Brochure: none</p>
Annual Reports	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MRA Financial Reports: none <p>MRA Annual Report: A number of MRA funded projects have a direct bearing on the quality of life for Missoula residents, being either cultural or recreational in nature.</p>
Job Descriptions	1	MRA Bylaws: None
Hiring Process & Interview Questions	1	MRA Wage Rate Policy: None
Meetings and Agenda Minutes	1	<p>January 21, 2021: none</p> <p>December 17, 2020: none</p>

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Key Documents	Rating	Terms, language (or imagery when applicable) used or implied	Frequency
Specific Terms or Language of Equity, Justice, Diversity, Inclusion, etc.			
		Native American Tribes	6
		Diverse	4
		People displaced by redevelopment	1
		Cultural	1
		Native American Language	3

Overview and Summary of Findings

The Missoula Redevelopment Agency holds a unique position in that they are responsible for redevelopment projects throughout the city. The department has an opportunity to discuss and ensure that marginalized populations are considered from a variety of perspectives, guaranteeing that equity-based practices and decision-making factor in these groups.

In reviewing their material, some documents readily discussed demographics, mostly dealing with average age. Only the URD II discussed the areas higher than average Native American population. Similarly, some documents used terms and language of racial equity but did not describe explicitly and specifically how such terms were to be incorporated into the plans of the URD. Other accompanying documents found on the website, such, as job descriptions, newsletters, and the wage rate policy also did not include any terms associated with racial justice.

Crucial Transformative Actions

MRA needs to engage in an evaluation of its implicit assumptions and norms as well as taken-for-granted ways of operating in its established policies, procedures, and protocols. They need to reflect on implicit

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biases and do a thoughtful and painstaking examination of the voices, or definitions that may be unwittingly ignored or marginalized. In essence, go through the transformative questioning process.

Important Questions to Begin Process

Have any redevelopment projects disproportionately harmed ethno-racial, culturally and linguistically diverse people groups and communities? Which groups voices are privileged and which ones are ignored or marginalized even unintentionally? Has the growth of Missoula priced out members of the BIPOC community with intersecting social identities? To what degree have Indigenous people groups and communities have been invited into authentic partnerships? How do MRA use data?



Questioning raised awareness of taken-for-granted or
implicit biases, assumptions, or conventions

Processes and Practices for Public Engagement & Participation Audit

The City of Missoula in conjunction with its departments has expressed an unequivocal commitment to equitable, just, and inclusive practices and procedures. Thus, this audit scrutinized the City and its departments' current strategies for information dissemination as well as their processes and practices for public engagement relating to hiring, appointments, contracts, services utilization, etc. It appears that these processes and strategies have been based on the principle of simple randomization.

The basic premise of simple randomization is that the population is homogeneous with minimal or unimportant distinguishing characteristics. and, furthermore, it presumes that there is limited information about the population, which may not be seen as relevant. Randomization operates without regard to individual characteristics. This inevitably results in some people having a higher probability, chance, or likelihood of being included or selected, especially if they are among a numeric majority and have knowledge of and access to important resources

In essence, simple randomization assumes that everyone (i.e., potential applicants, appointees, service users, residents, etc.) is equal with an equal likelihood or probability of:

- 1) knowing about & participating in municipal initiatives, decision-making, etc.
- 2) gaining/knowing about relevant information
- 3) being aware of & having opportunities to access services and resources
- 4) knowing of, applying, & being chosen for paid and volunteer positions, etc.

Summary and Overview

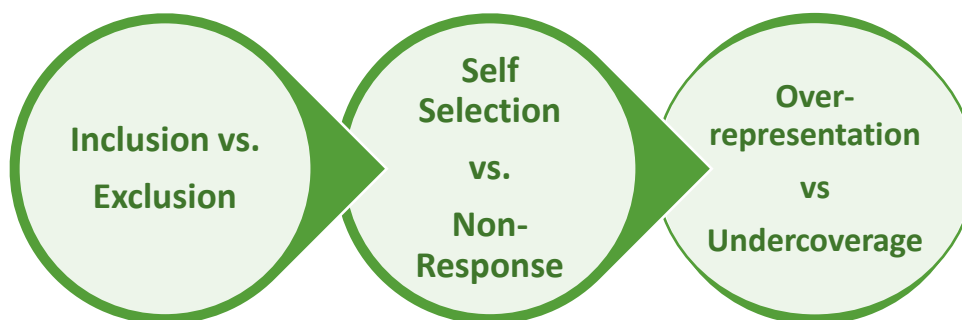
In scrutinizing and evaluating the City's processes, practices, and strategies for information dissemination and public engagement relating to hiring, appointments, contracts, services utilization, etc., it seems to be built on the assumption that every resident is equal and has an equal probability, chance, or opportunity to be aware of and informed on aspects, such as, how to:

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- a) Access services, resources, & information
- b) Apply for paid & volunteer positions or appointments
- c) Bid for contracts
- d) Engage in public comments
- e) Participate in City's initiatives & decision-making, etc.

A simple example of this randomization practice is how the City has disseminated relevant information. Information from the City and its department has tended to be shared through *Engage Missoula*, departmental websites, social media, email, etc. or public service announcements and potentially via other “traditional” media options. These web and technology-based communication platforms are seen as accessible, available, and convenient. However, an important question is, “*For whom? For which groups?*”

It is important to note that an outcome of simple randomization is bias because inevitably there are groups that are excluded while others are included. Below are the major types of biases, which form a reinforcing progression and feedback loop.



Explanation of Bias Progression

- **Inclusion** - characteristics of individuals who are more likely to have a greater chance of being in the *selection, knowing, participant, or service user pool*:
 - Are already part of the municipal system
 - Have some type of existing relationship with it
 - Are aware of it and know how to navigate through its complexity, etc.

Being a part of this “insider” pool (i.e., having knowledge, opportunity, or relationship) predisposes them to pay attention to what is happening in the City.

- **Self-selection** - when being in this “pool of inclusion” is further coupled with comfort and access to technology, then there is a greater probability of self-selection because these residents are aware of and informed about City’s initiatives, services, contracts, paid and volunteer vacancies, etc.
- **Overrepresentation** - ultimately, being a part of the “pool of inclusion” result in over-representation of particular individuals who have similar characteristics.
 - An ongoing outcome of this is: important parts of the population as a whole are underrepresented.
- **Exclusion** - characteristics of individuals who are more likely to experience exclusion directly or indirectly:
 - residents who have a higher probability of being excluded directly or indirectly are more likely to be non-responders
- **Underrepresentation** – being in the “non-responders pool” lead to certain groups being systematically under-represented while others are over-represented.
 - For example, the City unwittingly privileges web and technology-based communication and English. This automatically excludes groups who have limited or no internet/technology access, less proficiency with navigating web-based platforms or English fluency.

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Given the City and its departments stated commitment to inclusion, diversity, justice, and equity, it is important to address the inherent structural biases.

Social Transformative Action Recommendations

It is imperative for the City to re-evaluate its practices that seem to be based on randomization, which is predicated upon the belief that everyone is equal with equality of access, opportunity, knowledge, etc. This seem to lead to processes and procedures that have limited ranges of variability, adaptability and differentiation and as previously noted result in systematic overrepresentation and under-coverage of particular groups.

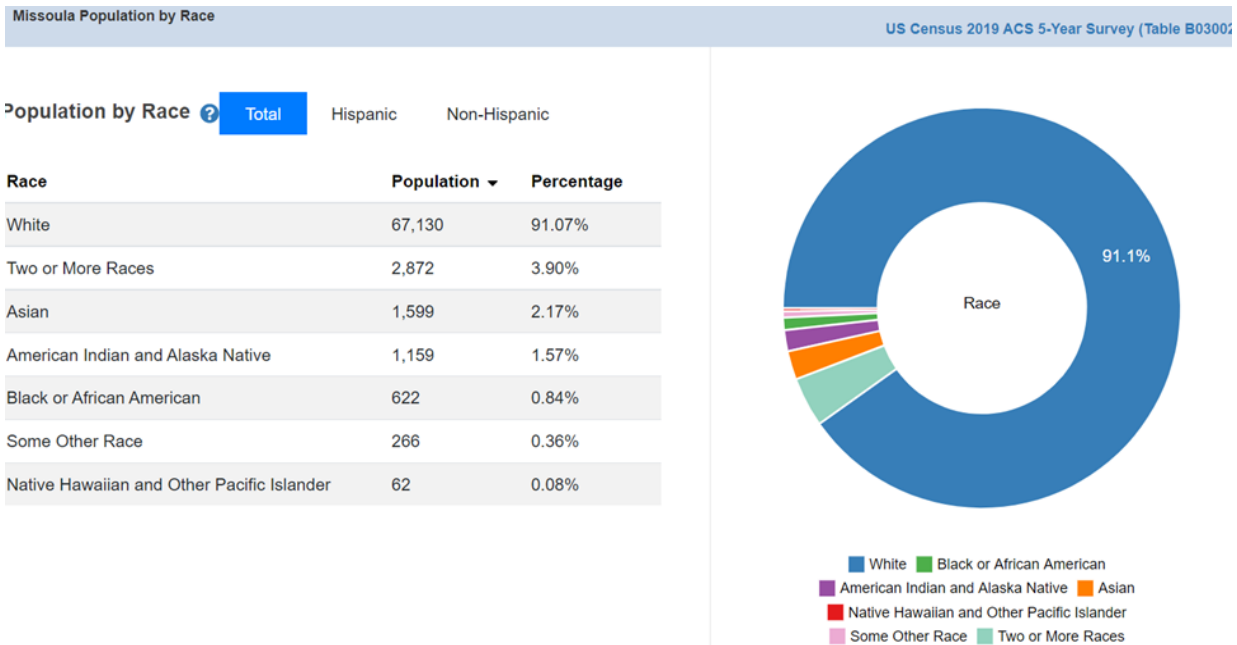
Three transformative actions are recommended to address these issues.



I. **Clearly Map Out the Different Ethno-Racial, Cultural, & Linguistic Groups**

An important first step to reduce the bias in current strategies for information dissemination as well as processes and practices for public engagement relating to hiring, appointments, contracts, services utilization is to clearly map out the ethno-racial, culturally, and linguistically diverse groups and communities in Missoula's population and gather sufficient data *from and about them*. This information will help with identifying and establishing processes that are both differential and adaptable to diverse people groups with intersecting identities. See information below from the US Census 2019 about the population make-up of Missoula.

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(Please keep in mind that the above information does not reflect all of the diverse groups and communities that are part of Missoula.)

Mapping out the diverse groups and communities is especially crucial in addressing and reducing the biases of over- and underrepresentation/coverage. As it is already known and supported by data from the census, Missoula is primarily White, which sets “the stage” for the bias progression described previously. Without an investment in learning about and gaining a degree of cultural intelligence and intercultural skills relating to ethno-racial, culturally, & linguistically diverse people groups and communities in Missoula (such as, diverse Indigenous people groups; diverse Asian & Pacific Islanders, e.g., Filipino, who historically have been recruited for nursing, Hmong who has been a part of Missoula for over 40 years; a growing group from the Indian subcontinent; citizens & immigrants of Latin/Hispanic origins; Black Americans; resettled groups from regions of Africa, Central and Southwestern Asia; and other people of color who have immigrated from South America and regions of Africa), bias will continue to occur because White residents will be systematically more likely to be part of the *selection, knowing, participant, applicant, or service user pool*.

II. Review & Evaluate How and Where Disseminate Information and Advertise

Once the City and its departments have begun to invest in identifying and knowing about the ethno-racial, culturally, and linguistically diverse people groups and communities, they can consider, review, and evaluate

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current points of access and move toward expanding them so that the points of access are more inclusive, diverse, and differential based on best options. Of importance is: *how, where, and in what formats advertisements are made; and how, where, and in what formats is information disseminated.*

Additionally, it would be important for the City and its department to engage in “oversampling,” meaning that they have an increased and targeted focus on ensuring that BIPOC groups and communities are aware of and come to know about varied opportunities relating to hiring, services/resources, contract., decision-making, etc. This would mean saturating the communities with information through multiple, innovative points of access so that there is an increased numeric probability of potential participants, applicants, service users, etc. Furthermore, it would be important for the City and its department to establish, monitor, and evaluate goals/outcomes in this area.

III. Pay Attention to and Track Non-Response

Understanding who are residents, especially ethno-racial, culturally, & linguistically diverse people groups, who do not: 1) participate in the various initiatives or decision-making of the City, 2) use various services, 3) apply for paid and volunteer positions, etc., offers valuable information. It is important to come to know and understand this group.

Transformative questions to consider:

- Is there an overrepresentation of ethno-racial, culturally, and linguistically diverse people groups?
- What might be potential reasons or factors that inhibit their participation, utilization, or applications?
- Are the current points of access reaching them? What might be better, more optimal access points?

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- Are existing inclusion/exclusion criteria a barrier? For example, English fluency. To what degree has this criterion been reviewed and evaluated to determine if it is necessary for all positions or opportunities?

The above will require intentionality in collecting and evaluating data. In addition, it is crucial to reflect on and choose ways or mechanisms of connecting with diverse groups and communities that are appropriate, meet their needs and circumstances. As with the previous transformative actions recommended, it would be important for the City and its departments to develop a monitoring and assessment process that could be used to inform continuous quality.

Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Justice Training and Educational Programming

Training/educational programming has been identified as important by Missoula City employees and BIPOC residents. Specifically, it needs to be an integrated aspect with SMART goals, initial and follow-up assessments, and accountability mechanisms rather than being approached as an item on a list or some perfunctory/performative task to be completed. Moreover, measures need to be incorporated to assess, determine or gauge employees' growth, development, application and integration of knowledge, skills and values.

Additionally, training and education need to permeate the regular/usual work. For example, meetings should have agenda items that address an area of equity, diversity, inclusion, justice, systems of oppression, decolonization, etc. It needs to move beyond something that is welcomed and supported (passive) to something that is intentionally invited (active). This area will be further developed in the survey of City employees and BIPOC engagements sections.

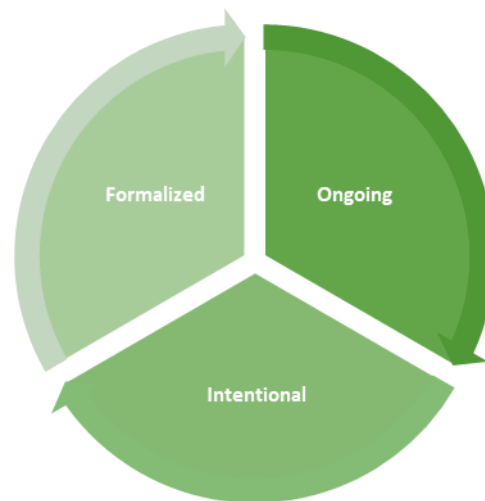
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Social Transformative Actions Recommended

Four transformational action areas were recommended and discussed below.

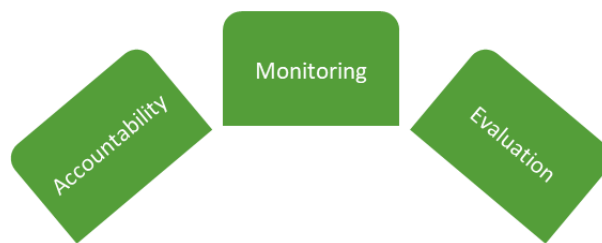
I. Formalized, Ongoing, and Intentional

Training/educational programming needs to be formalized, ongoing, and intentional with accountability, monitoring, and evaluation processes that are integrated aspects.



IA. Accountability, Monitoring, and Evaluation processes

Regarding the aspects of accountability, monitoring, and evaluation, it is essential for the City and departments to arrive at and achieve consensus on the processes in advance. i.e., what and how will measure? All need to understand and accept method(s) chosen with a plan to review its effectiveness. In addition, these aspects must be incorporated at the employee level (micro) as well as the system level, meaning within teams, departments, subdivisions, etc., (mezzo).



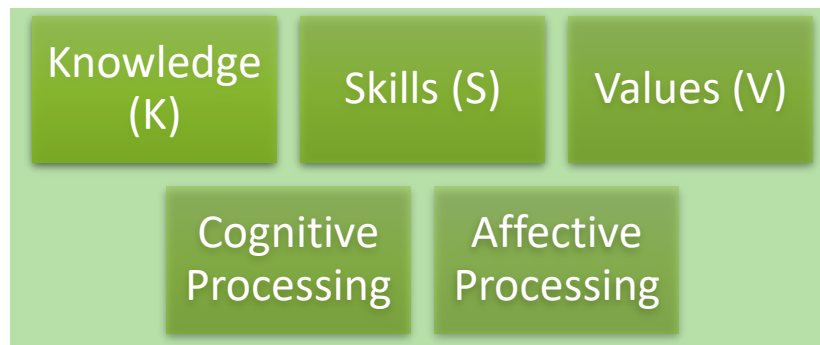
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- **Accountability** involves incorporating specific goals in employees' performance plan as well as goals for teams, departments, subdivisions, etc. Create SMART goals related to growth, development, implementation of cultural intelligence and intercultural knowledge, skills, values.
- **Monitoring** provides ongoing information and assessment of employees' growth, development, and changes or modifications in their repertoire and application of intercultural knowledge, skills and values. It is also important to monitor teams, departments, subdivisions, etc., growth and development of cultural intelligence.
- **Evaluation** focuses on outcomes relating to changes in acquisition, implementation, and integration of diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice knowledge, skills and values. Evaluation requires several crucial components: operationalizing, observing, and recognizing the degree of presence or absence of what has been taught. Are the trainings, meeting discussions, etc., making a difference?

II. **Multilayered and Multidimensional**

Training and educational programming needs to be *multilayered* and *multidimensional*.

Layers & dimensions include:



Knowledge Building (K) Areas

- Ethno-racial, cultural, and linguistic groups that historically and currently live in Missoula, e.g., their strengths, values, important practices & celebrations as well as barriers and obstacles face.

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- This will help challenge and rescript the “presumption of non-belonging” -- a theme that recur in interview conversations with BIPOC residents
- Others areas for knowledge building
 - Implicit and explicit biases
 - Prevailing assumptions, stereotypes, and prejudices (historical and contemporary antecedents, contributing factors, structures that keep them entrenched and pervasive....)
 - Intersectionality
 - Decolonization
 - Systems of oppression, inequity, & privilege, etc.
 - Cultural literacy & cultural intelligence

Skill Building (S) Areas

- Anti-racism and anti-oppressive advocacy
- Recognizing & interrupting:
 - marginalization
 - inequitable and unjust practices
 - explicit/implicit biases, assumptions, prejudice, & stereotypes
 - systems of oppression & privilege, etc.
- Appropriate communications and interactions
- Identifying & challenging default white dominant cultural norms, practices, and expectations

Value Development (V)

- Appreciating and valuing the importance and significance of diversity, equity, inclusion & justice. Seeing it as crucial and non-negotiable

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Cognitive and Affective Processing (CP/AP)

- Address viewpoint threat & explore defensiveness that are inherent in learning about alternative perspectives/viewpoints that challenge own taken-for-granted and often unexamined systems of beliefs
- Incorporate experiential learning

III. Criteria for Choosing Training/Educational Programming

Establish criteria for choosing training/educational programming as well as trainers.

For example:

- Every trainer who is being considered must have training/educational program with:
 - Explicit learning outcomes (KSV, CP/AP)
 - Defined processes or mechanisms for monitoring and evaluating employees' level of integration and application
 - Evidence to support effectiveness of training (achievement of specified learning outcomes) not just evidence of trainers' abilities
- Training/education program should classify where along continuum of beginning to advanced is the proposed offering
- Training should have explicit processes for follow-up to ensure continued growth and implementation of knowledge and skills



- Training/education programming should not be one size fit all but responsive to current and emerging knowledge, skills, and values of employees.
 - It should be data-driven, meaning assessment of employees current and evolving repertoire of knowledge, skills, & values must frame decisions made about offerings in general and influence the options given to individual employees.

IV. Trainings Specific to BIPOCs



- Mentoring in City and departmental areas with inequitable or no BIPOC representation.
 - Establish thorough well-designed programming targeting ethno-racial residents, inclusive of fellowship programs, internships, etc.
 - This would create a knowledgeable and skilled pipeline of BIPOC residents who could add value to the City of Missoula.
 - Moreover, it would challenge and reduce the default attitude of “that’s the reality of Missoula.”
- Leadership development in various part of Missoula municipality:
 - Establish leadership training opportunities for BIPOCs who are conspicuously absent from positions of leadership, power, and decision-making

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Social Transformative Action



Going forward, it would be of utmost importance for the City to integrate the equity skill of asking thought-provoking, multilayered, and critical questions as an inherent aspect of its operations and functioning to ensure equity-based practices, policies, procedures, processes, codes, ordinances. Voltaire suggested that people should judge an individual by their questions rather than by their answers. In essence, the value of a good question far surpasses a multitude of answers; and as noted, BIPOC residents stated that questions allow for an examination of motivation, intention, and impact; and questions create a context for reflection and provide opportunities to become open.

**PEOPLE SHOULD BE JUDGED BY
 THEIR QUESTIONS RATHER THAN BY
 THEIR ANSWERS. THE VALUE OF A
 GOOD QUESTION FAR SURPASSES A
 MULTITUDE OF ANSWERS.**

Voltaire



Section III

Findings: City Employees Survey Nested Quantitative Component

Quantitative Nested Component: Findings from Survey

Survey Rating Components

City employees who elected to participate offered their thoughts, viewpoints, and perspectives on equity, inclusion, justice and diversity in the community and municipality of Missoula. The survey solicited their assessment of three main areas:

-
- *Degree of support and welcome for discussions and conversations on topics focused on diversity, equity, inclusion, justice (1 = minimal to no support/welcome to 10 = support/welcome to the greatest degree)*
 - *Regularity of inclusive and equity-based practices, processes, and activities (no or never, sometimes true, always true, or unknown)*
 - *Level at which departments has incorporated or actualized diversity, equity, justice, and inclusion in their operations (work not started in area as yet, plans exist to incorporate, in place with some evidence of use, an inherent part of routine and has been modeled for others, or unknown)*
-

Area One: Support/Welcome for Conversations on Topics of Diversity, Equity, Justice and Inclusion

As a part of the survey, the sample of City employees were asked to rate degree of welcome and support for conversations or discussions on a range of issues relating to diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice. The scale used was: 1 = welcome or support is offered to the least degree/amount or is completely absent to 10 = welcome or support is offered to the greatest level/amount or is fully present. Some of the topics rated included social issues of inequity, racism, injustice, systems of oppression, white dominant culture, etc. The results are outlined in the table below.

Table 7

Means and Standard Deviations on Ratings of Welcome and Support

Conversation Topic Areas	Welcome and Support Scores	
	M	SD
Social Issues of inequity, racism, injustice, systems of oppression	7.26	2.31
White dominant culture	5.21	2.76
Possibility of inequities from decisions even unintentionally	6.18	2.80
Budget and ensuring accountability around equity	5.89	3.18
Leaders participation & support for discussions on equity, privilege, oppression, and power	6.53	3.02

Note. The maximum score is 10.

Statistical analysis revealed that, on average, the sample of City employees perceived a moderate and higher level of welcome and support for the range of topic areas relating to diversity, equity, inclusion and justice. The two lowest subject areas were conversations on White dominant culture and discussions about the budget and how it ensures accountability around equity, justice, institutional racism, etc. It appears that the City employees who participated in the survey perceived that there was a slightly greater level of welcome and support for conversations on topics relating to issues of inequity, racism, injustice, systems of oppression and discussions on possible inequitable outcomes from decisions made in comparison to the budget and its accountability and White dominant culture and how it may be operating within departments.

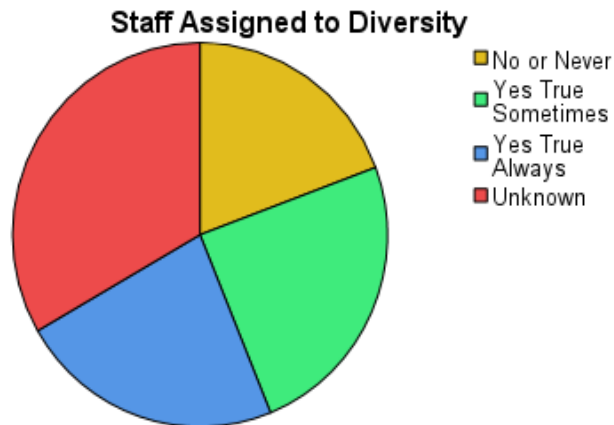
Area Two: Regularity of Inclusive and Equity-based Practices, Processes and Activities

The second aspect of the survey invited City employees to evaluate the regularity at which certain diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice activities, processes, or practices occurred. Constancy was measured with the following rating: 0 = no or never; 1 = yes, true sometimes; 2 = yes, true always; and, 3 = unknown, if they did not know nor had no knowledge.

Results revealed that *no or never* was the most frequent assessment for the following three items: 1) employees at every level are trained in recognizing & interrupting intolerance, oppression, marginalization and racism within the department, during service delivery, and at departmental events; 2) employees are supported and evaluated on deepening their knowledge and building skills around issues of White privilege, systemic oppression, and anti-racism advocacy within or outside the department; 3) members of diverse ethno-racial groups and communities are equitably represented at all levels of the department (staff, supervisory, managerial, director, administrator, etc.). These appear to be activities or practices that the sample of City employees assessed as not happening.

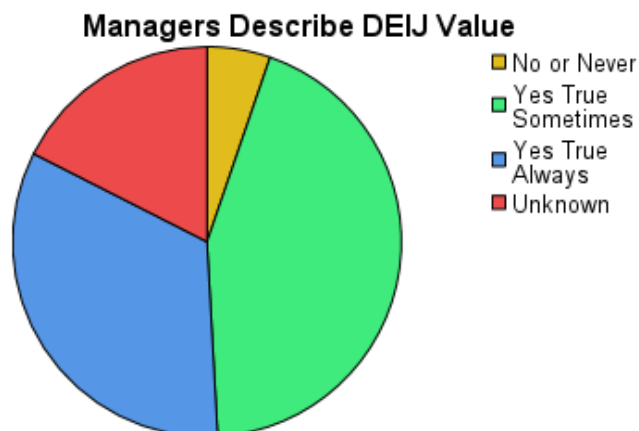
There were also several processes or practices where the most frequent response given was either *no or unknown*, that is, employees, who interviewed with LEARN, reported having no knowledge. Surprisingly, the sample of City employees repeatedly indicated that they did not know whether departmental leaders applied a social justice and equity lens and evaluated the role of power and privilege in departments' operations, decision-making and service delivery. They further noted that either no one was assigned or they were unaware of whether staff has been assigned to implement diversity, equity, inclusion and justice initiatives.

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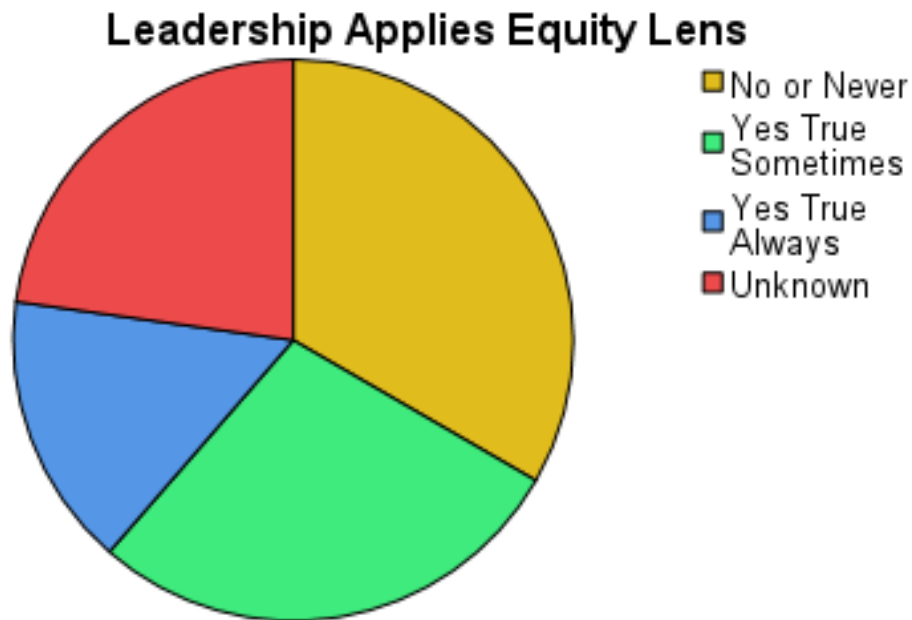
City leadership would need to consider what are potential factors that contributes to employees not knowing about these two crucial aspects.

The final two areas with the most frequent response of unknown were about contractors and vendors. This was not as unexpected as the previous ones. Many shared having no knowledge about diversity, equity, inclusion policies and practices relating to vendors and contractors. All of the other topical areas, however, employees rated as true sometimes or always. Examples included willingness to name and address inequitable or unjust practices, familiarity with department's diversity, equity and inclusion policy and expected behavior around it as well as regularity of discussions about systemic oppression, managers ability to describe the value of diversity, equity, inclusion and equity.



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This was an interesting contrast to the fact that they reported most frequently not knowing whether leaders apply a social justice equity lens but noted that departmental leadership were able to articulate its value.



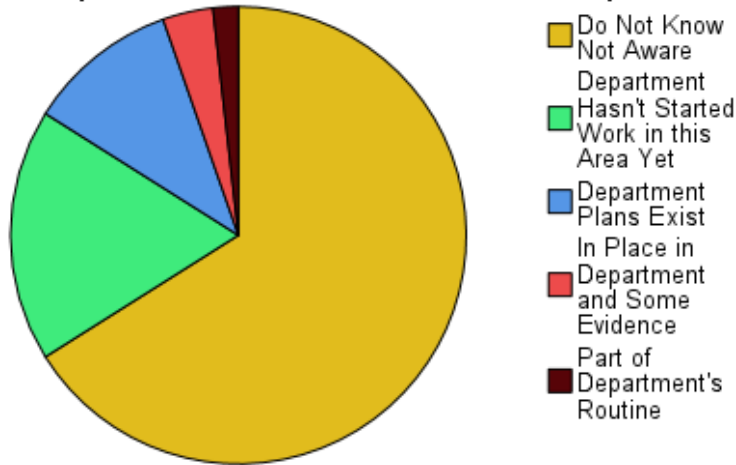
Area Three: Incorporation and Actualization of Diversity, Equity, Justice and Inclusion in Operations

While City employees reported moderate to high levels of welcome/support for conversations and discussions about various issues relating to diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice *and* they assessed that there is some constancy in certain aspects, they frequently reported not knowing whether evidence existed for practices or procedures and could not articulate whether these practices/procedures were part of departments' routine.

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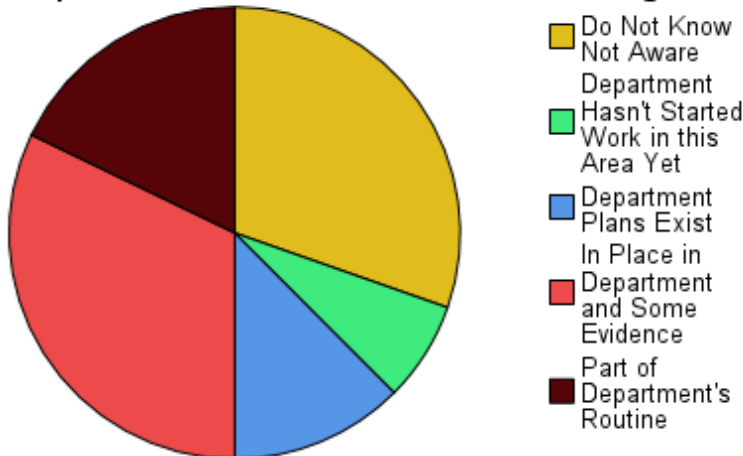
For example, many among the sample of City employees stated that they did not know or alternatively they reported that plans had not started in areas related inviting in, building, and developing authentic collaborative relationships with BIPOC groups and communities or if the City uses equitable or effective communication strategies, etc.

Department Consults with BIPOC Groups



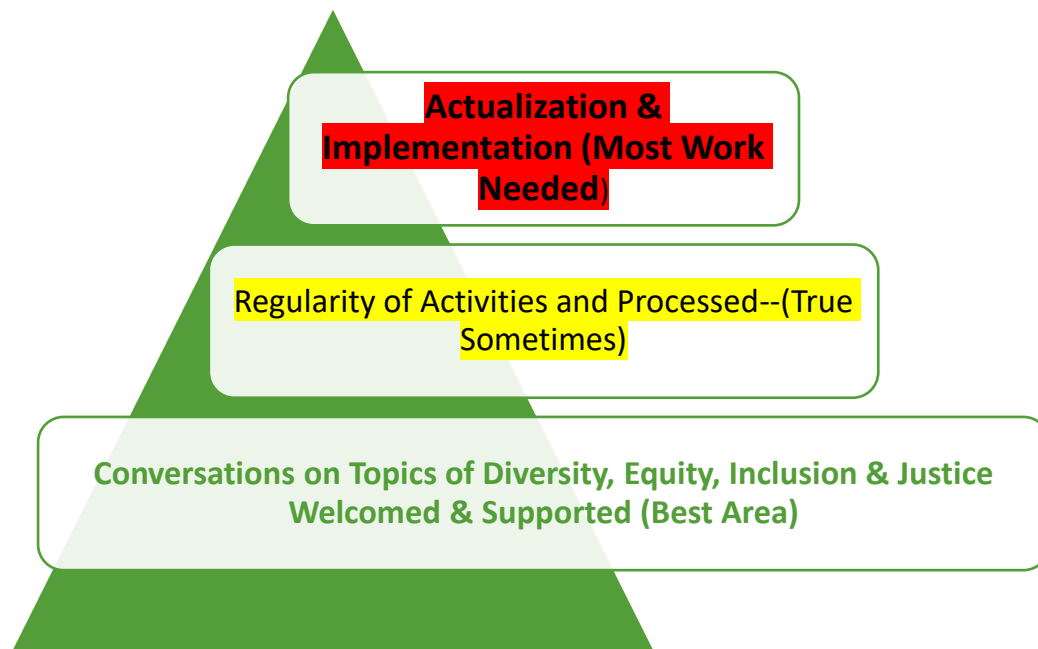
In contrast, many had knowledge of departments' usage of data for decision-making. There were some who did not know, but it was much less than those who reported having no knowledge of department's current or planned relationship with BIPOC groups, communities or organizations.

Department Uses Data for Decision Making



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It appears that the City needs to share about its efforts so that employees are cognizant of plans and activities. Employees need to know how and when the City is starting and advancing in the various areas of its commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice. From the results, the City is perceived as doing well in welcoming and supporting discussions and conversations. However, as City employees who interviewed with LEARN moved into assessing the regularity of its activities and evaluating the City's actualization and implementation of its stated commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion and diversity, their awareness and knowledge of what is occurring declined significantly. Diagram below offers a visual representation.



Survey Reflections & Open-ended Questions Component

In addition to rating numerically various aspects of the City's diversity, equity, inclusion, justice processes, practices, and activities, City employees were invited to identify and share: 1) areas of strengths, 2) areas for growth and development, 3) recommendations to enhance effort related to diversity, equity, justice, and inclusion, and 4) share perceptions of biases and intercultural relationships. Employees from the Mayor's Office, Human Resources, Parks & Recreation, Public Works & Mobility, Community, Planning, Development &

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Innovation, Missoula Police and Fire representing, service, project or initiative specific groups, teams, divisions, etc., as well as employees at varying levels of the organizational hierarchy.

1. Areas of Strengths

Common areas of strengths that were shared consistently included: internal and external communication, responsiveness to customers, which they demonstrated by “centering the needs of residents and people who live here” as well as treating customers with dignity and respect. City employees, who interviewed with LEARN, also identified personal and professional qualities as important areas of strengths, such as, passionate about work, commitment to making community better, collaborative, team players, and problem-solvers, approachable, adaptable, and honestly caring, as well as having a high regard for integrity, professionalism, and doing the right thing.

In addition to the above stated areas, a few employees recognized diversity as a potential strength. One employees statement summed up this belief, “If you are trying to put together the best team to solve problems and fix things, I’m going to put my money on solving the problems in a creative way, in a faster way because of the diversity brings different ideas, different perspectives. I think much better problem-solving abilities.” In contrast, other employees noted that a strength of the City is, “we view people as an individual not as a specific subset of humanity like anyone that identify as a different gender or anybody that focuses on race.”

2. Growth and Development Areas

There were some overlap among areas of strengths and the growth and development areas. For example, the sample of City employees noted that more outreach, open communication with the public, communication within and across teams, divisions and departments would be very helpful. They suggested that there is a wealth of knowledge and skills that has gone untapped. It was noted that a well-developed system of internal communication would “facilitate increased learning from each other” and it would ensure that employees are kept updated on what is happening within the City. This area of growth is congruent with survey

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ratings. A comparable growth area was “doing better to incorporate viewpoints, opinions, and experiences of diverse people groups in what we do.” This meant “actually seeking out diverse people groups and communities and inviting them in,” which is another point of correspondence with survey ratings.

Yet another development area discussed was increasing the level of support to employees in several spheres, including knowledge building and training opportunities, more support as many have been operating at or above capacity, which was reported as inhibiting “the ability to engage in reflections we need..... to actually do things differently.” One such reflection that was identified is:

Growth Area

“Really interrogating recruitment and hiring processes, thinking about why we’re getting oftentimes homogeneous applicants.

What’s keeping people from diverse backgrounds, experiences, and identities from wanting to work here and applying to work here.

I think that’s absolutely on us, not on the community nor potential applicant.”

However, as noted above, engaging in such needed reflections so things can be done differently was seen as a challenge because many City employees reported working above capacity.

Additional Strengths and Areas for Improvement

Strengths

- Manage public resources well
- Improved transparency
- Use evidence-based practices and have necessary tools
- People are competent, have a level of expertise, and do their jobs well
- Use a multidimensional perspective when addressing tasks & projects
- Positive, supportive work environment

Development Areas

- More diverse employees with intersecting diverse identities
- Advancing literacy of employees in important areas of inclusivity & equity
- Pay equity & promotional opportunities of women, especially those beyond young adulthood
- Community engagement
- Definable pathway for employee success, growth, & career trajectory
- Employee acknowledgement and recognition
- Data & evaluation tools

3. Recommendations to Enhance Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Justice Efforts

Similar to City employees having a collection of shared strengths and growth areas, their recommendations to enhance diversity, equity, inclusion and justice repeatedly focused on a group of topics, such as: 1) recruitment, hiring, and promotion, 2) knowledge building, i.e., cultural literacy and intelligence, 3) goal setting and accountability, 4) integrating equity as foundational, 5) soliciting authentic relationships with BIPOCs.

3a. Recruitment, Hiring & Promotion

This topic was permeated with a focus on recruiting more BIPOCs. City employees suggested that it would be helpful “just reaching out to different BIPOC professional associations or groups to just make sure that they know when and how departments are hiring.” Specifically, it was recommended that there should be more outreach to “Native Americans because in Western Montana, we have a pretty large Native population. I think they should be represented more.” One way to accomplish this is “to reach out to SKC and UM Native Americans.” This focus on recruiting to ensure a diverse representation appears congruent with similar areas identified as needing development. Although this recommendation was offered repeatedly, other employees had alternative viewpoints. They proposed “not to hire people based on diversity. We need to hire good candidates and good people.” Furthermore, it was noted that “sometimes I feel like departments are so eager to hire based on diversity and gender more than they’re concerned about hiring on the individual themselves.”

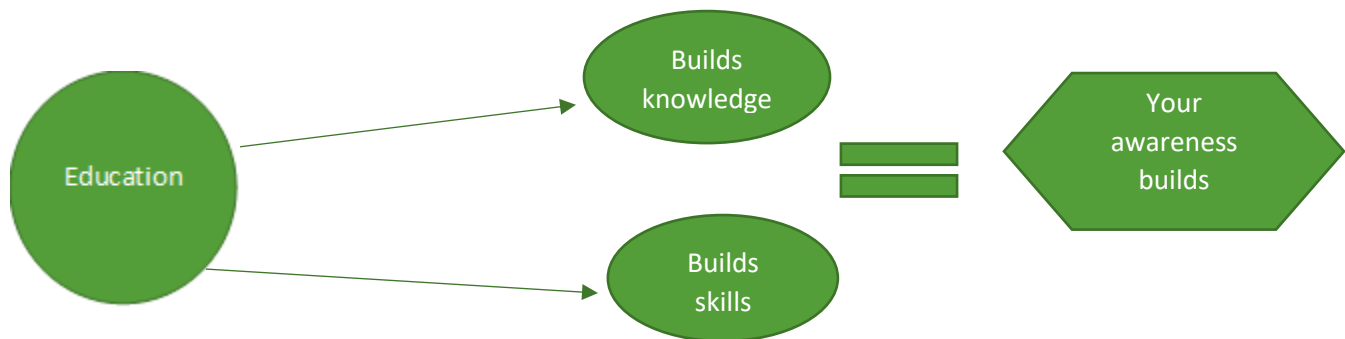
In addition to recommending targeted recruitment, City employees suggested that there need to be a “formalized hiring and promotional plan that is transparent.” This plan, they noted, must articulate the “career path and be informed by an equity and inclusion lens.” This recommendation re-echoed the area of growth dealing with having a definable pathway for employee success, growth, & career trajectory.

Furthermore, they suggested that the current advancement process, which is longevity-of-service based seems to create a structural divide between older and younger employees. Those with the greatest “seniority may be less inclined to actively invite in and embrace with intentionality diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice initiatives, policies, and processes.” They may offer the required support without the deliberate and full application and integration of diversity, equity, inclusion and justice-based practices and procedures.

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3b. Knowledge Building

There were several options proposed. However, the ultimate outcome was increased cultural literacy and cultural intelligence. The diagram below outlines the process of knowledge building articulated.



It was expressed that the knowledge building process need to unfold in multiple ways rather than one singular manner, including:

- ❖ Having a menu of training choices based on an assessment of current diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice knowledge and skills
- ❖ Offering engagement sessions potentially where employees could be assigned a book to discuss as well as other non-traditional learning events or opportunities for City employees and the larger community. Many stressed that the trainings, learning opportunities, or educational programming must not come from “a fully White dominant lens.”
- ❖ Encouraging supervisors/team leaders to focus on a predetermined collaboratively decided diversity, equity, inclusion, justice topic of the week in their scheduled meetings. Presenting it as, “we need you to focus on this aspect for 15 in your team meetings.” This regular focus was understood as facilitating diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice in “all our spaces as opposed to one training once.”

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- ❖ Importantly, during the trainings or educational programming, it was underscored that it would be important to have an awareness of who is attending, paying attention to the impact of the training for everyone participating, including BIPOCs.

3c. Goal Setting and Accountability

City employees reiterated that it is important that the diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice standards is set from “top down.” Setting standards from the “top down say that this is an important issue we should be able to talk about.” Moreover, they stated that it is equally important to “turn great intentions into actionable steps with accountability.” One recommendation was to set diversity goals at employee, departmental, and organizational levels with an actual timeline. “Because without a timeline, there is so much going on that it could easily get brushed aside. So, it has to be turned into a focus.” Another was to “set value through budget and workplans making them concrete and having definable expectations. Plans, it was restated, “must be made a departmental/organizational expectation instead of them being employee dependent.” An important part of the process is “measuring where departments are in this work, how they are either advancing or starting.”

3d. Integrating Equity as Foundational

City employees recommended that equity has to be foundational to departmental processes. Specifically identified was equity in parental leave. Employees noted that parents of any gender should benefit equitably. Additionally, they recommended creating equity-based and cultural literacy criteria for choosing trainings and educational programming.

3e. Authentic Partnerships with BIPOC Groups and Organizations

A few City employees asserted that having authentic partnerships with BIPOCs is integral to any diversity, equity, inclusion and justice efforts. One employee noted, “we need to get over ourselves to learn.... if you are not explicitly invited then you feel disinvited.” In essence, it is crucial to engage in cultural humility to increase cultural literacy. To accomplish the idea of inviting BIPOCs in and learning from them, mentoring relationships

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between BIPOC organizations and City departments were suggested. Departments could be matched with BIPOC organizations that would serve as mentors to them with the goal of building or enhancing cultural literacy and intelligence.

In summary, City employees, on average, had recommendations that were shared readily about ways to enhance diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts. A few, however, they noted that the primary way to improve these efforts would “basically mean people accept them [BIPOCs] for who they are, but you really can’t dictate that in other people.” Furthermore, they continued, “Missoula as a whole already is accepting of other people and their different lifestyles and cultures. It’s already that way for the most part in Missoula. It’s a very accepting city.”

Perception of Biases and Intercultural Relationships

In the area of perception of biases and intercultural relationships, there were three groupings or classifications: 1) good, 2) nonexistent or difficult to determine, and 3) exist but unable to classify. See table below for examples of descriptions.

Table 8 Examples of Responses for Biases and Intercultural Relationships

Categories of Employees’ Responses on Bias and Intercultural Relationships		
Good	Nonexistent/Difficult to Determine	Exist but Cannot Classify
In Missoula, I would say, well, compared to the state of Montana, Missoula is probably one of the more open-minded places in terms of acceptance of others, of their values, of their ethnicity, I guess their gender identification	I don't think it usually comes into play in my job.	I believe it [bias] exists. I believe it's out there, I guess I don't know, I can't identify any examples within the community of implicit bias
One of the nice things about this city is that it is one of the more accepted places in the state. I think, comparatively to maybe bigger cities, Missoula seems fairly cohesive across racial boundaries	I don't know what biases exist. I can't think of any I don't pay attention to race or ethnicity. Everybody is the same to me	I think I see less of it because an overwhelming amount of people are white

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Categories of Employees' Responses on Bias and Intercultural Relationships

Good

Nonexistent/Difficult to Determine

Exist but Cannot Classify

We are by far White, Caucasian people in Missoula predominantly. I don't come across anything that keys me in as that something being racist right off the bat, or that would stand out as obviously racist

It almost feels nonexistent because of the lack of diversity we have I guess limited

There is a lack of diversity in general and people think everything is okay here because maybe you're not confronted with it as much. But not necessarily true that it just doesn't exist

In my opinion, I think it's good. I would say that they are genuinely good

I see bias as someone internally having predetermined opinions, and I don't know how I would become aware of someone else's unless they told me

I would describe them as hidden. Folks take the approach of 'Oh, well we don't really have people of other background here. Montana is so White"

In my knowledge I think the relations with different racial groups are, I think, they're good.

it seems like for the most part, people get treated as people and not as a color or a whatever

They are limited because there's not a lot of diversity in Missoula. With that said, I think they're still relative positive relationships and interactions, just not a lot of opportunities for people here

As far as racial stuff, I don't know

Two Main Narratives

There were two narratives that emerged relating to City employees' perceptions of intercultural relationships.

The dominant one appears to suppress and overpower the second.

One dominant and pervasive:

But there are pockets [of diverse people groups and communities] if you want to integrate and understand what's going on in worlds of anyone non-White in Missoula

City employees

A second subjugated and subordinated:

I am not around enough of a diverse racial and ethnically diverse community to think about how we interact.

It is not something you really have to worry about here because the people are so White

City employees

Along with the primary groupings, and the dominant and subordinated narratives, there were two other types of perceptions, which endorsed the widespread narrative captured above. This smaller subgroup noted that intercultural interactions were "poor" because there has been limited to no "intermixing and intermingling." They classified Missoula as "clique up," noting that for "some people it's a big step to maybe break out of their own shell or group and try something new."

The second subgroup could be classified as non-committal about intercultural relationships and biases. Their perspectives have been encapsulated below:

if you people think that it's okay and people think that the relationship with other ethnic and races, everything is okay.

I don't think we have a lot [BIPOC] in Missoula for me to really give an honest answer.

Well I would say it's no different than any other city

I think you would struggle to find any community where it's [bias] not present

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Primary Biases

The primary biases identified and reported were toward or against:



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Facilitating a Deeper Sense of Place for BIPOCs

Finally, when asked to reflect on what would need to happen in Missoula for BIPOCs to have a deeper sense of place and safety, City employees offered several recurring ideas. The most frequent thought on what would need to happen was more representation, more inclusion. City employees noted that there is limited to no representation and offered the following thoughts: “You just don’t see it [representation]...if you look at City Council, you look at City leadership, you look at business owners, everywhere you look, you just don’t see it. If it’s not there, it’s easy to not pay attention.” Therefore, they suggested that more BIPOCs need to be in

Representation & Inclusion

“Instead of asking BIPOCs, ‘will you help me understand your experience?’ then I’ll use my power to make decisions that are intended to improve your experience. A better approach is you know your experiences and you know how that experience need to be changed. And, so I’m going to give you the power I hold or we’re going to create power for you to make the decisions that you need to improve that experience. It’s about true transfer of power in spaces.

“It needs to be a collective effort from the majority White population to learn to be open and recognize privilege we have then use our privilege to create space in the community for BIPOCs.”

positions of power. “Their voices need to be heard by giving them a platform to stand on.”

Furthermore, they asserted that “people need to stop being so gatekeeping of what they think they have possession over. If things are already closed off, people with other identities may not want to try and become a part of that because what’s the point in being somewhere you’re just an outsider.”

Yet another employee suggested, “maybe it’s White people publicly stating that, ‘hey, we’re aware of the dynamics of privilege and oppression and we are working to change them. We’re not going to get it right but we’re here trying and asking for help without putting a disproportionate amount of the work on people of color to help with that.’ This is about inviting BIPOCs to the table and actually being willing to cede some power and actually include them in decision-making and not just hearing concerns and then making the decisions you’re going to make anyway.” Finally, the

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risk of tokenism was raised with the thought, “then you are asking potentially some of our most marginalized to do a disproportionate amount of heavy lifting to get us there.”

Another perspective on what it would take to deepen sense of place and safety was elevating, highlighting, and supporting BIPOC businesses and spaces where cultural things are happening in Missoula. “Move them from the hidden space.” An idea, which seemed like an extension this one was for the City to include topics and posts dealing with diversity, equity, inclusion and justice in its social media. Doing so would demonstrate openly that cultural knowledge, skills and values are important.

The final thought on what would need to happen in Missoula to deepen sense of place and safety for BIPOCs was “acceptance through education. Education is always a good tool because if you are going to have acceptance may be you need to learn a little more about another person’s culture and experience to have a different view or a different perspective.”





Section IV

Findings: Engagement with BIPOC

Qualitative Findings

Missoula residents and stakeholders, who self-identified as BIPOC narrated stories and gave descriptions of their lived experiences that invariably connected their social reality to systemic marginalization, disenfranchisement, and inequity in irrefutable and measurable ways. These stories were impactful, and despite their uniqueness they had common themes, point of views, and life events. Moreover, from their historical and contemporary lived experience in Missoula, BIPOC collaborators envisioned and designed a just, safe, and inclusive Missoula where BIPOCs can experience an ongoing sense of safety, place, belonging, and well-being.

Point of View

A shared point of view that became apparent very quickly was BIPOCs’ genuine appreciation of Missoula. They recognized its value, especially in comparison to other places and towns in Montana. Below is a sample.

Enjoyable Things about Missoula

Missoula is this little oasis that has things to make people and life comfortable in comparison to other part of Montana	Finding a niche then getting connected and integrated is easier when compared to larger metropolitan areas	Best place for people of color in Montana
A college town that feels liberal and inviting a lot of the time compared to other parts of Montana	There’s intimacy, yet it is big enough to not really know everyone.	Quick access to outdoor activities, e.g., trails, hiking, river, camping
Acceptance of different lifestyles, choices, and practices	There’s a sense of community and connection that come from seeing familiar faces when navigating public and private spaces	Things are relatively close and it’s easy to navigate and get to places
The beauty of the natural environment	People are friendlier than in other areas of Montana	There is greater diversity when compared to other places and towns in Montana

They also readily recognized that Missoula seems to prefer life being ordered or structured in particular and predictable ways. They expressed their perspective that there is a value for constancy.

The following summary was offered:

MISSOULA IS A PLACE WITH ITS OWN VIBE THAT COMMUNICATES 'THIS IS WHAT WE ARE ABOUT.' AS MUCH AS IT SEES ITSELF AS MORE PROGRESSIVE THAN OTHER TOWNS, MISSOULA HAS A STAGNANT FEEL BECAUSE IT FOSTERS THE ATTITUDE 'LIVE LIFE JUST THE WAY IT IS.' THEY ARE 'COMFORTABLE WHERE THEY ARE AT' RESULTING IN LIMITED OPPORTUNITIES TO GROW BECAUSE THEY DON'T WANT THINGS TO CHANGE.

WHEN THEY RECOGNIZE THAT THINGS NEED TO CHANGE, THE RESPONSE IS ONE OF TWO ALTERNATIVES: 'OH SURE. BUT THEY CONTINUE ON' OR 'WE KNOW THAT, BUT THIS HAS BEEN WORKING FOR US.' AS A RESULT, IT TAKES A LONG TIME FOR ANYTHING NEW TO BE EMBRACED.

ADDITIONALLY, IN ORDER TO HAVE ACCESS TO, OR BENEFIT FROM OPPORTUNITY/ORTUNITIES, OR EVEN KNOW ABOUT POTENTIAL RESOURCES, YOU HAVE TO HAVE CONNECTIONS, BE AN INSIDER.

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Point of View: Comfort Discussing & Acknowledging Racial Issues

In addition to sharing their perceptions of Missoula, BIPOCS, who engaged with LEARN, reflected on level of comfortability discussing and acknowledging racial issues in Missoula. According to the BIPOCs participant collaborators, the degree of comfort discussing and acknowledging racial issues was context dependent. They delineated three primary contexts where conversations with Whites could potentially happen: a) professional circles and spaces, b) personal social networks or circle, and 3) the broader Missoula community.



Of the three contexts, BIPOCs noted that discussions and acknowledgements within social network are the highest whereas the broader community was designated the space least likely to have consistently discussions and acknowledgements of racial issues. One vital reason for the greater level of comfort within their social groups/circles was the fact that they make choices about who they invited or brought in to their personal life and sphere. “I choose the people close to me in my life and we do have these conversations. We’ve talked about this frequently.”

In contrast, within the broader context of Missoula, the sample of BIPOCs noted that some Whites have been willing to acknowledge there are issues but others “really downplay because they haven’t seen it, because they haven’t been exposed to it, or anything like that. The majority might acknowledge that there’s a little issue but really downplay how important it is.” In reflecting on what seems to get in the way of acknowledging racial issues, many expressed that one of the greatest

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factors is “it honestly doesn’t affect their lives. They have the things and relationships that are valuable to them so it leaves no room to really acknowledge.”

There was a final group identified by BIPOCs, whom they described as trying to bring out issues of race but doing so “from a place of not knowing. They announce it [the particular racial issue] like they know it really well,” which may inhibit them from being open to hearing the emic perspectives of BIPOCs. Their belief of “knowing” may stem from their sense of being progressive and “woke.”

Common Life Events: Uninterrogated Assumptions

BIPOCs described being aware acutely of a large percent of Missoula’s White residents’ taken-for-granted perception of themselves as forward-thinking, open-minded, and accepting, especially in comparison to other areas of Montana. While they did not disagree with this perception, they noted that there are unexamined parts. For example, BIPOCs collaborators collectively noted that there are uninterrogated assumptions by many White residents that have been experienced directly when navigating public and private spaces. These assumptions are described below.

Assumption of Non-belonging

Uniformly, BIPOCs, who engaged with LEARN, related stories and encounters that exemplified this dominant narrative of BIPOC nonbelonging held by many Whites, which was echoed and re-echoed regardless of racial, ethnic or cultural heritage. According to BIPOCs, many White residents, with whom they have interacted, inevitably conveyed to them that they are different “There is always this, ‘Oh, you are a little bit different’” communicated in some way, which is a precursor to them being asked questions such as, where are you from? What are you?

One BIPOC captured this experience by noting, “one thing I have experienced my entire time in Missoula is always the question of where are you from. I have been here for over 20 years.” Another BIPOC reported,

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“They want to know how you end up in Missoula when Missoula has been my home for my whole life.” Yet another noted, “they try to draw out where I am from and make assumptions about cultural or ethno-racial identity. They don’t necessarily know how to ask the questions that they want to ask you when they meet you. So, they do it in uncomfortable ways.” Furthermore, “when attempting to interact, so many of them do not know how to act, do not know the questions to ask, the language to use, how to hold these conversations. Totally unaware that their actions and words are racialized.” The table offer additional narratives that exemplify the assumption of nonbelonging

Pervasive Narratives about Non-Belonging

I generally will have some sort of uncomfortable encounter maybe at least once a month. People will say something to me that just calls out that I have an ethno-racial identity.

There have been times when people will randomly speak to me in a language other than English even though I do not speak those languages. Things like that make me uncomfortable. It feels offensive to me because I speak English

It’s an uncomfortable feeling not really knowing what someone’s motivation is. Guessing why someone is asking you certain things

People will initiate the conversation often with some type of complement about a physical trait or characteristics as a way to try and just start the conversation about what is my ethnicity

There’s a difference when asked by another person of color. It is not offensive because there is a mutual asking and sharing. It’s reciprocal and mutual. It’s not random and you’re not just an object of curiosity

A lot of them assume like, oh are you from the military? Or who did you marry? Or where are you from? Or where did you come from?

This question continues even when you have been resident for years or you actually were born in Missoula.

The question, where are you from or what are you is always there, nuance sometimes, but present nonetheless

These questions inevitably come up. I feel like it’s asked in 99% of the conversations

People assuming things about me that I might not be able for example, assuming I don’t know or I am able to speak English fluently, not able to understand it and make own decisions

In explaining this inevitable question, one BIPOC resident indicated that “sometimes there is curiosity but often it is intended to validate their assumption of you not being originally from here [Missoula]. They

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continued, “I do not call that a genuine assumption because everyone came from somewhere different even their ancestors. This is a forgotten, overlooked, or ignored fact.” Yet another BIPOC participant collaborator attributed these interactions and communications to evidence of limited to no cultural intelligence, cultural literacy, or intercultural skills.

One result of not having the skills, literacy, and intelligence is discomfort for BIPOCs who then have to navigate through the byproducts of the interactions -- microinsults and microinvalidation. Whereas, there seems to be a degree of privileged obliviousness of the part of Whites who appear comfortable expressing impromptu or offhanded comments without realization of impact. For BIPOCs, these encounters are less about reciprocal mutual “connecting and more for their [Whites] personal gratification.” Other expressions of nonbelonging included customers treating them as invisible and less competent than co-workers and colleagues. In various establishments, customers/consumers have ignored their overtures of assistance and have shown directly a preference for Whites. Additionally, there have been demands to “go back to your country or go back to where you come from” and other types of disparagement. BIPOCs reported:

When you are the one who has these things directed at you, you don't always know what to do nor do you feel comfortable doing anything especially when you're by yourself. Especially if you are alone you don't always feel safe doing it, meaning speaking up. Because you don't know what the state of the other person might be, especially, I mean, in the state with people who carry firearms you need to be careful.”

Participant collaborator

There also have been “snide comments made about our color and other comments like, ‘oh you're not supposed to be here, or just mean things like, speak English.’”

Presumption of Absence

In addition to the assumption of nonbelonging, many Whites have made presumptions that there are limited to no BIPOCS in Missoula. According to participant collaborators, “White folks are not aware nor do not recognize that we are here in Missoula, that we have a place here.” An interesting dichotomy appears to exist. On the one hand, BIPOCs are visibly different so they are seen yet, at the same, time they are invisible. The presumption of absence has reinforced BIPOCs invisibility despite Indigenous people groups and communities having been the original stewards of this place.

Assumptions about BIPOC Identities and Heritages

Similar to the narratives about assumptions of nonbelonging, BIPOCS unvaryingly shared lived experiences of many White residents seeing them as interchangeable as not having distinctive identities and heritages. BIPOCS noted that “they do not seem to recognize that there is a lot of knowledge around how different people live their lives and where different people would have come from.” Rather, according to BIPOCs:

“When White folks cannot place you or determine where or with whom you belong, they end up making these arbitrary decisions about who you are and your place in this world. If you can’t be placed then they’ll classify you on who they think you are and treat you with the associative stereotypes.”

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In essence, BIPOCs reported experiencing limited respect and valuing of their uniqueness within and among their respective groups. BIPOCs have been treated as undifferentiated – Asians and Pacific Islanders are all the same. Indigenous all the same. Blacks all the same. Latinx/Hispanic all the same, etc. Moreover, Brown bodies have been seen as undistinguishable. This experience was summed up in this way, “we inherited everybody’s racisms because people can’t place us so we get all of it.”

BIPOC participant collaborators suggested that all of the above assumptions and presumption are rooted in and exacerbated by “the lack of cultural influence.” Cultural influence was defined as “having leaders, someone who’s looked up to, someone who is an inspiration, someone of renowned, someone who is like, I guess, perceived as heroic, who has made some sort of a difference. They would be people of color in prominent roles and positions of power who are visible and public facing.” Without people of color present in public facing spaces, spaces of influence, this has strengthened and reinforced all the taken-for-granted assumptions.

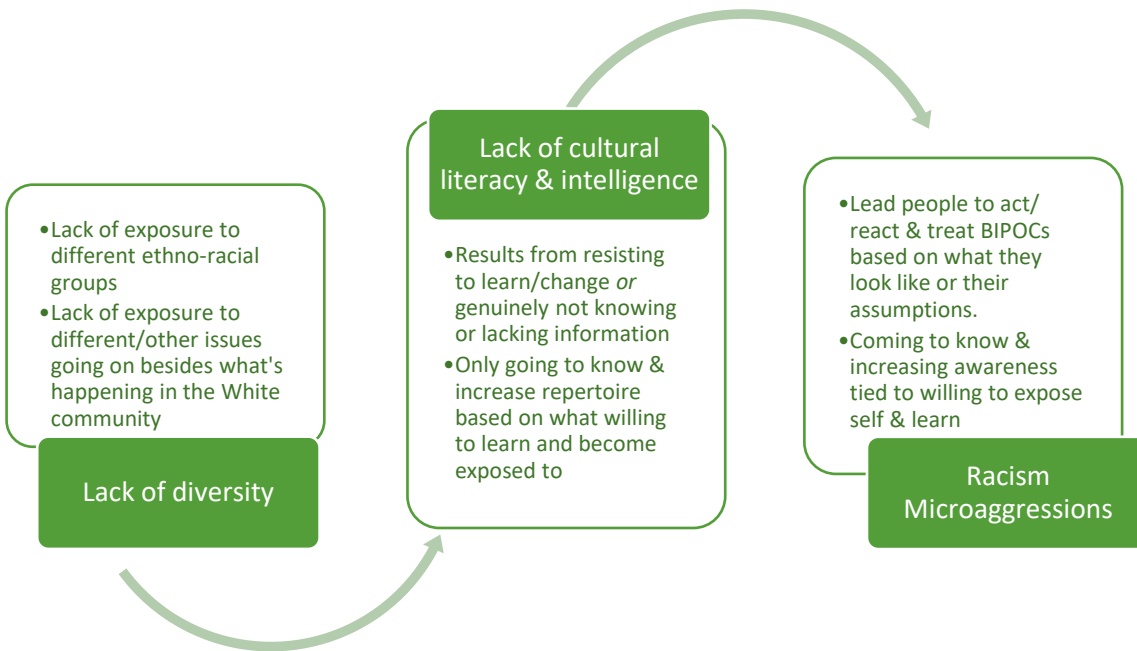


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Issues that Engender Worry and Concern

There were several issues identified by BIPOCs who engage with LEARN. They are delineated in diagrams and table below. Language and descriptions are theirs.

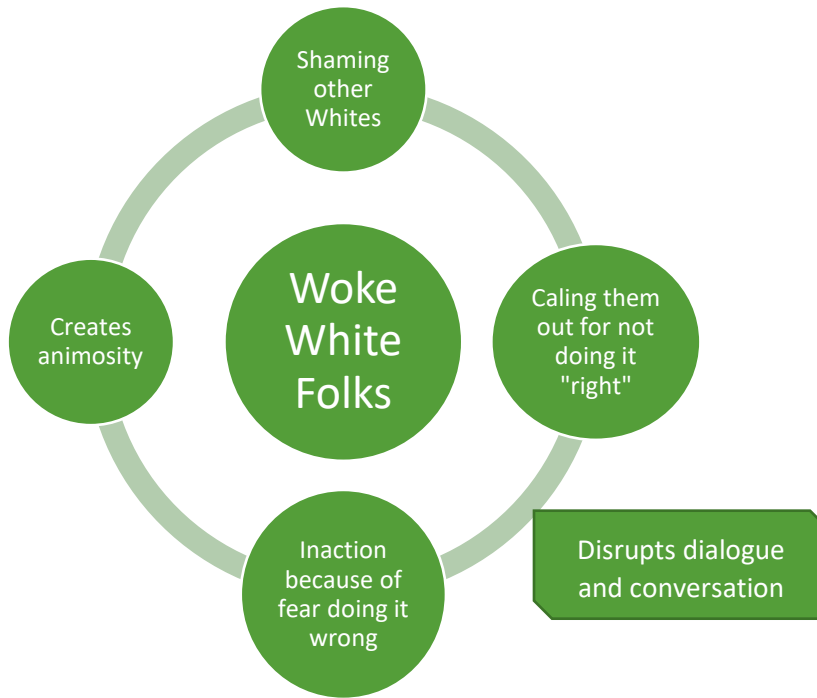
Lack of Diversity and Racism



BIPOCs, who were participant collaborator, underscored the fact that “people of color in Missoula just have to prove themselves that they are not their stereotype.” With one voice, however, they stated unequivocally, “I am more than just what you assume I am.”

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Woke White Folks Shaming



According to the sample of BIPOCS, White-folks-shaming has been a concern because this group of Whites present as learned and knowledgeable and the arbiter of what is the “right and best” way for doing equity work, antiracism efforts and advocacy, shaming other Whites who try, but make missteps or mistakes.

Below is a table with additional areas and issues of concern shared by BIPOC participant collaborators. The language is representative of their expressions and thoughts.

Table 9 Mutual Areas and Issues of Concern

Areas and issues of Mutual Concern		
Emergency Responders	Educational System MCPS	Lack of Representation
An area where we are lacking in diversity, exposure and knowledge	I feel like the staff could really benefit from exposure and learning opportunities to enhance skills and cultural knowledge	City Council is primarily white we have a white mayor, governor and we could stand to invite more diversity into those spaces

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Areas and issues of Mutual Concern

Interactions with first responders have been more than 90% with White males	Teachers engage in communication and interactions with students that single out they are different.	It would be nice to see more of a diverse representation across-the-board whether it's the university system or our City Council and government
Have felt talked down to, a power-play and there seem to be limited respect	Teachers often expect that students of color will be the representative of their culture, and they would be happy for the spotlight, this attention	There is also lack of representation in the health system which potentially could be a barrier for people of color seeking medical help or feeling comfortable sharing their concerns
Targeted by the police	Teachers trying to be inclusive but at the same time it's also singling them [BIPOC students] out so it feels weird	Not sure how much cultural training healthcare professionals in Missoula have received, having the knowledge of how to address the diverse people groups and communities.
Inconsistent treatment from one officer to another. There does not seem to be standardized processes or procedures. Treatment based on who you are. Who is verifying that procedures/protocols are meeting standards?	The educational system almost is influence by the White majority who are in positions of power deciding the curriculum/content. Feels like we don't have voice on curricular decisions and content	People of color are sometimes cautious about voicing concerns or issues; not being understood, judge I just want to see more people of color in leadership positions that are public facing because I think it's really important for us to see ourselves in these positions not just behind the scenes.
No follow up from police officer despite leaving messages I heard nothing back there was no, 'hey how you doing or hey just want to check in and let you know we haven't had any leads'	Teachers not understanding lived experiences of children of color, including those who immigrated or resettled	
Seems like there is neglect or marginalizing individual who call often or multiple times. If known to the police, 'police don't take them seriously'	In such a small town, we already have these inequities starting at such a young age. Our youth who should be getting exposure to people of different abilities, different diverse backgrounds and	

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Areas and issues of Mutual Concern

SES instead already been put into boxes. This is the good white box, and this is, and that is...

Who is holding officers accountable for their decisions?



Housing	Economic Mobility	Wage and Cost of Living
<p>The housing market is outrageous right now.</p> <p>Concerned about application process because judged by an added layer beyond credit & rental history, your racial identity. Your application is weighted on your identity</p>	<p>Having to make difficult decisions or choices about seeking greater education</p> <p>vs.</p> <p>providing for family. Sometimes cannot do both</p>	<p>People are not making the standard of living that they need to be making for the cost of living in Missoula</p>
<p>Homelessness has always been a problem in Missoula but it is only getting worse it's getting worse to the point where people that are from Missoula or have lived in Missoula for a long time can no longer afford to live here anymore</p>	<p>How do you plan for a better economic position when you need to survive and maybe take care of a family?</p> <p>Sometimes you have to make difficult choices about saving vs. spending on what need</p>	<p>The cost of living is insane here right now it's hard I feel like the housing and the amount of money it takes even to live here kind of makes it impossible for people to even move here and I feel that affects the diversity here too</p>
<p>Housing market here is obscene. I worry about affordability of housing for refugees</p>	<p>Barriers include policy decisions and cost of living</p>	<p>Our cost-of-living is soaring and the pay is not</p>
<p>The rent here is not affordable at all. It's hard to find a place that's affordable, that's safe, in a good location and accessible to public transportation and stores. You won't find all in one place</p>	<p>It is really difficult to think you are living your best life without feeling financially secure. That's really difficult in Missoula</p>	

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Areas and issues of Mutual Concern

There is a lot of people in this town doubling up in apartments and houses

When you feel like your are struggling, it is really difficult make ends meet; it's really difficult to elevate to the next level

Affordable housing is a huge issue

One solution is we need to actually make it so that people can't change the Airbnb ordinance

So, people can't just rent out their house as Airbnb without actually being people who live in the house at the same time

All these houses that have been brought up that aren't actually being used by full-time residence

Exploitation of BIPOC Brand

Businesses are exploiting, using BIPOCs as a way to sell but are necessarily involved in any way. They do this because they know that it is the 'in thing' and their customers value that

Without authentically participating it feels wrong to me

Politicizing Issues

Everything gets politicize here. Everything becomes political
 Politicize issues that are real and have real life impact and consequences for people of color

Political divisiveness

Not Earth Friendly

It's not very earth friendly. The issue of not being able to recycle anywhere.

Recycle policies and programs not widespread or inherent

Lack of Resources

Not enough resources lead to having to figure out who or what has the most need.

Concern what is the evaluating criteria for decisions on where to focus. The services funding

Homelessness, Mental Health & Addiction

Services available especially for low resource individuals. Feel marginalized because maybe they have encountered the say police officer a few times before, or they kind of make the same house calls

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Areas and issues of Mutual Concern

allocation not always readily
 understood

so the police don't take them as
 serious

There is a great difference
 between worry and
 concern. A worried person
 sees a problem, and a
 concerned person solves a
 problem.

-Harold Stephens

picsmeme.com

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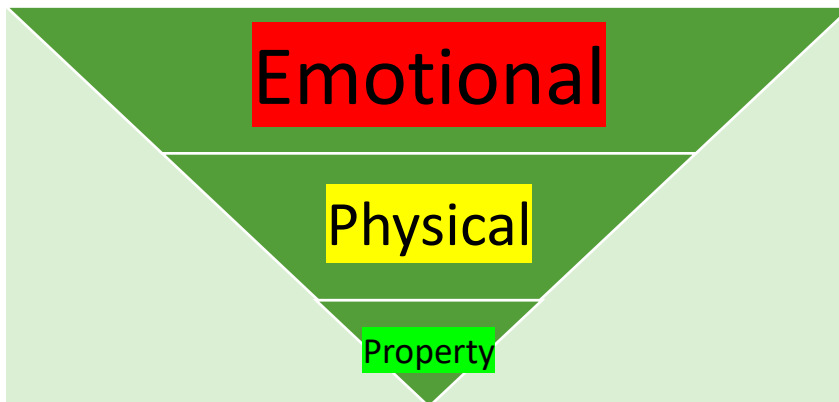
Safety and Justice in Missoula

In addition to discussing areas and issues of mutual concern, BIPOC participant collaborators reflected on safety and justice in Missoula, which also areas of concern. Safety was featured prominently in their stories and descriptions of life events. Below are some examples of common descriptions and definitions.

Safety

Reflections on Safety	
Interconnected relationship between acceptance and safety. Acceptance = letting down/go expectations, meaning don't start conversations with assumptions and stereotypes	
The feeling of comfort; the people of color in Missoula probably do not	
Not having to worry about being threatened whether it's a physical or mental . if I'm worried my antennas go up and I'm always scanning in a protective mode for my family & myself	
Being able to walk around and not feel that someone is going to hurt you because of the way you look or fear that something is going to happen to you because of what's going on in society, what the media is portraying	
Feeling like you can go anywhere without being worried about, I think, either emotional or physical danger coming to you	
Being able to be comfortable, not judged, or not feel like you're going to be attached walking down the street because of what's going on in the world	
For me to feel safe, I would have trust in the authorities	
I keep thinking of safety as coming from a social contract of others caring of others	
It would mean non-judgement; maybe some curiosity but feeling like you are just accepted as who you are	

Three types of safety were remarked on and named: physical, emotional, and property. Of the three, safety relating to property was least concerning followed by physical. However, emotional safety carried the most concern because verbal attacks, being called racial slurs, other public disparagement, being unexpectedly randomly approach, etc. eroded it. Based on the degree of intensity of the aforementioned encounters, they could prompt fears of potential physical harm or attacks.



Regarding property safety, one BIPOC participant collaborator noted, “you might forget your wallet downtown on accident and go back and it’ll probably be there.” Whereas, in describing emotional safety, BIPOCs who engaged with LEARN discussed how people of color have been called racial slurs and then the thought was, “Oh my gosh, I could be targeted. I just have not yet. It was a more like yet rather than it won’t happen. I was like it hasn’t happened yet.” Furthermore, they described racialized interactions that were uncomfortable, and they designated them as “washed in this positive ‘I’m not being mean nor harassing’ yet uncomfortable.”

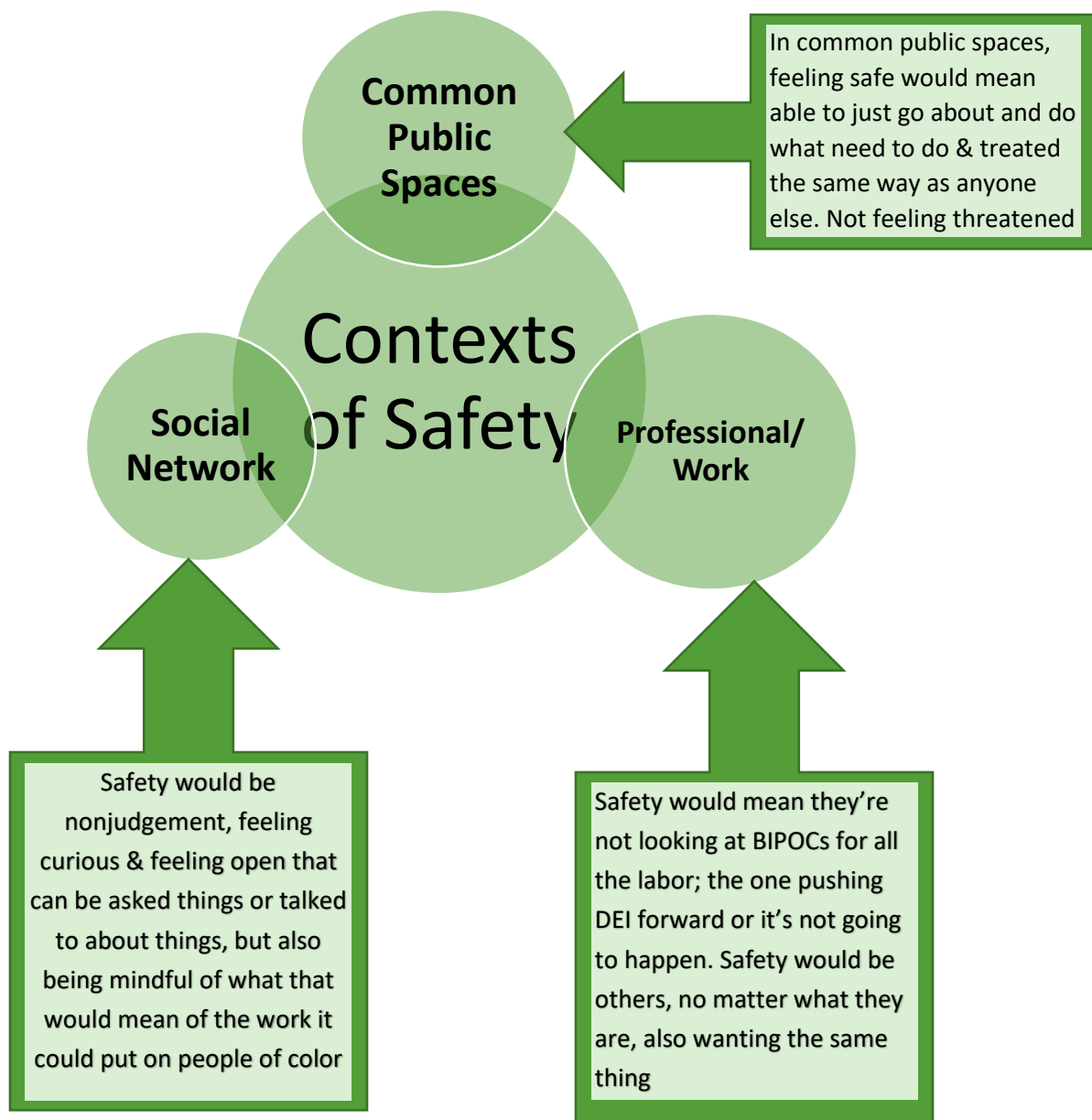
Additionally, BIPOC participant collaborators expressed needing to “put on a different persona” hiding versus revealing authentic self as a mechanism of safety and protection. For them, revealing true cultural selves left BIPOCs open to discrimination and a diminishment of value and competence.

Finally, they reflected on having to navigate through “being approached” and engaged in interactions and conversations that were inevitably about assumptions of nonbelonging. Depending of the approach, how

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conversation was initiated, what was said, how interaction unfolded, etc., have factored into their sense of safety. BIPOCs also related that safety is contextual. The diagram below outlines the various contexts and describes what safety would mean or look like in each one.

Diagram Contexts of Safety



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These contexts mirror the previously identified potential spaces where conversations/discussions and acknowledgements of racial issues might happen.

Justice

For BIPOCs who engaged in conversations with LEARN, safety was interconnected with justice. They narrated concerns about justice and, similar to safety, offered definitions and description. Below is a sample.

Reflections on Justice
The first place my mind goes to is colonialism
I equate justice to reparations
In Missoula, justice looks like putting a poster in your front window
Justice is recognition, fairness.
I think justice manifests itself as success, influence, having positive influence
Justice is selective in Missoula. If you know somebody or you are somebody, it can be fair.
Justice, it has to be two-sided. You have to weigh out both and listen to everybody
Being a woman, and a woman of color really did not help in terms of fairness. Judges are biased
Justice is acknowledgement, actions & accountability
I see a lot of inequity for people of color, the BIPOC community in Missoula, when it comes to justice
Justice is getting what you deserve like equal rights and making sure that everybody is offered resources available to them
Justice is a dialog. In order to bring justice or to provide justice you need to listen. It's being empathetic
Justice for people color, it's unfulfilled

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According to BIPOC collaborators, within the judicial system, justice has been differential based on intersecting social identities and diversity dimensions. For example, they shared that there is an inclination to believe powerful White people over BIPOCs. Additionally, BIPOC women have not been “seen on the same level as even a White woman and especially a White man. I don’t feel like we are on the same level in priority at all.” Furthermore, they expressed, “Missoula being very White being different could put you at a disadvantage.”

Couple with themes of justice relating to the broader judicial system, concerns were expressed directly about a range of interactions and communications with law enforcement. A summary of the picture has been captured in the following comments:

There is a culture around the police, a deeply held belief of themselves that they are culturally responsible; believing ‘I’m not racist.’ Truly believing that they possess all these moral and everything, that they do their job really well.

They have an aura of pride about what they are doing for our community, the service that they are providing. But these deeply held convictions and perceptions are based on their own self-perception, ‘seeing’ themselves through their own eyes rather than seeing it through the lens of the people that they’re actually interacting with.

Seeing it through a very whitewashed lens and thinking, truly believing, that they are inclusive and diverse.

And they do not want to have their perceptions challenged

In summary, BIPOCs who engaged with LEARN stressed that to have justice would mean living freely, living, surviving, and enjoying life. Moreover, to maintain a level of justice, which was seen as connected to respect, several steps were identified for everyone if Missoula would become a just society. They were seen as especially crucial for law enforcement:

- Constantly work on yourself, including work on being a better person so others [BIPOCs] don’t feel uncomfortable about being around you and being themselves
- Work on how to be appropriate with people of color, which involves education, application, & integration of intercultural/cultural literacy knowledge and skills



Section V

Envisioning

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Envisioning, Creating, Designing, a Better, More Just, and Equitable Missoula

LEARN invited BIPOC collaborators to envision (dream) and design (construct) transformative solutions and action strategies for making Missoula into a place/space of equality, equity, and inclusion. Below are ideas.



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Group II: Transformative Solutions & Action Strategies



Group III: Transformative Solutions



“Including our voices in huge decisions reduces negative direct impact”

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Group IV: Transformational Solutions

Trainings need to have acknowledgement, actions, and accountability integrated

Focus on wage equity. Local wage, being able to have more connection, a sense of community, & understanding one another are all intertwined

Paid parental leave should be implemented in all businesses

How different it would feel to go into businesses knowing where they stand. Open acknowledgement would increase sense of safety

Human issues with real life impact are politicized. It would be great for MPD to have open conversations about Back the Blue vs. lives of BIPOCs. They need to communicate that it is not either/or but a "we". How great would that be

City Council need to initiate conversations to inspire people to talk about diversity issues

Support Mountain Line. Get out and meet people on the bus. Good place to have conversations and mingle

Bring diverse entertainment to Missoula. Then feature cultural entertainment as featured stories so they get the recognition

Find ways to dismantle the 'good old boys network' out of law enforcement, courts, judgeships

Have community gardens that are designated just for people who can't afford the food. Why is there not a garden supplying the Pov and food bank with free vegetables?

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Use various forms of media to share about the various ethno-racial and cultural groups in Missoula. Share important aspects about them

Do a series of articles on interacting and communicating with diverse groups

Have translators

Raise awareness of diverse cultural groups through art, highlighting the artist and heritage, through the children's theater

Acknowledge and discuss national racial issues rather than ignore or deflect from the issues. MLK said injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere

Training created for us by us on how to navigate through racialized interactions

BIPOC cultural festivals similar to German Fest with all sorts of authentic food, music, dance, & performances

Teach Whites how to recognize and interrupt racialized disparagement

Review and ensure laws, etc., against discrimination in all contexts are updated and comprehensive.

Local government, City Council, MPD all publicly acknowledge that they take a stance against all forms of racism

Having programs specifically created for BIPOCs: mentorships, internships, leadership development, etc.

Every granting program or grantor should allot one award specifically for BIPOCs. Grants help with advancement

Trainings on how to succeed in business, City requirements for opening a business and other expectations around business ownership

Training for City that is built-in, with accountability and application afterward

Final Group of Transformational Solutions and Action Strategies

Having grants available help BIPOCs do the things needed to progress and advance in their field. Grants help BIPOCS advance in their careers

The above listed transformative action strategies are part of the BIPOC-generated knowledge and solutions that emerged from BIPOCs who have engaged with LEARN. Engagement is continuing and more envisioning and designing a of just, equitable and better Missoula for BIPOCs to have a deeper sense of safety, place, belonging and wellbeing are proceeding. Such valuable information has been gained, and as noted, without these conversations, BIPOC thoughts, ideas, and solutions might otherwise be lost, ignored, or marginalized. Moreover, these findings represent a beginning collection of codified BIPOC experiences and viewpoints, which can contribute potentially to their improved quality of life and well-being in Missoula. Finally, the results have imbued their experiences with epistemic authority. They are no longer anecdotal.

Reflections on City Municipality

Interestingly, BIPOCs who engaged with LEARN described limited knowledge about and interactions with the City except for departments that had relevance to civic and professional responsibilities or with COVID. Furthermore, they noted that they did not access the City's website with any regularity and most were unaware of the *Engage Missoula* platform. Many were surprised to learn about Parks and Recreation programming and activities for residents of all ages.



Section VI

Appendix

Appendix

Evaluative Tool for Audits

Rating for Key Documents:

- 0 – Not applicable. Document or communication vehicle does not exist
- 1 – Terms or language (or imagery when appropriate) of racial equity, social justice, diversity, and inclusion *not used*
- 2 – Terms or language (or imagery when appropriate) of racial equity, social justice, diversity, and inclusion *implied* but not directly used
- 3 - Terms or language (or imagery when appropriate) of racial equity, social justice, diversity, and inclusion *mentioned but not discussed*
- 4 - Terms or language (or imagery when appropriate) of racial equity, social justice, diversity, and inclusion *explicitly used*; explanation/making a case is present or substantive comment made

Some Key Terms or Language (or imagery when appropriate) Include:

- Racial, health, social, economic equity
- Social justice
- Racism
- White privilege
- Structural or systemic racism, systems of oppression
- Antiracism
- Disparities/ inequities
- Cultural knowledge, competence, humility or intelligence
- Fairness
- Justice
- Diversity or diverse
- Inclusion or inclusiveness
- Equity, equitable, equality
- White dominant culture

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- Anti-or non-discrimination
- Land, labor and life acknowledgement

Stories and Stones Audit

Summary and Overview

This document included information about a wide range of diverse people and groups. This is commendable. However, there were major concerns relating to the consistent negative portrayals/descriptions of “the Indians” that reinforced and perpetuated erroneous stereotypes and biases while unwittingly supporting colonialism and imperialism. Additionally, there was an overriding sense of depersonalization and objectification with the repeated classification of them as “the Indians” whose primary identity was associated with criminality, savageness, hostility, etc. Finally, there was a conspicuous absence and erasure of Indigenous people groups historical connection to this *land and space*.

Social Transformative Actions

- Address the conspicuous *absence and erasure* of the historical connection of Indigenous peoples to the land and space. This lack of recognition and acknowledgement reflect the practices of colonialism and imperialism. Consider writing and including a preface about their historical place and belonging to this land.
- Rewrite all the sections/areas about “the Indians.” Maintain the integrity of historical events without using the current highly inflammatory and pejorative language/labels that support/confirm and perpetuate biases and erroneous stereotypes of criminality, inhumanity, soullessness, etc. Share and present the events or situations in a similar manner to those of Whites; use neutrality, objectivity, and unbiased language. Remove all negative descriptors and pejorative labels: savages, renegades, hostile, etc.
- Use Indigenous resources: consult with Indigenous groups about how to recount events in ways that honor and value the full complexity of Indigenous historical experiences.

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- Instead of presenting them only as aggressors and victimizers, demonstrate that they experienced significant loss and displacement, that their home and place were invaded and conscripted, that the fear and anxiety were bidirectional, etc.
- The current recounting of events and situations always gives privilege to & highlights the terror and fragility of Whites but does not convey the fear and terror experience by “the Indians.”
Consider who was invading/encroaching on whom?
- Incorporate stories about specific historical Indigenous people and their contributions to Missoula. It was great that women were included.
- Use quotations to designate actual language, descriptions, or statements and by whom or clearly identify information that specific historical individuals or sources *described, said, noted, or indicated, etc.* when relating all historical events or situations
 - **The key:** *can the integrity of historical account be maintained without the inclusion of known pejorative language, labels, or terms that reinforce/perpetuate the value of colonialism as well as communicate cultural unresponsiveness and insensitivity, cultural thoughtlessness and carelessness even when used by a specific person historically?*

Guidebook Sheriffs Audit

Summary and Overview

There was clear evidence, in this document, of language and messaging bias that reinforced/confirmed erroneous stereotypes. Negative and pejorative labels as well as insensitive terms pervaded the recounting of events/situations involving groups who are not White. The use of such terms and language demonstrated a lack of cultural awareness, responsiveness, sensitivity and cultural humility. The key would be to relate and maintain the integrity of historical information without perpetuating historical colonialism, imperialism and cultural negativity.

Social Transformative Actions

1. Evaluate the tone/tenor, word choices, messaging (implicit & explicit) etc., used in recounting events/situations relating to “Indians,” and Mr. Coleman.
2. Use language that is neutral, unbiased, objective, etc., rather than inflammatory/pejorative labels confirming, reinforcing, and perpetuating stereotypes. Share historical events or situations in ways that maintain their integrity without pejorative labels or clearly biased messaging about cultural groups or people.

There appears to be a distinctive difference in accounts relating to Whites. Adjectives or labels, such as, vicious, dirty deeds, lawless, troublesome, renegade, etc., were not used but they are fully present with Indigenous groups and Mr. Coleman. Therefore, consider stating historical facts or remembrances without the use of negative adjectives/descriptors/labels for everyone

3. Use quotations to designate actual language, descriptions, or statements and by whom.

Clearly identify information that specific individuals or *sources described, said, noted, or indicated*, etc. when relating all historical events or situations. This was a practice clearly evident in recounting of historical events involving Whites. Offer the same to everyone.....

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4. References to “Indians” or “area Indians” are depersonalizing and objectifying. How might you portray them as humans with an identity and of inestimable worth?
5. Consider carefully what value or significance exists in describing historical accounts or situation with specifically quoted pejorative language, labels, or terms that convey a lack of cultural awareness/ responsiveness/ sensitivity and cultural humility, even when/if used by the specific person, e.g., “redskins”

The key again: *can the integrity of historical account be maintained without the inclusion of pejorative language, labels, or terms that reinforce/perpetuate the value of colonialism as well as cultural unresponsiveness and insensitivity, cultural thoughtlessness and carelessness even when used by the specific person, i.e., “redskins” “criminals”?*

6. Use Indigenous resources: consult with Indigenous groups about how to recount events in ways that honor and value the full complexity of Indigenous history in Missoula.

Professional Associations and Organizations

One additional solution offered by BIPOCs was to encourage BIPOC employees' participation in programs and professional associations that benefit people of color. They would help with building professional networks for BIPOCs and they would offer City departments opportunities to interface with them for information and sharing about positions.

Asian Professional Associations & Organizations List:

- [Ascend](#) is the largest, non-profit Pan-Asian membership organization for business professionals in North America, with 60,000+ senior executives, professionals, and MBA/undergraduate students.
- [Asian American Advertising Federation \(3AF\)](#) is dedicated to advancing the Asian American marketing and advertising industry for Asian American consumers through education, advocacy, and collaboration.
- [Asian American Architects and Engineers Association \(AAAESC\)](#) is committed to providing a platform for empowering Asian American professionals working in the built environment.
- [Asian American Journalists Association \(AAJA\)](#) believes in promoting diversity in news coverage and in newsrooms.
- [Asian American Professional Association \(AAPA\)](#) inspires, develops, and promotes Asian American and minority professionals to maximize their career and leadership potential.
- [Asian American Hotel Owners Association \(AAHOA\)](#) is the largest hotel owners association in the country for Asian Americans.

[Asian Pacific American Medical Student Association \(APAMSA\)](#) is committed to addressing the unique health challenges of Asian Pacific American communities through education, outreach, advocacy, and service.

- [National Asian Pacific American Bar Association \(NAPABA\)](#) is the national association of Asian Pacific American attorneys, judges, law professors, and law students.

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- **National Association of Asian American Professionals (NAAAP)** is a non-profit organization that cultivates and empowers Asian & Pacific Islander leaders.
- **National Organization for Vietnamese American Leadership (NOVAL)** fosters the advancement of the Vietnamese American community.
- **Society of Asian Scientists and Engineers (SASE)** is dedicated to advancing its members to help them achieve their full career potential.

Black Professional Associations & Organizations

The following Black Professional Associations & Organizations hold a variety of networking events and professional development programs to bring like-minded African American professionals together. These membership-based professional associations serve the interests of African Americans in a given industry or occupation

Here is the list:

[American Association for Access, Equity, and Diversity \(AAAED\)](#) is the association of professionals managing affirmative action, equal opportunity, diversity and other HR programs.

[American Association of Blacks in Energy \(AABE\)](#) ensures the input of African Americans into the discussion and development of energy policies, regulations, R&D technologies and environmental issues.

[American Association of Blacks in Higher Education \(AABHE\)](#) is a membership-based organization dedicated to serving as the voice for African Americans in higher education.

[Association of African American Museums \(AAAM\)](#) is a non-profit organization that offers individual membership and empowers its members through advocacy, professional development, and collaboration.

[Association of Black Business Coaches & Consultants \(ABBCC\)](#) is a membership organization dedicated to building the skills and business networks of its members.

[Association of Black Cardiologists \(ABC\)](#) is a membership-based association for physicians, scientists, clinical care associates, cardiologists in training, medical students and more.

[Association of Black Psychologists \(ABPsi\)](#) promotes and advances the profession of African Psychology.

[Association of Black Sociologists \(ABS\)](#) is a membership organization for black social science leaders committed to research, teaching, mentoring, service, and social justice.

[Association of Black Women Physicians \(ABWP\)](#) is an organized network of black women physicians committed to the improvement of public health and health equity.

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Black Data Processing Associates (BDPA) is an organization for black professionals in IT including programmers, analysts, engineers, managers, instructors, and entrepreneurs.

Black Women in Science and Engineering (BWISE) is a membership-based organization for African American females who have degrees in the sciences, math, and engineering.

International Association of Black Professional Fire Fighters (IABPFF) is dedicated to cultivating and maintaining professional competence and establishing unity among black professional fire fighters.

Missouri Association for Blacks in Higher Education (MABHE) is dedicated to fostering the development and growth of blacks in the educational process statewide.

National African American Insurance Association (NAAIA) is dedicated to empowering African-American insurance professionals.

National Alliance of Black School Educators (NABSE) is devoted to the success of the nation's children, particularly children of African descent.

National Association for Black Veterinarians (NABV) is dedicated to supporting African-American individuals within the field of veterinary medicine.

National Association of African Americans in Human Resources (NAAAHR) is an inspirational and unique career development and networking powerhouse.

National Association of African American Studies (NAAAS) serves as a resource for scholars in the field doing research related to the African and African American experience.

National Association of Black Accountants (NABA) is the leader in expanding the influence of minority professionals in the fields of accounting and finance.

National Association of Blacks in Criminal Justice (NABCJ) is comprised of African Americans in law enforcement, judicial admin, juvenile justice, institution-based corrections, and more.

National Association of Black Female Executives in Music & Entertainment (NABFEME) empowers women of color in recorded music, sports, media and related entertainment industry fields.

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National Association of Black Geoscientists (NABG) is a nonprofit organization established to encourage and support African American geoscientists.

National Association of Black Journalists (NABJ) provides career development as well as educational and other support to its members worldwide.

National Association of Black Law Enforcement Officers (NABLEO) is a national organization serving as an advocate for the concerns and issues of law enforcement officers of color throughout the United States.

National Association of Black Male Educators (NABME) promotes the professional advancement of black and minority male educators.

National Association of Black Narcotics Agents (NABNA) is devoted to furthering the hiring, training, and retention of minority DEA employees.

National Association of Black Physical Therapists (NABPT) is a membership-based organization for African American physical therapists and physical therapy assistants.

National Association of Black Social Workers (NABSW) is committed to enhancing quality of life and empowering people of African ancestry.

National Association of Negro Musicians (NANM) is a membership organization for African-American music and musicians, performers, educators, students, administrators, and enthusiasts.

National Association of Real Estate Brokers (NAREB) the nation's oldest and most historic black real estate membership-based professional association.

National Association of Securities Professionals (NASP) is the premier non-profit organization for minorities and women in the securities industry.

National Black Association of Speech Language and Hearing (NBASLH) is a membership organization representing certified black speech-language and hearing professionals.

National Black Coalition of Federal Aviation Employees (NBCFAE) focuses on networking, education, volunteering and leadership through aviation based careers.

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National Black Contractors Association (NBCA) addresses the needs of African Americans in construction, women and other under-represented contractors.

National Black MBA Association (NMBAA) leads in the creation of educational opportunities and economic growth for African Americans.

National Black Nurses Association (NBNA) is a forum for black nurses to advocate for and implement strategies to ensure access to the highest quality of healthcare for persons of color.

National Black Prosecutors Association (NBPA) is the only professional membership organization dedicated to the advancement of African Americans as prosecutors.

National Black Public Relations Society (NBPRS) is a membership-based organization for black professionals in the public relations, media relations, and corporate communication fields.

National Coalition of Black Meeting Professionals (NCBMP) is a non-profit organization dedicated primarily to the training needs of African American meeting planners.

National Conference of Black Lawyers (NCBL) is an association of lawyers, scholars, judges, legal workers, law students and legal activists.

National Conference of Black Political Scientists (NCOBPS) is organized to study, enhance, and promote the political aspirations of people of African descent.

National Dental Hygienists' Association (NDHA) is committed to serving minority dental hygiene practitioners of African American descent and bringing the community together for betterment.

National Economic Association (NEA) offers membership to minority professionals and graduate students in the field of economics and a wide array of related disciplines.

National Forum for Black Public Administrators (NFBPA) is a professional membership organization dedicated to the advancement of black leadership in the public sector.

National Medical Association (NMA) is the collective voice of African American physicians and the leading force for parity and justice in medicine.

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National Organization for the Professional Advancement of Black Chemists and Chemical Engineers

(NOBCChE) welcomes black and minority professionals in chemistry and chemical engineering.

National Organization of Blacks in Dietetics and Nutrition (NOBIDAN) is a professional organization of African-American dietetic and nutrition practitioners.

National Organization of Black Law Enforcement Executives (NOBLE) represents black chiefs of police, sheriffs, and command level law enforcement agency personnel.

National Society of Black Engineers (NSBE) is dedicated to serving culturally responsible black engineers who excel academically, succeed professionally, and positively impact the community.

National Society of Black Physicists (NSBP) promotes the professional well-being of African American physicists and physics students.

Organization of Black Aerospace Professionals (OBAP) is a nonprofit organization dedicated to the encouragement and advancement of minorities in all aviation and aerospace careers.

Female Professional Associations & Organizations:

[Accounting & Financial Women’s Alliance \(AFWA\)](#) is a national organization offering networking, education, and leadership to women in accounting and finance.

[Alliance for Women in Media \(AWM\)](#) advances the influence and impact of women in all forms of media.

[American Association of University Women \(AAUW\)](#) is the nation’s leading voice promoting education and equity for women and girls with a network of more than 170,000 members.

[American Business Women’s Association \(ABWA\)](#) brings together businesswomen through leadership, education, networking support, and national recognition.

[American Medical Women’s Association \(AMWA\)](#) empowers women to lead in improving health for all within a model that reflects the unique perspective of women.

[Association for Women in Aviation Maintenance \(AWAM\)](#) is a membership organization dedicated to promoting networking, education, and fostering a sense of community for women in the industry.

[Association for Women in Communications \(AWC\)](#) champions the advancement of women across all communications disciplines.

[Association for Women in Science \(AWIS\)](#) is dedicated to achieving equity and full participation for women in science, mathematics, engineering and technology.

[Association of Professional Insurance Women \(APIW\)](#) is a membership-based organization for women in the insurance industry.

[Association of Women Surgeons \(AWS\)](#) is committed to inspire, encourage, and enable women surgeons to realize their professional and personal goals.

[Association of Women’s Health, Obstetric and Neonatal Nurses \(AWHONN\)](#) is accredited with distinction as a provider of nursing continuing professional development.

[Federally Employed Women \(FEW\)](#) is a private, non-profit organization dedicated to promoting equality for women and addressing concerns of women in the Federal workforce.

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International Association of Women (IAW) is a networking platform that provides women with the forum, education, and services to thrive in an interconnected world.

National Association of Women Business Owners (NAWBO) propels women entrepreneurs into economic, social and political spheres of power worldwide.

National Women's Studies Association (NWSA) leads the field of women's studies in educational and social transformation.

Society of Women Engineers (SWE) is a not-for-profit educational and service organization that empowers women to succeed and advance in the field of engineering.

Women in Fitness Association (WIFA) supports women of all ages to succeed both professionally and personally within the fitness industry.

Women in Listed Derivatives (WILD) promotes networking and relationship-building among women in our industry through social and educational events.

Women in STEM Leadership (WISL) is a membership-based organization providing coaching and leadership development workshops to aspiring women in STEM leadership.

Women in Technology International (WITI) empowers women worldwide through technology, leadership and economic prosperity.

Women In Trucking (WIT) is a non-profit organization with the mission to encourage the employment of women in the trucking industry.

Women's Diversity Network (WDN) connects and mobilizes women of different backgrounds to create positive changes through a more unified sisterhood.

Women of the Vine & Spirits (WOTVS) is dedicated to empowering and advancing women in the alcohol beverage industry.

Hispanic Professional Associations & Organizations:

[American Society of Hispanic Economists \(ASHE\)](#) is committed to serving the interests of Hispanic Americans in the economics profession.

[Association of Latino Professionals For America \(ALPFA\)](#) is the country's leading professional Latino non-profit organization.

[Hispanic Alliance for Career Enhancement \(HACE\)](#) is a national non-profit organization dedicated to the advancement of Latino professionals.

[Hispanic IT Executive Council \(HITEC\)](#) is a premier global executive leadership organization of senior business and technology executives who have built outstanding careers in technology.

[National Association of Hispanic Journalists \(NAHJ\)](#) is dedicated to the recognition and professional advancement of Hispanics in the news industry.

[National Association of Hispanic Nurses \(NAHN\)](#) is a nonprofit organization dedicated to promoting Hispanic nurses to improve the healthcare of our communities.

[National Association of Hispanic Real Estate Professionals \(NAHREP\)](#) is the largest minority trade group in the real estate industry.

[National Association of Latino Healthcare Executives \(NALHE\)](#) is led by Latino executive leaders of U.S. hospitals and healthcare organizations and experts.

[National Hispanic Corporate Council \(NHCC\)](#) offers individual membership opportunities specifically for individuals employed by Fortune 1000 corporations.

[National Hispanic Medical Association \(NHMAMD\)](#) is a non-profit association representing 50,000 licensed Hispanic physicians in the United States.

[Prospanica](#) is dedicated to building and advancing Hispanic leadership through graduate management education and professional development.

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[Society for Advancement of Chicanos/Hispanics and Native Americans in Science \(SACNAS\)](#) is an inclusive organization dedicated to fostering professional success in STEM.

[Society of Hispanic Human Resource Professionals \(SHHRP\)](#) is a membership-based organization dedicated to the promotion of diversity and inclusiveness in the workplace.

[Society of Hispanic Professional Engineers \(SHPE\)](#) is a membership-based organization for Hispanic engineers.

LGBTQIA Professional Associations & Organizations:

[Association of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender Addiction Professionals \(NALGAP\)](#) is dedicated to the prevention and treatment of alcoholism, substance abuse, and addictions in LGBT communities.

[Association of LGBTQ Journalists \(NLGJA\)](#) serves journalists, media professionals, educators and students working from within the news industry to foster fair and accurate coverage of LGBTQ issues.

[Gay & Lesbian Medical Association \(GLMA\)](#) is the world's largest and oldest association of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) healthcare professionals.

[National Association of Gay and Lesbian Real Estate Professionals \(NAGLREP\)](#) is the number one forum for LGBT home buyers, sellers, and real estate professionals.

[National Gay Pilots Association \(NGPA\)](#) is committed to build, support, and unite the global LGBT aviation community through education, social events, and outreach programs.

[National LGBT Bar Association \(LGBT BAR\)](#) is a national association of lawyers, judges, and legal professionals promoting justice in and through the legal profession for the LGBT community.

[National Organization of Gay and Lesbian Scientists and Technical Professionals \(NOGLSTP\)](#) is a professional society for LGBT people in science, technology, engineering, and math.

[Out in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics \(oSTEM\)](#) empowers LGBTQ people in STEM to succeed personally, academically, and professionally

Native American Professional Organizations/Associations

[Native American Journalists Association \(NAJA\)](#) serves and empowers Native journalists through programs and actions designed to enrich journalism and promote Native cultures

American Indian Sciences & Engineering The [American Indian Science and Engineering Society \(AISES\)](#) is a national nonprofit organization dedicated to increasing representation of American Indians, Alaska Natives, Native Hawaiians, Pacific Islanders, First Nations, and other indigenous peoples of North America in STEM studies and careers. The organization offers support to students in STEM programs with scholarships and events and offers professional development support in addition to career and networking opportunities.

[American Indian Business Leaders \(AIBL\)](#)

American Indian Business Leaders is a nonprofit organization designed to support and promote the education and development of future Native American leaders, while maintaining and incorporating cultural values.

[National Alaska Native American Indian Nurses Association \(NANAINA\)](#)

The National Alaska Native American Indian Nurses Association's mission is to promote a continuum of health among Native Americans; to serve the professional needs of Native American nurses; to cooperate with other professional associations, health care organizations, and governmental entities in matters affecting the purposes of NANAINA; and to recommend culturally appropriate health-service delivery solutions where barriers to Native American consumers exist

[National Native American Bar Association \(NNABA\)](#)

The National Native American Bar Association serves as the national association for Native American attorneys, judges, law professors and law students. Founded in 1973 as the American Indian Lawyers Association, NNABA works to promote issues important to the Native American community and works to improve professional opportunities for Native American lawyers.

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National Native American Law Enforcement Association (NNALEA)

The mission of the National Native American Law Enforcement Association is to promote and foster mutual cooperation between Native American law enforcement officers, agents and personnel, their agencies, tribes, private industry and public.

Women Empowering Women for Indigenous Nations

Women Empowering Women for Indigenous Nations (WEWIN) exists to provide Native women with the knowledge, support, and resources necessary to achieve success in their personal and professional lives. The WEWIN Annual Conference is an opportunity for Native women to engage in professional renewal, inspire others and network.