Office of Equity and Inclusion

OVERVIEW & IMPACT PLAN

PRINCE WILLIAM COUNTY

Office of Equity and Inclusion Overview

In Prince William County, we take pride in our diversity, which ranks among the highest in the state. Utilizing a "human-centered" approach, The Office of Equity and Inclusion centers its work on the importance of our County's diversity (both inherited and acquired) while addressing ethical and social imperatives (accountability) and delivering tangible advantages to the County in talent acquisition, innovation, decision-making, and overall organizational efficacy.

In 2020, the Prince William Board of County Supervisors directed the staff to develop a framework for becoming a more inclusive and equitable Prince William County (Equity and Inclusion Resolution, June 16, 2020).

The Office of Equity and Inclusion (established in 2021) serves as a vital pillar of action and accountability within the County's Strategic Plan to:

- Foster prevention and accountability with equity tools, leadership professional development, and collaboration with the County Cabinet, department leaders, employees at all levels, and the community at large.

- Fuel workplace creativity, innovation, and problem-solving by incorporating diverse perspectives and ideas into decision-making processes.

- Cultivate a sense of belonging and psychological safety among employees, boosting morale, motivation, and overall well-being, subsequently enhancing productivity and staff retention.

- Mitigate the risks of discrimination and bias, establishing a fair and respectful environment for all individuals.

- Implement accountability for equity and inclusion showcases the organization's dedication to social responsibility and ethical business practices, potentially enhancing its reputation and appeal to customers and prospective employees.

Equity and Inclusion Impact Plan

Since March 2021, the Office of Equity and Inclusion has embraced a human-centered Theory of Change Model to derive the three Key Priority Areas for the Office: Organizational Culture and Climate, Improving Organizational Infrastructure and Enhancing Community Engagement.
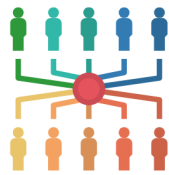
COMMUNITY BUILDING

ENGENDERING AWARENESS

CO-CONSTRUCTING KNOWLEDGE
beginning practices

APPLICATION
transformation advancing & revising practices

Starting in January 2022, the county began a three-phase process to understand the current state of the Key Priority Areas, establish baseline measures for these areas, and identify opportunities for programmatic initiatives.

- **Phase 1:** Completed preliminary research, which led to County Executive Chris Shorter's recognition as one of the "Top 100 Under 50 Executives and Emerging Leaders in Corporate America" for the collaboration between DiversityMBA Learning Solutions and the Office of Equity and Inclusion. This collaboration created the County's first <u>Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Review Report.</u>

- **Phase 2:** Synthesized the results from three organizational surveys, a community survey, a review of internal human resource documents, and over 500 submitted verbatims to shape the <u>Equity and Inclusion (EI) Impact Plan</u> (delivered in September 2023).

- **Phase 3:** Focused on executing the EI Impact Plan, which includes eight initiatives addressing the Office's three Key Priorities across the 2024 calendar year (see aligned priorities and initiatives outlined below).

Key Priority One: *Enhancing Organizational Culture and Climate* - Our foremost priority is to enhance the culture (lasting structures, behaviors, and norms) and the climate (immediate experiences within the culture). This focus fosters a favorable employee environment, elevating morale and commitment. Consequently, it enhances productivity, fosters innovation and leadership at all levels, improves retention rates, cultivates a sense of inclusion, and ensures psychological well-being in the work setting.

Initiatives to Address Priorities

- **Initiative 1:** Data Competency Building: Four departments have committed to a year-long program focusing on inclusive communication, leadership, and data competency enhancement utilizing equity tools. This initiative comprised 20 professional development sessions led by the Director and Business Services Administrator.

- **Initiative 2:** Leadership Development Portfolio: This initiative encompasses professional growth opportunities, and while none of the opportunities are mandatory, EI Leadership cohorts, mini-workshops, and book reviews are well attended, totaling 71+ scheduled sessions led by the Director of OEI).

Key Priority Two: *Improving Organizational Infrastructure* - Infrastructure refers to the systems, policies, and processes connected to the employee cycle (from "hiring to retiring") and county policies, standard operating procedures, and programs. Improving the infrastructure creates fairness and transparency in critical institutional processes that our people interact with regularly as employees.

- **Initiative 3:** The Equity Impact Screening Assessment (EISA) tool has been mandated across all departments to ensure alignment of new or revised organizational policies, standard operating procedures, and programs with the County Equity and Inclusion Policy. This initiative aims to enhance service delivery and is overseen by the Business Services Administrator. The tool's launch involved the creation of instructional videos and informative documents and facilitating departmental sessions. The tool's recognition beyond the county is noteworthy, with the Director's active involvement in two national Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion task forces.

- **Initiative 4:** The Standing Employee Groups Initiative introduces the formation of Employee Resource Groups (ERGs) to offer support, leadership training, advocacy, and mentorship opportunities for County employees. The ERGs are set to be fully operational by July 1, following the development of the ERG Policy and Implementation Plan by the Director of OEI in collaboration with input from employees at all levels, the Office of Human Resources, and the County Attorney's Office. The Senior Executive Assistant (Senior Equity and Inclusion Coordinator) provides support for this initiative. An essential component of this initiative is the New Employee Onboarding Overview, with approximately 20 sessions conducted annually.

Initiatives to Address Priorities

- **Initiative 5:** Spearheaded by the Business Services Administrator, this initiative focuses on establishing formal partnerships with the Office of Communications to conduct employee and community surveys, collaborating with the Office of Human Resources to support the implementation of the Human Resources Reimaged Plan for employee cycles, and working with the Office of Innovation and Technology to create Employee Data Dashboards. The projected release date for these dashboards is late Spring 2024, with full support from all OEU team members.

Key Priority Three: Enhancing Community Engagement, overseen by the Senior EI Coordinator, involves formulating a Language Access Policy and Plan, hosting various community workshops, and contributing to creating the Community Dashboard. These initiatives improve transparency, engagement, and advocacy across all PWC communities.

- **Initiative 6:** The Senior EI Coordinator developed the Language Access Policy and Plan (LAPP), with current employees in translation and interpretation, all County department directors, the Office of Human Resources, and the County Attorney's Office. The LAPP is a cornerstone in ensuring effective service delivery to a linguistically diverse community, promoting communication and inclusivity for all residents.

- **Initiative 7:** Community Communications & Collaborations, under the guidance of the Senior EI Coordinator, sets community engagement goals. The coordinator facilitates the monthly Partners in Equity and Inclusion sessions (12 in total), which were organized based on community feedback and provide a platform for sharing resources and County service information. The Senior EI Coordinator leads Community Book Talks, comprising nine sessions. Additionally, in-person summer learning opportunities focused on cultural competency will feature three full-day sessions.

- **Initiative 8:** Community Dashboards, overseen by the Business Services Administrator in partnership with the Office of Innovation and Technology, will develop a user-friendly demographic and resource Community Data Dashboard. The Data Dashboard will be a powerful tool for informing and empowering users with the insights they need to make informed decisions, monitor progress, and drive positive change within the organization and the community. The anticipated launch date for these dashboards is Summer 2024.