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County of Humboldt Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion Assessment Project

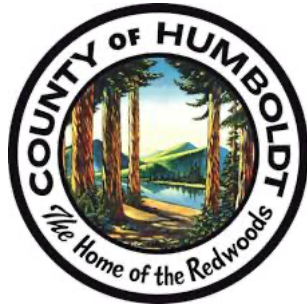
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I. PURPOSE/OVERVIEW



Coaching Imperative's strategy to achieve the desired deliverables center on the three research questions posed in the RFI:

- What does DEI mean to our staff?
- How is the county performing concerning DEI?
- How can the county best demonstrate a commitment to DEI?

The Survey Instrument: Coaching Imperative developed a survey instrument in a collaborative process with Humboldt County. Areas of focus for the survey include Hiring and Retention; Career Development; Personal Experiences; Policies and Procedures; Inclusion and Belonging; Experience with Supervisor; Ongoing Diversity Training; Community Relations. The survey instrument is modeled after the [SHRM Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Survey](#). Coaching Imperative collect and provide analysis of the data and, per the RFI, provide all data to the County of Humboldt's Office of Human Resources/Risk Management upon completing the project.

Facilitative and Interview Style: Reflective inquiry, attending skills, and emotional intelligence allow interviewees and focus group participants to see their thoughts, emotions, beliefs, assumptions, and perceptions through different lenses and mirrors. Guiding participants to speak from personal experience while allowing for multiple truths fosters individual and organizational learning. Empathy, Respect, Empowerment, and Community are fundamental principles of Coaching Imperative's facilitation strategy.

About Coaching Imperative: Diversity is the solution of our time, and emotional intelligence is the key to getting results. Coaching Imperative believes that embracing diversity is the only course to recognize our collective humanity. Coaching Imperative meets our clients where they are and helps them reach their equity goals.

Our experience with DEI aligns well with the qualifications outlined in the RFP, including the following experiences:

- Conducting quantitative and qualitative research, analyzing and interpreting data, summarizing findings, and making recommendations;
- Using multi-phased and mixed methodology approach to data gathering, including surveys, interviews, focus groups, and story-telling;
- Facilitating small group dialogue to explore diversity, equity, and inclusion;
- Developing culturally responsive training programs to support DEI best practices;
- Working with internal and external stakeholders to assess organizational effectiveness in meeting the DEI needs of the community;
- Auditing organizational DEI effectiveness by examining: Talent Management, Organizational Culture; Pay Equity, Public Facing Communication Channels, Suppliers and Vendors, and Community Stakeholders.

II. METHODOLOGY/ASSESSMENT PROCESS

Coaching Imperative's assessment approach emphasizes the use of Intersectionality for both inquiry and analysis. Intersectionality provides an analytical tool for people better to access the complexity of the world and themselves. (Collins & Bilge 2016, p. 2). Using a multi-phased and mixed methodology approach to data gathering, the research processes included:

- 818 Responses to Survey Response. August 11 – August 23, 2021
- Three Focus Groups 13 Respondents. Focus group dates July 21, 22, 30, 2021.
- 13 Departmental Directors Interviews. Interviews conducted between June 7 – July 6, 2021

III. KEY TERMS

DIVERSITY: Psychological, physical, and social differences that occur among any individuals, including but not limited to race, ethnicity, nationality, religion, socioeconomic status, education, marital status, language, age, gender, sexual orientation, mental or physical ability, and learning styles.

EQUITY: The guarantee of fair treatment, access, opportunity, and advancement while at the same time striving to identify and eliminate barriers that have prevented the full participation of some groups. The principle of equity acknowledges historically underserved and underrepresented populations and that fairness regarding these unbalanced conditions is needed to assist equality in providing adequate opportunities to all groups.

INCLUSION: The act of creating environments in which any individual or group can be and feel welcomed, respected, supported, and valued to fully participate and bring their whole, authentic selves to work. An inclusive and welcoming climate embraces differences and offers respect in the words/actions/thoughts of all people.

LEADERS: Leadership is a collective, relational process whereby individuals move themselves and others through practices of discernment, growth, and change to achieve health equity with and for those that our systems have pushed to the margins.

MICROAGGRESSION: The everyday verbal, nonverbal, and environmental slights, snubs, or insults, whether intentional or unintentional, communicate hostile, derogatory, or harmful messages to target persons based solely upon their marginalized group membership.

IMPLICIT BIAS: Attitudes or stereotypes towards people without our conscious knowledge. These biases operate beyond our control and awareness, inform our perception of a person or social group and influence our decision-making and behavior toward a person or social group.

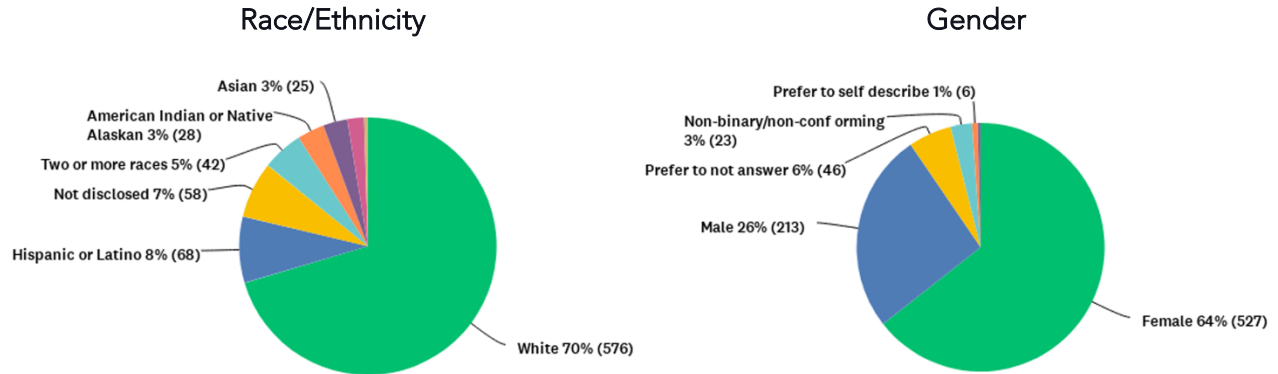
INTERSECTIONALITY: Intersectionality is a way of understanding and analyzing the complexity of identities through a prism connecting multiple forms of discrimination and disempowerment.

SOCIAL JUSTICE: A concept of fair and just relations between the individual and society. This is measured through power distribution, wealth, education, healthcare, and other opportunities for personal activity and social gain. Equal rights + Equal opportunity + Equal treatment.

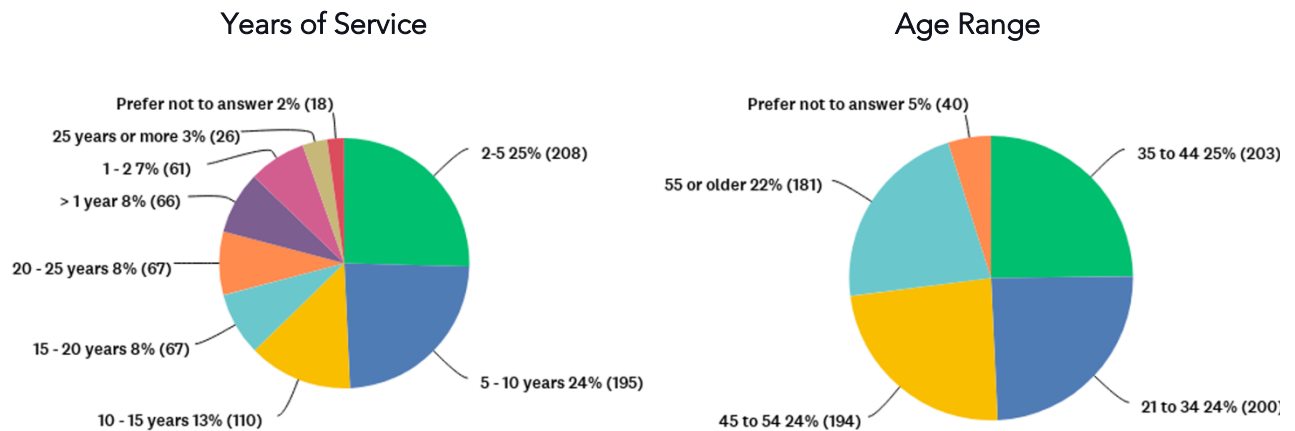
IV. SURVEY DATA

Demographics

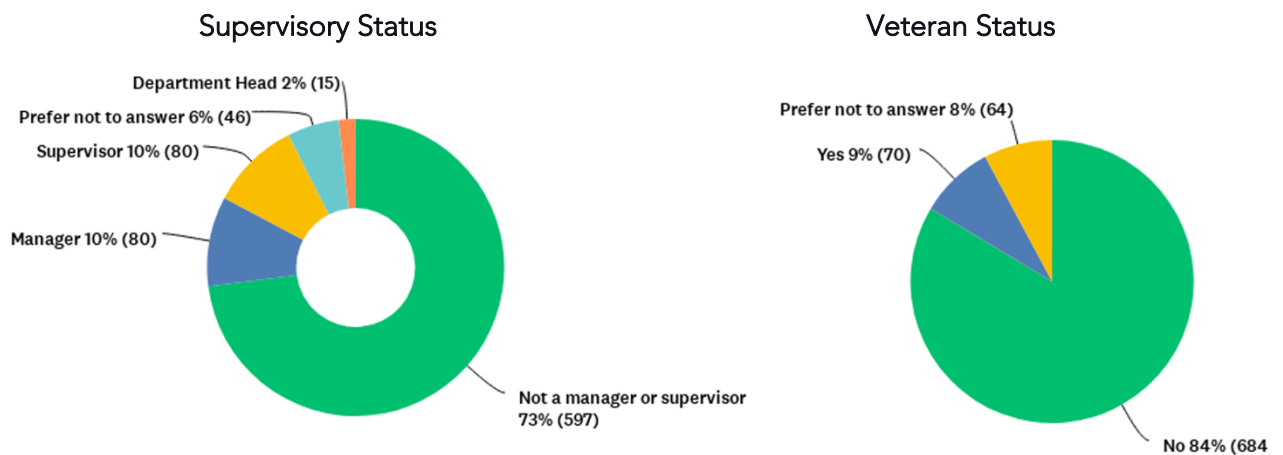
Most of the respondents to the survey were White (70%) and Women (64%).



Forty-nine percent have worked for the county for between 2 -10 years. Nearly 50% of respondents were between the ages of 21-34 or 35-44 and another 24% were between the age of 45-55.



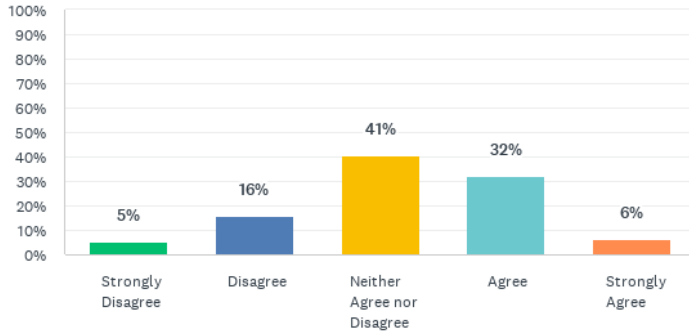
The majority of respondents were not managers or supervisors and only 9% of workers are Veterans.



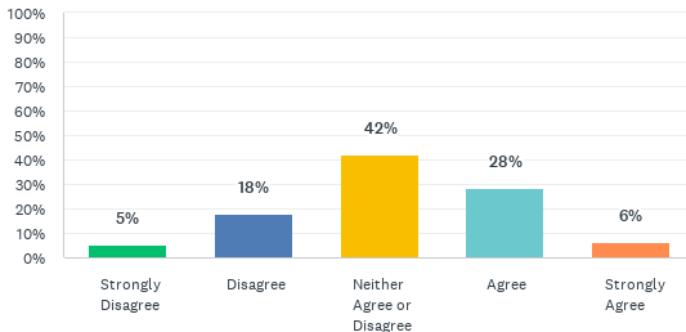
Leadership

The overall data reveals that respondents do not believe the County’s leadership encourages, demonstrates the importance of diversity, or that all employees are treated fairly. Only 38% (strongly agree and agree) of survey respondents believe that the leadership of the County of Humboldt encourages diversity. Thirty-four percent (strongly agree and agree) think that management demonstrates that diversity is essential, and 31% (strongly agree and agree) indicate that employees are treated fairly. It is significant to point out that 42% of employees either strongly disagree or disagree that all employees are treated fairly in terms of fairness.

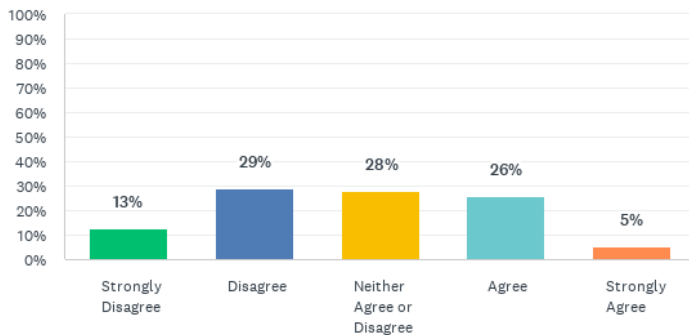
The Leadership of County Encourages Diversity



Management Actions Shows Diversity is Important



Leadership of County Treats All Employees Fairly



results are highlighted in more detail in the DEI Survey Report PowerPoint Report Presentation.

that employees are treated fairly. It is significant to point out that 42% of employees either strongly disagree or disagree that all employees are treated fairly in terms of fairness.

“From a leadership standpoint, in my conversations and interactions with the leadership, they do mean well, but there is no genuine acceptance; they can speak about it but don’t understand what the concepts mean? I observe instances of inequity that require being called out—very superficial understanding among the concepts. Individuals use gaslighting to create tensions. There is a need to have a respectful tone and ask questions to learn and better self vs. challenging or judging style. We have a long way to go in a way that we must embrace it, role model it, own it, so when we speak, we are representing our county, not ourselves.”

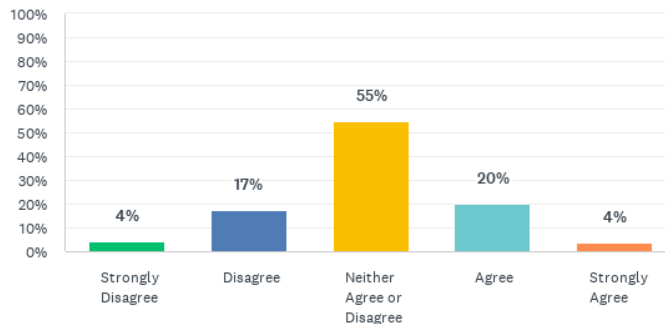
It is also important to note that both, Women and BIPOC populations’ experience of fairness in the County is significantly lower when compared to Men and White respondents, respectively. These

Career

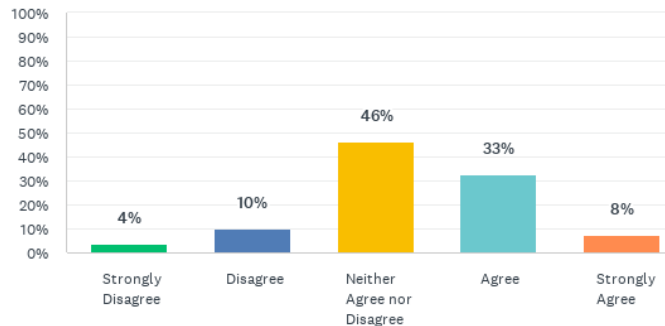
The survey respondents indicate that 24% (agree or strongly agree) believe the county actively seeks diverse candidates. Forty-one (41%) percent (agree or strongly agree) feel that can help candidates from different backgrounds are encouraged to apply for promotions, and 38% (agree or strongly agree) believe candidates from diverse backgrounds are treated fairly.

Neither Agree nor Disagree the largest response category in this section of the DEI survey. Further exploration is needed to understand the ambivalence demonstrated by the responses. The Great Resignation period we are currently in across the country is an opportunity for organizations to re-assess their employee’s levels of engagement and sense of belonging. One respondent shared, *“While there are opportunities, oftentimes good workers become “invisible” because they are busy doing their job rather than “networking.” There aren’t opportunities for lower-level workers to participate in many committees or decision-making processes, so they don’t have a chance to demonstrate leadership or cooperative networking. In general, decisions about processes are often made without a transparent process and this excludes the input of the people doing the work, and it’s unfortunate.”* Given the data additional exploration of career, outcomes are necessary.

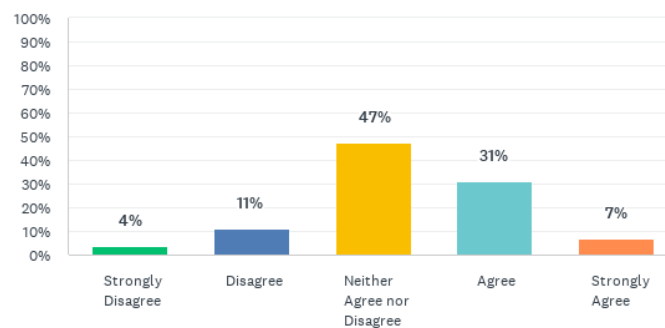
County Active in Seeking Diverse Candidates



Employees From Different Backgrounds Are Encouraged to Apply for Higher Positions

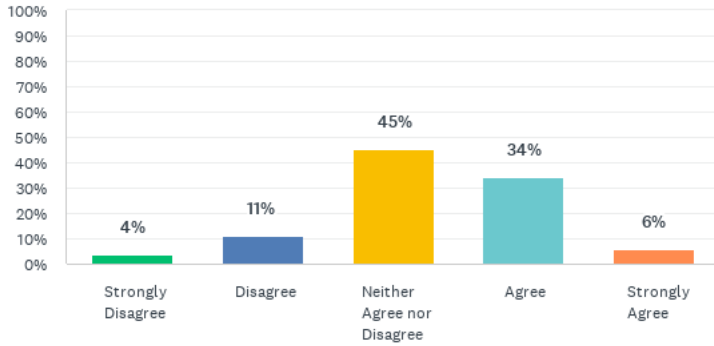


Employees of Different Backgrounds Are Treated Fairly in the Internal Promotion Process

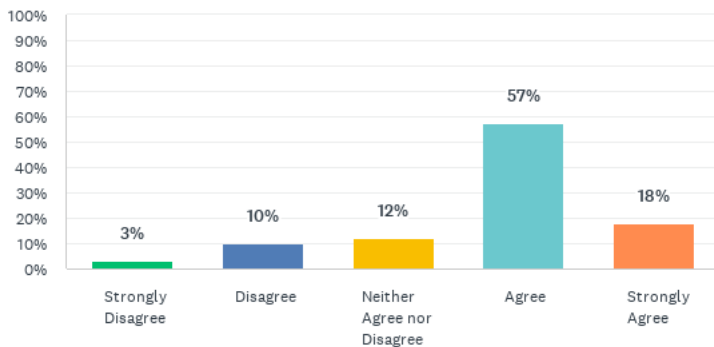


Policies

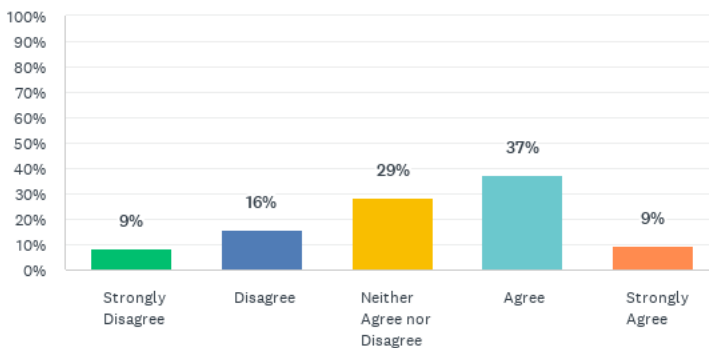
Policies and Procedures Encourage Diversity



Awareness of Procedures to Report Discrimination



Believe County Will Take Appropriate Action Against Bias



The policy segment of the DEI survey shows a high-level understanding of policies and procedures encouraging diversity (40% strongly agree or agree), procedures to report discrimination and reporting (75% strongly agree or agree), and the belief that the County will take appropriate actions against bias (46% strongly agree or agree). However, twenty-five percent (25%) of respondents indicated strongly disagreed or disagreed that the County would take appropriate action. *"I think we need to be thoughtful in what we are trying to accomplish and in articulating the problem and solutions. I can understand the sentiment that I have frequently heard, that we just need to do something but do not find this sentiment to be particularly inspiring or even satisfactory. Policies need to reflect the vision and values of diversity and equity within our shared work environment, which means that we have to be clear on the vision and values that we hold out as those we hold dear."* Policies are an essential part of the DEI equation for change, and it is vital. Additionally, policies must be accompanied by appropriate practices. Given that 42% of employees either strongly disagree or disagree

that all employees are treated fairly, it will be necessary for the County to explore the connections between policies, leadership, career.

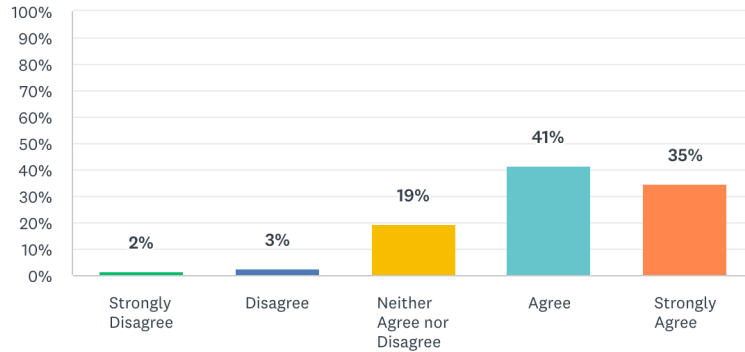
Supervision & Training

Respondents to the survey rated their supervisors very favorably. Seventy-six (76%) percent of employees either strongly agreed or agreed that their supervisor is committed to and supports DEI. Sixty-nine (69%) either strongly agree or agree that their supervisor handles DEI-related matters satisfactorily. The response regarding direct supervisors is in stark contrast to the data reported on Managers and Leadership of the County (see p. 5).

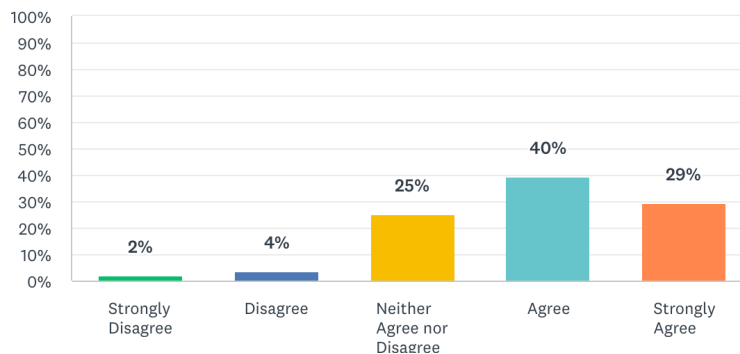
One employee offered the following comment, *“The supervisor I have now is so much better. I have trust issues and PTSD from all my previous supervisors who yelled and screamed at me in front of people. One stalked me to the hospital. This supervisor supports me in succeeding. Why couldn't the rest have done that? I could have done a lot in my service for the County. I do not feel it is fair that they pick and choose.”* This comment

points to the need for additional training for supervisors that are attentive to diversity as well as emotional intelligence to support the emotional wellbeing of staff members. Additionally, the survey data indicates more training is necessary. Twenty-five percent (25%) strongly disagree and disagree that the County has done a good job of providing DEI education in the workplace.

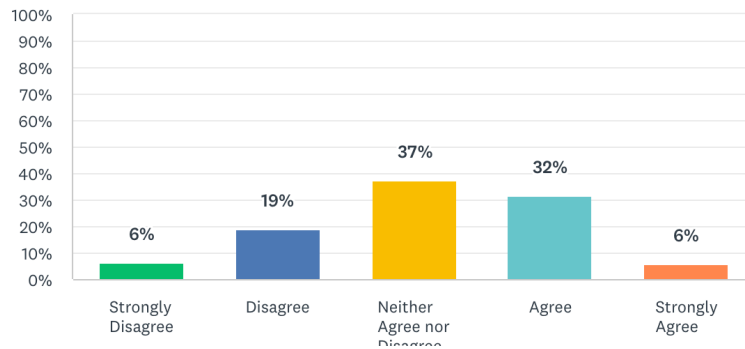
My supervisor is committed to, and supports, diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI)



My supervisor handles matters related to diversity, equity, and inclusion matter satisfactorily



The County has done a good job providing educational programs promoting DEI in the workplace



V. KEY OBSERVATIONS

The findings from the survey, focus groups, and interview creates a compelling narrative for the further support of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion throughout the County of Humboldt.

- There is a high level of distrust and/or fear of management and senior leadership in the County of Humboldt.
- In addition to trust, there is also a call for more transparency, which aligns with focus group data.
- Disaggregating the data reveals a significant difference between men and women in how they experience and view the organization.
- Disaggregating the data also reveals a significant difference in how BIPOC populations experience the workplace compared to White members of the organization. The racial/ethnic categories not tested for significance due to size demonstrated a “practical significant difference” compared to White members of the organization.
- Policy enforcement is believed to be hindered due to an unwillingness to hold the top levels of leadership accountable and supervisors and managers.
- There is a sizable population who does not believe employees are treated fairly, though employees rated their supervisor’s commitment to DEI positively
- Career pathways are not clear, and there is a belief that nepotism is at play.
- Recruiting and hiring of BIPOC members is low due to the lack of diversity in the immediate area, the limited reach of job announcements, and pay rates. Though others believe the demographics reflect the county, as they should.
- Retaliation is a concern for those who want to report misconduct or discrimination.
- There is a need to go below the surface when operationalizing DEI to address microaggressions as structural issues at all levels of the organization.
- A high percentage of respondents believe the County will take appropriate action in response to incidents of discrimination and/or bias. However, the comments reveal a high level of distrust that actions will be taken throughout the different levels of the organization.
- There is a sizable amount of commitment to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion among the employees in the County.
- The commitment to DEI as measured through this assessment project reveals a healthy cynicism about the county’s institutional commitment and accountability for promoting and furthering DEI efforts.
- The data reveals a perception that hierarchy undermines DEI efforts and is unwilling to hold accountable people in leadership capacities.
- The employee indicated that diversifying hiring, and career development are impacted by race, gender, location, and age.
- There is a sentiment shared that diversifying means hiring unqualified people.
- There is also a sentiment that diversity, equity, and inclusion is being overprioritized.

VI. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the data collected, focus groups and discussion with management Coaching Imperative offers the following recommendations.

- Creating an Inclusive Leadership for Department Heads and Managers + DEI Goals and Evaluation
- Ongoing DEI Group Coaching for Department Heads
- Develop an online Monthly DEI Learning Series: Inclusivity and Belonging
- Intercultural Conflict Management
- Increase Emotional & Cultural Intelligence Competencies within the County
- Systematic DEI Hiring Initiative (Across All Departments)
- Adding DEI metrics to Performance Evaluations (All Staff)
- Increase Support to HUM 21 Group (or Alternative) to Promote Cultural Understanding
- Transparent Online DEI Complaint Portal
- Multilevel Team Building by Department
- Redrafting of the County of Humboldt's Strategic Framework [2019-2024](#) to include DEI

A major component of my recommendations includes emotional intelligence. [According to SHRM](#) Emotional Intelligence Is Key to Outstanding Leadership. It is essential to learn and to understand how emotions drive your own and the behaviors of others. In an article published by [Harvard Business Review Online](#), emotional intelligence accounts for nearly 90 percent of what sets high performers apart from peers with similar technical skills and knowledge. In a study done by the [Center for Creative Leadership](#) emotional intelligence was found to be essential to employee engagement and bringing out the best in people.

Certain EI qualities play into the top 10 vital skills for the future workforce, as defined by the World Economic Forum. Furthermore, 71% of hiring managers say they value high EI over IQ. A [Forbes article](#) shares that emotionally intelligent people are proven to be more effective and research reveals that, in terms of performance, EI is more important than IQ when people with equivalent academic backgrounds.

VII. FOCUS GROUP DATA

Humboldt County Department Head Interviews

June 7th – July 6th, 2021, Participants: 13

How does the leadership in the county encourage diversity?

- I can't say on a county level; I can only speak to my department. As a department, we need to have our department represent the community. We need people to have different people reach out to the community and build relationships with our communities.
- For example, we have never gone to Hoopa and had a job fair and brought awareness to the tracks available in the county; the county could do a better job.
- I don't know that they encourage diversity, "I haven't had a conversation about; it is just not something people talk about in everyday conversation
- The Board Direction coming supporting
- The county can do more, but they are trying
- From a leadership standpoint, in my conversations and interactions with the leadership, they do mean well, but there is no genuine acceptance; they can speak about it but don't understand what the concepts mean? I observe instances of inequity that require being called out—very superficial understanding among the concepts. Individuals use gaslighting to create tensions. There is a need to have a respectful tone and ask questions to learn and better self vs. challenging or judging style. We have a long way to go in a way that we must embrace it, role model it, own it, so when we speak, we are representing our county, not ourselves
- How can you be representative of the community you serve? It is a meaningful conversation taking place in the field. We have had some discussions in various iterations of HR, primarily around recruitment. Underserved in native American representation in the department, though we serve many native populations.
- I don't know enough about the infrastructure or history. From my perspective, we have open recruitment. When communities became more diverse, they worked with foundations and placed native speakers in certain areas to meet the needs of shifting demographics—supported that process for over [#] of years. I don't know enough, but I feel there is a growing emphasis; there is an increasing commitment.
- I believe it is crucial, set up formal structures so that you have an opportunity to explore diversity, encouraging opportunities for others. I have a group that brought back best practices they learned at a national conference. I am lucky to have a group interested in the subject, providing opportunities for training; the most impactful lessons I have learned come from empathy and those pieces that leaders need to support.
- Up until this point, I don't recall anyone thinking about hiring for diversity. I don't remember a specific direction to diversify the workforce. There hasn't been any clear guidance or advice for hiring. Applicants are centralized based on experience, background, and education.
- This process is an example of the commitment
- A culture change initiative is trying to make it attractive to work in the county government characterized by inclusion, belonging, affection, belonging. The desire is there, and the willingness is there, and they are trying to do the right thing and trying to authentically chance

to make it a place where we all can work together. Good intentions are good starts. Humans are messy.

How has the county provided educational programs that promote diversity, equity, and inclusion in the workplace?

- I think that educating people on the benefits of diversity. "The best candidate fits into a well-rounded department. We need to help more people to see the advantages and invest in creating diversity so that they have recruitment fairs, incentives for moving. We have to make Humboldt is more attractive. Need to address housing market and support homeownership of professionals relocating. Help everyone establish roots and feel connected.
- People don't want to talk about it when it comes to race and ethnicity. I want to create a safe space and have a welcoming atmosphere, but we want people to feel safe by having the conversation.
- Other than HUM21? For a long time, we have done the state-required; this is now how we should act and how we can be more inclusive
- Very little, 19 departments. There is no concerted effort; we need interpersonal development; leadership starts with self. Technical + interpersonal
- There is a need to create a staff development program, [Foundations for Success Program] Supervisor Academy, then Executive Leadership
- Historically not good, there has been more activity from HR in providing training in the last three years. 2001-2015 it was non-existent.
- We work to provide opportunities during the workweek for professional development
- The County has done an excellent job more recently
- I don't think the county has done an excellent job of that, but I do not see us as a county actively engaging in those discussions.
- It's done an ok job. They have always encouraged engagement by everyone to participate in the programs. The available programs have been good, but they haven't had much participation. There should be more broad-based initiatives. IT Security and Sexual Harassment, but not much in the EDI. It has been included in sexual harassment, but the diversity specific training is the missing component
- The importance of communication, I have been extremely frustrated that the communications are not transparent. "People make requests, but people do not know who is taking care of their request. It needs to be measurable, and people need to be held accountable.
- I couldn't tell you off the top of my head, besides this specific initiative, except for the cultural change

JULY 30, 2021 Focus Meeting Questions and Notes

9-10:30 am # of participants: 3

1 WORD TO DESCRIBE WHAT DIVERSITY MEANS TO YOU:

- Exciting
- Important
- Necessary
- Undervalued
- Exciting

Meeting Questions & Notes

1. What does DEI mean to you as a staff member?

- Eliminating things that create disparities. Less so increasing something, but looking at what is causing barriers.
- Deciding to participate was challenging for me. Feel like as a white woman of my age, I represent many of our county workers. Did not know if I was the best candidate to be here. As the face of the most represented section of people at the county, I could put more thought and focus on DEI, which would help with forwarding motion for folks who look like me on paper. Wanted to get these complicated feelings out first. DEI is about a process of encouraging elimination and recognition of processes and systems that discourage diversity in the workplace and recognize that what we are doing and have always been doing might not be encouraging and engaging of people to come to join us in the workplace.
- Agree with both above. County will continue to fall behind / because if the county does not take action to embrace/execute DEI we will continue to lack innovation. County from my perspective is in an echo chamber in terms of the workplace environment. A White privilege echo chamber. Need to remove those barriers to people, the obvious and invisible barriers that are present.
- Same thought as above, I am in the least diverse demographic. We [the county] are extremely white and white males. Did not know if I was the best candidate to participate in this, but I'm very glad I have the opportunity to be here.
- People want to come in and do their work in their workplace, regardless of their background. People do not want to be harassed or singled out.
- We do a lot of recruiting. Try to have panels of diverse groups of people. But when we look at who is employed, there is not a lot of diversity there. Trying to increase diversity, but those processes are so limited. And retention – seeing people that are more diverse around you is important. If you walk into a place and you are the only person of color, that would be a hard experience.

- DEI I think it is about looking at things at not necessarily the experience; eliminating things that create disparities, what are the things that create a barrier

2. How is the county performing with respect to DEI?

- We opened our recruitment in more diverse areas and got a lot of diverse candidates in that area. High turnover rate though of those folks come here and then going home. Maybe 1-1.5 years working before leaving. Working that job is very hard. One might attribute the high turnover to the hard job, but I did not see that type of turnaround with the white staff in those positions. Maybe because of lack of promotions for non-white staff? These are not databased facts, this is just by my own knowledge/observance. Not sure how hires have been in the past year-plus because of covid, but I have seen most recruitment end up with people that look like me (white). That might be how/where we recruit. But yes, this is a weird place. There is a high level of Latino and Native populations, Hmong populations, and we have diversity here but I do not see them [diverse people] across the table from me when setting them up for benefits. What is the barrier? Not sure but let's find out so we can tear it down.
- Observation of my dept/coworkers – working remotely since Feb of last year. A lot of turnover. I do see diversity in our dept. More so than when I came here in 2013. Leadership sometimes does not make helpful remarks: a supervisor at a public event will make off-the-cuff remarks that are racist on more than one occasion. I think he later apologized, but people were still upset understandably. We see enclaves of bigotry and racism. Not sure if remarks reflect an internal pattern as informal representations of held beliefs to a degree.
- Not well. The workforce is white/male primarily. Leadership is not diverse. Board of Sups, are all white. Older white folks. Dept. heads, the most part, white. Blatant racism exists. In other areas, the proof is in the pudding. When you look at the hires and the people who work here, white people get hired. In terms of recruitment efforts, how do we do better? People who don't have the know-how, are trying to figure something out they are not familiar with. At a leadership level, people need to be humble and realize they do not know. Be willing to acknowledge what you do not know and listen to learn. Obvious that whatever we are doing is not working and we need to relinquish control and listen to the perspective of others and learn about why people do not want to work for the county or stay at the county. I hear a lot about [white] people saying "well I've worked hard to get here and had a hard time doing it, so I understand..." which is not a good way to start to try and understand different lived experiences.

- What we do internally, how we do DEI will affect our outreach to the community. Public engagement and community outreach – if I do not do a better job in the dept in regards to DEI, then how are we going to be successful in engaging the public to improve public participation?
- The “good ol’ boy network” is a thing. Community of people who are newer is coming to the county and bringing new ideas...and then there are the people who stay. This builds a community of people who say things because they were raised in that culture, and you feel comfortable saying awful things in public settings. It is so ingrained and is hard to think about how to address this. The surge of anger from people who are losing long-standing industrial jobs (logging, fishing, etc.) and I think the anger of a transitioning economy and community makes diverse communities uncomfortable.
- We are very white. I think only two people in my dept that are not white. That is shocking
- Retention: if you can’t be happy in your job, if you feel uncomfortable or targeted at work and in the community then you aren’t going to want to stay. Housing and medical care issues are real here. Having places to feel, comfortable, see people who look like you, understand your thought process/experience. Without that, it is going to be difficult here. You have to actively search for that here. Humboldt County as an employer and as a place is not welcoming if you are not white. Hard coming here without a good deal of advantages from the get-go. Also, it’s a better deal financially to go work at In’N’Out than to be an office assistant at the county.
- Mostly white folks. Some depts. that might be more diverse. Certain areas in Arcata are more comfortable than Fortuna. I can’t imagine how that would feel. And housing is more affordable in less diverse places.
- Technically there are places/processes where you could utilize to report discrimination or related issues. But it’s not super well-known or comfortable utilizing is. Might be an “it is what it is” mentality.
- I would not trust my supervisor to act/execute responses to complaints. The supervisor makes “jokes” and remarks generally that are inappropriate and do not consider accessibility needs or personal consent about privacy in virtual settings for example.
- I don't if the lack of diversity is a product of our efforts or is it a product of our relationships within the county and in the community. I know that we have a sizeable Latino, native, and mung population in the area but I don't see them sitting across from me in my job
- Sometimes leadership doesn’t make helpful remarks. There is a supervisor that makes remarks off the cuff that are insensitive and though apologizes, still not helpful. There are enclaves of bigotry and racism in the county, and some who speak in the county share some of those beliefs.

- If you look at our workforce and our leadership is not diverse. Look at the board and department heads and you see a lack of diversity. Everything bleeds down in leadership, when you look at the hires and who are people bringing in, they are white people. So when we think about our hiring or diversity it is evident that we do not know, but the people who don't know are being asked to address the problem. I don't think I can understand.
- I feel there has been a surge of anger across the county and here too, and I would think that it makes people of color feel uncomfortable. In department

3. How can the county best demonstrate a commitment to DEI?

- Talking more, providing opportunities and time. Just getting people to take training is hard. Provide more resources. Expand actual program/division at the county that focuses on this on a daily basis. Capacity issues are real. Have a more defined group and resources put towards this, and talking more about it, more upfront info (not tucked away).
- Unless we throw money, time, and resources at it, it won't go. If it's a voluntary thing, people are not going to do it. Fund it, put human resources towards it.
- Can't be relegated to another training on training day. Then it's checking off a box. It needs to be embraced by leadership because they see the value it brings to the county. The value it brings won't be immediate gratification, it's something long-term, and I think leadership would need an understanding that we will not all of a sudden have a diverse workforce. It's a long-haul work and effort by Hum County. This is important for leadership and the workforce to understand.
- I was in another focus group about making this a great place to work, a great employer. Disappointing process, answers were already baked into the process. Hoping this process reflects a priority to DEI and a true commitment. Not just an overcorrection from mistakes that have been made. Agree that money, time, commitment, an overall push, and a sense of urgency are what's necessary to make this stand out as a priority. If it does stand out, loud and proud, as a priority, even just that commitment will encourage people to come to apply. Because we promote ourselves and really mean it, as a place of diversity and a place of safety. I am in recovery from my last position at the county and feel like I was not in a safe place. I know other employees across the county do not feel safe and cannot speak the truth. Most look like me, so I can only imagine what folks who don't have a common skin color with their supervisor must feel. Threatening work environment. Heard lip service for many years that "oh, you can come to me and talk to your supervisor," and you can't. If you want to keep your job and not be harangued by your supervisor, you keep your mouth shut

and have an hour-long convo with Human Resources. Needs to be top-down all around. Appreciate this opportunity, but I am doubtful.

- Toxicity pervades. Sometimes you think it might just be in your own head. The last initiative also I heard that the outcome was baked into the process.
- Leadership is where it starts. Structure at the county – dept heads are appointed. A few were elected by the public. Unfortunately, with the long-haul idea, we need to get rid of some of these folks. They need to retire. In that hiring process, this [DEI] needs to be a focus. They need to be competent in their areas of work. This should be a very clear part of that hiring process and know the candidate's outlook and approach to DEI. The people who are in those positions reflect the outlook of the people who chose them to be there. If our board is taking this to heart, this is a big part of the hiring process going forward. As a County employee, there are a lot of protections for people. Regardless of appearance/background, ask "what is your perspective on DEI?"
- County over-relies on the subject matter expertise. It ignores if there is management expertise. See appointees who could not manage their way out of a paper bag.
- This [the above statement] is at all levels. Need leaders, not people who happen to be good at the job they were doing. This is part of our hiring process. Need supervisory, leadership, management skills.
- Cascadia Leadership program is supported by the county. Which is a good program. But leadership does not use it or execute it. The commitment and behavior have a disconnect.
- County trying to go too fast, do too much all at once to please the public. Forget that to do that well, need to care for the staff/employees. Hear from leadership that they are bogged down too and there is no time to focus on the person/people/leadership. Comes back to budget – having resources and feeling like even at that level, it's ok to slow down to care of the workforce. Realize you have the time/opportunity to lead.
- We are public servants – beholden to the public. There is something we could be doing with the public. There is a collective thing or perspective that county employees are not working hard. This cultivates even more stress in the workplace throughout the workplace structure. Talking about DEI, something that can be done to connect to the public to make them understand that we are not going to fill that pothole because we need to focus on DEI. So there is a challenge to get the public involved that this is an initiative that the county is prioritizing. Not clear on the approach, but something like that.

Additional inquiry: Is DEI positioned against other work? The either-or dilemma?

- Yes. Competing task. It is not a highly prioritized task. I think people feel like they would want to do it, but are pressured to do all the other work. People are not given the time resources needed to participate.

Additional inquiry: Is there transparency about DEI efforts at Humboldt County?

- Non-existent
- Keeping people informed about the initiatives and ongoing communication with staff at least (public too) – any info shared about this work – should be. This does not need to be a secret that we are talking about this. Sharing what comes out of these conversations. Share this with other staff, not just board. Not behind the doors talk. This is a conversation with everyone. Leadership is not tasked to fix this, we are together, front, top to bottom working on this. Without transparency, you won't have buy-in.
- No band-aid approach. The as a "need-to-know basis" is not ok. Leadership has a propensity to avoid the meaningful and stick with the band-aids unless they get sued or something.
- Sense for me, of gaslighting in our workplace culture. The word and the deed are not the same. A factor in me deciding to join this conversation today— I have seen two black women railroaded out of their jobs – 1 at the highest level in the county. It felt racially motivated to me. I didn't know their performance every day but felt like a bunch of mean white girls driving out a black girl. I think if the information went county-wide, I think it would help people see that what they are experiencing is more common than they think.
- Acknowledgment on behalf of the entire workforce is crucial in holding a light up to what is wrong with our organization. Hope you are able to word this [notes from this conversation] in a way that helps leadership see/hear this.
- Unconscious bias is real. Being more transparent and communicating it out is important. Whether you think you do this or not, this is the perception, so maybe there does need to be a change still. Challenge people to realize they are doing things unknowingly (maybe knowingly), need to shine a light on the subconscious stuff.
- Thinking of the reaction of the public to some of this. There would be some people forced to resign. People in power who have an interest in this are not being shared out because they have too much at stake. If we can get a commitment to DEI out of this, I think the powers that be will not allow this type of accountability for elected and appointed leadership to be seen by the public.
- If we are promoting DEI and mean it, I am in recovery from my last position, not feeling that I was in a safe place. I know that other employees across the county don't feel safe and cannot speak a truth, and I can't imagine how people of

color feel. This can be a very dangerous place, while people say you can talk to your supervisor, but you can't be retained

- I talked about our leadership, and this is where it starts, most department heads are appointed. I feel like we need to be more diverse at leadership.
- We need leaders and not just people who know things. It seems like people get promoted without consideration about how the person is perceived or their leadership capacities
- There is no transparency, there needs to be a place that keeps track and provide ongoing communication that this work is happening
- The results need to be shared with staff more broadly, this is a discussion for everybody, we are together as County employees, we need to do this together. If there is no transparency, there can not be buy-in
- There is a sense of gaslighting, the word and the deed are not the same. I have seen two Black women being railroaded out of their job. It felt racially motivated to me. It felt like a group of white girls going after a black girl.
- We have said some harsh things about our leadership, they may be hard to hear, but it is crucial to hold up the light to what is wrong with our organization
- Whether you believe that you are doing it or not, if the perception is out there then it is real and needs to be addressed. I am not sure it will get out very far, because there is too much at stake; hopefully, the outcome of this is meaningful change, but the powers that be will not allow this to come

July 22, 2021 Focus Group Meeting Questions & Notes

10 -11:30am # Of participants: 4

1 WORD TO DESCRIBE WHAT DIVERSITY MEANS TO YOU:

Inclusion

Excitement

Critical

Equality

1. What does DEI mean to you as a staff member?

- Not matter background/race – get level playing field. I think of the image of people standing behind the fence. I saw one that includes a ramp for someone in a wheelchair which I thought was an important addition to the image. Equal opportunity.
- Equal opportunity to reach the places they [people] want to be in. Managers and everyone need to lift each other up and support general census and that means going around, talking, listening, looking for ways to improve things in the workplace and so people feel heard. Continual engagement with the workforce to make sure we are meeting the needs to do the jobs to provide services for the community.
- Personally, being a minority, it means everything. Taken upon self to do trainings the county has that include these topics. Not required but do it for the work I do. Used to be a teacher. Socially, as far as business goes, I have personally experienced it [discrimination]. DEI means everything for harmony – inner harmony for anyone & everyone.

2. How is the county performing with respect to DEI?

- Don't know. When we are swamped and busy/stressed it narrows things down as far as diversity in what we do on the job. Heard from other employees that they have attended cultural-type trainings, but myself, did not know about it. When I heard about it, I wish I would have known about it. Need to have this [DEI] perspective to serve all our clients.
- Some of our divisions we have taken several steps into DEI, that are required. Certain departments required to take trainings. Been part of discussion for a while, but in other pockets of the county, they are just starting to make active efforts. The department I work in does not feel like we have control over the county, so some of our efforts are just what we have control over. I think with this initiative county is

taking the first step. The department I work in is building a repertoire of trainings. Certain departments have more trainings than others.

- I used to have rich conversations/trainings in prior departments and bringing that with me to problem solve on different policies where I work now. Try to be solution focused and strength based. Need team approach on making our workers life better. We have diverse clients. When we have staff come over who are not aware of these needs for diverse populations, we allow them to move on. Even with turnover, we are making sure that the people we serve are getting the best care they can without being discriminated against. Their life experiences should not be negatively impacted by untrained or inadequate services. We changed a lot of processes in last three months because we are listening.
- The County is behind with catching up with [specific department], mainly because of their comfort level and rules regulations around the work they do, or the amount of work they must do, or old thought in admin that holds back innovative people that want to move forward with stuff. Caution around these things.
- Our director [in specific department] is very committed to this work. Having that leadership has been a very helpful support. Staff will be able to engage with this work. Does not feel the same on the other side at the county. Less comfortable in the county than at [specific department].
- Few trainings I have participated in were from behavioral health. Important to motivate my clients that is does not matter what their background it, but validating their experience, which is a big thing for client employment, esp. if they are a minority.
- Creating internal policies and procedures to focus on solutions and strengths to create the best workplace possible. The county is early in its growth, there are those who may hold back innovation and change, there seems to be more caution in the DEI front. Our director is extremely committed to this work

3. How can the county best demonstrate a commitment to DEI?

- Continual training from the bottom up, middle-out. Strong start getting this started with managers. Now they feel comfortable practicing these things, do continual training for younger managers, for the trickle-down effect. New managers go into their units and can bring those trainings and discussions shared and done there too.
- County needs to have leadership champions throughout the county and show up and be present in that work. Training, training, training. Also needs to be adopted policies about how this is done and how to be diverse and inclusive. Equity statement would be a nice start. [Specific department] engaged in doing this now. Doing first mandatory training (termed training) so we can level the playing field about what it is we mean and are talking about around DEI.

- I forgot we [the county] don't have an equity statement, but at least a mission and vision. But yes, we need these in onboarding so new employees understand that we promote these values.
- Already present training systems that are live, working with HR, and should be available to all county staff. Webinar series from UC Davis – 4 modules – also available. NeoGov is another resource. 7 trainings available that can be found.
- Time is always short / swamped / busy. Being aware of what trainings are available across the board shared broadly vs having to seek it out myself. From top down, curious how it works to inform people of what is available in terms of trainings and resources. Communication would be good. There are people who I know who are bored and could use the time to do a training in DEI and other areas of work.
- Policy would be nice to implement “x number of hours required”
- Try sending less bulky emails. Make it more engaging and fun and wanting to learn. That starts with supervisor/on-boarder. Engage people in the work they are doing. Make it more classroom style and go through the information with staff. Show that this is being led and that we are promoting these values.
- Yes, to adding an equity statement. If we had an equity statement at the beginning that maybe, we would be able to create a better and more informed workforce. Start with these values in the interview process. Give these things to people even before applying to the job. Give a packet to interested candidates before they even apply so they know what they are signing up to be a part of the hiring process
- County of Humboldt is working on a culture statement. Focus groups that happened recently, came out with intent to draft the culture statement.
- Recently EEOC report, data in there made people upset because it leads to recommendations, which said need to hire more white males. Data and data collection is not great. Need to improve this to make better recommendations to support plans/initiatives/strategic planning. There is a process to collect data, but the people collecting data have not been updating these records, so it is not very useful/relevant and makes for bad recommendations.
- Our office believes in hiring "THOSE WHO ARE QUALIFIED". I cringe at any recommendation based on color or gender. I would like to see efforts to get a more diverse group of applicants. Trying to draw in EVERYONE.
- Telework program should continue/become more robust. Would give us opportunity to bring in more people outside county to come work for us from diverse places. Would like for people to ideally be willing to move here, but we do not need to require that. I know we could make that work. Need to CAO to sign onto that. Do engagement at other universities, job fairs, about Humboldt County hiring.
- We do have a lot of [diverse] groups in our county. How do we get them to apply? We also have a Hmong population, Native, and Hispanic. I think we need to push

county jobs out in the community. More than just advertising them online. It doesn't help that some of our starting wages are now as low as the new minimum wage.

- Coaching initiatives with third party vendors for supervisors so staff can go to them. Build capacity within infrastructure for staff.
- Need strategic plan to incorporate this work. SAP at [department] incorporating times/places to express concerns or converse about the workplace. We have civil rights as a requirement for clients and staff. Outside of that, our workforce is wondering, if we get a race-based complaint, we aren't well trained on how to handle or manage those situations.
- Do a survey of the workforce. Add equity questions (what you already know and what is your background).
- Wage level needs to be addressed.
- See how different communities are engaging in the county and meet them where they are apt to inform of job opportunities, etc. and see what their capabilities are and see where they are gathering so we can engage them in the first place.
- Humboldt county IS diverse. We just don't see it or try to see it. Our worldview, culturally and individually, as well as what the norm is, and what our social and cultural priorities are – it does not matter what cultural or lingual background there is, just simply having that statement out there in the open “we want you whatever your background is” – is a huge step and builds trust. We are trying to serve the community, but many of the bilingual community members or diverse cultures are not coming to the county to use the services because there is mistrust as the county/government has not had a good track record/history with these communities. So, need to build trust.
- Been here near 20 years and it is near impossible to get a list of Spanish speaking staff. This is a gap, and we need to have more access to these skills. Need to be able to depend on these folks who are receiving the stipends.
- We have some contracted cultural coaches. Great if you can access these coaches, but access is an issue. Need to know what we have available and be able to utilize these resources. Coaches are external – but we would like to build that capacity within, but do not know how to implement and sustain it.
- Trainings with music, food, movies, discussions to engage with intercultural competency trainings. Innovative way to engage these subjects.
- Something about learning about race/culture being more effective when you have travelled more than not. Possible to do more trainings in other places?
- Continue these conversations!
- Collaboration with county office of education and different schools in the area: not sure what collaboration goes on with county and those places.

- Being a staff worker that is trying to always connect to others, more awareness of trainings available, more clear, and simple communication regarding DEI opportunities
- Our supervisor needs to better prepare to understand and lead equity work. Developing Coaching Initiatives
- Creating and allowing space for BIPOC to gather express concerns and support one another
- We also have a Hmong population and Hispanic as well. I think we need to push county jobs out in the community. More than just advertising them online. It doesn't help that some of our starting wages are now as low as the new minimum wage.
- Be more innovative in approaches to training and offer opportunities to attend conferences to expose people the diversity of our society

JULY 21, 2021 Focus Group Meeting Questions & Notes

10 -11:30am # Of participants: 6

1 WORD TO DESCRIBE WHAT DIVERSITY MEANS TO YOU:

Excitement

Love

Acceptance

Vibrance

Engaging

Community

Texture

Welcoming

1. What does DEI mean to you as a staff member?

- Safe place where everyone feels welcome. Here to work. No judgement on basis of anything else
- Treat everyone equally, welcoming, positive manner. Extends beyond just us with each other but to those we serve as well.
- Honoring each other and incorporating that into what we do. Having this infused into broad range of projects. Able to bring whole self to work.
- In [department] we think a lot about equity in terms of looking at which population in community experience [certain] outcomes. We value having staff people who can understand that and help make improvements. Honoring the diversity of workforce in the value that brings to better serve the community. Reflects the community, and intentionally support staff to use the skills wisely. Hire with that intention and utilize that strength to do better in our work.
- Creating a work culture that, where there is an atmosphere of belonging and promoting justice and creating a welcoming space for all. Belonging: where people feel comfortable and welcomed and accepted and free to express who they are and their beliefs and a sense of community.
- Respect for everyone and valuing differing opinions and backgrounds. An atmosphere of belonging is important.

Common themes: valuing people and difference, community and belonging.

- Advocacy. Dealing with a lot of different demographics that have been disenfranchised and making sure their voices are heard. Continuing to grow and include as many people as we can. Advocacy is community.
- Live in a small rural town and because of demographic make-up this is not something that happens naturally or front of mind for people who I work with or may encounter day to day. Try to keep it front of mind for myself is important. (+1)
- Leadership making sure that there is the culture that we know we won't talk about things that might offend other people. People forget that they are having a conversation with a co-worker and others might overhear. People need to be mindful of what they are saying because other people may hear and find it offensive. I have worked in different departments and when something is happening on the political scale, people want to talk about it, and that can alienate people. The politics is the best way to find out what you do not have in common, so I have seen it happening here and there. This can affect how people feel included if they hear it. Remember that your co-workers may not all agree with you and be thoughtful about bringing that into the workplace.
- At [department] we honor the diversity, we intentionally support staff to use skills wisely, that we hire with DEI intentions then use strengths to support the community
- Create a work culture that is an atmosphere of belonging. Comfortable and welcomed, accepted and free, sense of community
- Leadership there is a culture that we don't talk about certain things, being mindful of conversations that may be offensive

2. How is the county performing in respect to DEI?

- Different depending on each department. My opinion that county does not do very well in this. That is why I was interested in doing this [meeting]. Compared to other workplaces I have been in; we are lacking in some areas. And for example, I look at this training and I do not see a single department head involved. This starts from the top down. Examples: each department is different. I work for [department] and tried bringing this up in the past. We have a division between [focus area] and non-[focus area] staff. Painful to watch sometimes. Disrespect. For example, [focus area staff] don't read/respond to emails. That happens across the county. Different pockets where you never get a response to your email. Hierarchy I have noticed in pockets for example, the auditor/controller - will insist on only speaking to dept head who in my instance will try to hand it back to me. I have seen it in HR of all places again too (+1). Hierarchy can be overly rigid because it does not meet responsibilities of different staff in the county. Unfair assumption that a department head has the skills for all responsibilities to run a department.

- Exceedingly difficult to do our jobs. Feels like we supposed to beat heads against the wall and contort and be disappointed. And this [kind of admin work] is straight forward work. There is something wrong and dysfunctional at the county. Gotten worse and worse. We lose good people because of it. Expectation accountability does not exist. Does not seem like anyone is holding anyone else accountable in the county for doing their work and being responsive. I feel powerless at the department level, and to do the job I have to do is so hard. Hesitated to join a workgroup because there is so much other work that isn't going well and so much work to do. (+1 "this just described my existence as an employee with the county. thank you.")
- I don't think we do a great job as a county. Seeing an initiative named this to begin with and a separate process going on for workplace culture and trying to create a standard for what we aspire to as an org. gives me hope and signals that people are thinking about these things. I am cautiously optimistic. This is a positive shift and being in the process gives me hope. I was thinking more along the lines of cultural division. I think if you look at dept heads no broad representation of the community or diverse whole there. This [initiative] is coming from HR, and not surprised that this initiative is driven by a POC. Conversations are started because someone notices something does not feel right.
- Clarify: is this about process or the bigger issue? Process comes back to hierarchy and class. We can't do our jobs because we are treated as subservient by people, we need cooperation from. Dept heads trust us, but those above them do not trust us. Not working in the best interest of the county citizens or government in general.
- Makes me sad to hear what ppl are saying. Not surprised. Worked here for 21 years and I have seen efforts to try and help in years when things feel more positive and engaging. Part of the communication was though HUM 21 and that initiative was to attempt to have space for when any level of staff has an idea. High performance, organizational approach, feel like that could still work. Never great at getting to everyone, so I think that there is an idea that keeps going but needs nourishment/attention. New people come and have no idea about HUM21 as a place they can go. It's different in different spaces. In [department] we recently had training for staff around racial equity and be witness to a time when someone felt that something racist happened and the supervisor was able to bring that to the conversation and allow that person to share that. That felt different and positive. Specifically, supervisors need to have more support and training around language, and we are working on that, and I imagine that is probably true across the board. Training - a way to support staff to acknowledge value of DEI and to provide language and common language and agreements about how to talk about things as they come up. If they come up and people do not know how to talk about them,

it will go sideways. It starts with listening. To answer the question: the county is doing this [initiative], so that is a start, which is something. In my experience there are a few things - hiring of bilingual staff - about 10yrs ago bilingual proficiency differential if you can pass a test, but there are problems with that system. They did open the test to additional languages, which was good, but I am frustrated because there is a [staff person] ready to take the test and can't. Translators trying to get hired, and no one passed the test. Hiring has been a poor process too. Hopeful and optimistic about things happening in your department, and that HUM21 exists, and then there are things like the hiring of bilingual staff that are different. You don't get to even say you want to hire a bilingual staff person (except for translator). Can't say that we would want to hire two bilinguals [staff persons], also have not tried that hard, there are so few [staff title] available that I don't know if department head would want to do that. I think there is an openness, but we need a focus group to resolve this issue. People did not know they could get their bilingual test score and where in the test they were most challenged so they could come back and take it again. It does cost money to take the test so HR may not be motivated to encourage retakes. If [a person] happens to be bilingual, then they can take a test. And they can get a tiny differential if they pass. Better than nothing, which is what we have had before.

- Times when you get asked to interpret without having passed the test or without the differential. "Culture tax."
- Would be great if HR could find more ways to say "yes" than "no". Maybe the test is too rigid. Need bilingual people to talk to folks to secure appointments for example. Need to find ways to bring people in and reward people for different skills.
- Supporting supervisors to also be bilingual? How does that supervisor supervise a bilingual staff person? Easier if a supervisor also speaks the language(s) for staff that are bilingual.
- Baseline should be that supervisors know that having bilingual staff is important.
- Improvement in area of gender equality. I had an experience where I was not being replied to in an email, so I asked a coworker who is male to ask the question and he got an answer right away. I'm having ideas and asking a male to deliver it because it will be received by higher ups better (+1). And it's more challenging because that is the person who you should be able to go to for support or it's your boss's boss. So, I just feel silenced at times. Not able to speak my truth or share how things have made me feel. I don't often feel safe going to supervisors.
- Don't think there is culture of naming the things that happens as it happens. Does not fit into the desired culture. If something is happening related to inequity, there is not a culture for response. Naming the thing as an organization, that piece is not there. Nowhere to go with it when something happens. And no response. Maybe

some 1-off situations. I could report it as an individual, but it does not seem like at an organizational level this gets addressed more broadly.

- I have found it necessary to “play the game” with the male/female/age discrimination and knowing going into a process to have my idea/voice heard I need to have it channeled through a male. It will be heard whether acted on or not. I have been more successful when I take that avenue then if I represent my own idea myself. It often, depending on who your coworkers are at the time, over the years I have been here, it has been a necessary tactic when I have felt strongly/passionately about the issue that I feel needs to be heard. “Put your pride aside and work the game” because at the end, it’s the end goal, not the accolade you want. If that brings you success, you pick your battles and you do what you need to do. In my world, it is a predominantly female field, you do have male representation, was not until several years back that there was a lawsuit that came up and it was “I did not get hired because I am male,” and no, you were not hired because you did not bring what was needed to the team. Walked away with, looking at the staff, observing how many males/females, what positions did they fill, until that time I paid no attention, but because I was forced to look at that from the perspective, I noticed that the males that were here had the higher positions. I saw it through that lens, and it was shocking for me. When I was forced to sit down and look at that it was quite shocking.
- Equity is data driven. I don’t think the department is data driven or uses approaches like that. In the workforce development plan, we have done some of this, but there is hiring for racial and gender diversity, but fewer minorities are promoted. Great if there was more data driven initiatives, which can be powerful to help track progress.
- The county does not do very well, compared to other workplaces we are lacking, there is a real division between [job title] staff and non- [job title] staff. I would say this happens across the county. Disrespectful and there is a hierarchy, speaking only to directors and refusal to engage on issues that you are responsible for, overly rigid and is not aligned. We can't do our jobs because we are treated subserviently.
- It is hard to do jobs because of a lack of communication and hierarchal roles, it makes it hard to work here. There is something wrong at the county and things don't work well here, we lose very good people, expectations and accountability doesn't exist, no one is held accountable, I feel powerless, we can't even get regular and routine tasks completed. Unneeded hierarchy, good ideas need to be able to get to the right people
- We don't do a great job but having a space like this is encouraging and gives some hope to the possibility of change, cautiously optimistic. How to include more cultural diversity across the board. If you look at department heads there is not broad representation. It is interesting that a person of color is in charge of this initiative.

- It makes me sad; I have worked here for a number of years. Ideas need nourishment and intention. We need more support of training around language and actions and help to acknowledge the value of DEI. How to talk about these things? It starts with listening. I experience hiring bi-lingual staff, there is a problem with the system.
- There are times when you are asked to translate because there is a specific need. Reward people for this extra work.
- Gender equality, I have experiences where I am not responded to and have asked male colleagues to follow-up and get a response, asking a male to present ideas, I'll second that. There is not a culture of naming things that happens, so something happens and there is no response and no public. Hierarchies silence issues being raised because of the power to fire or not retain, don't often feel safe to go to supervisors
- I feel like that I have had to become comfortable playing the patriarchy game, and let my ideas be represented by men vs. my own idea. It is a tactic that I use to get things done. Put your pride aside to play the game because the end goal is more important than your pride. It's sad, but if it brings success, you pick your battles and do what you have to do. Must be willing to look at hiring and other things from different perspectives and seek out difference and diversity and representation matters and creating balanced, diverse work environments
- Equity is data drive and not sure county uses data driven. There would be a benefit from having more data to track progress

3. How can the county best demonstrate a commitment to DEI?

- Being accountable. Sharing results of this focus group. And following up with the work/results. I see the county as good at discussing some things, without follow up. Trying to be positive, but I worry about no accountability or follow up. Too much secrecy around these issues.
- Noticed stark difference the way City of Eureka has been working through complications like this might bring out. History of Native American lands being given back and the Inclusion Act. This is something that has happened, acknowledging this, and doing something about it. Historically we did not have this process, and encouraging that it is happening with the city, but need it to be more consistent throughout the county. I think some departments are doing better than others, but as whole need to do a better job. City of Eureka is doing inspiring things and I want to be on that boat too, why can't we be doing that too? (+1). Lack a cohesiveness amongst staff. Need to connect as a community. Need this acknowledgment internally with staff and externally about who we are as an organization.

- County needs to make visible steps because we are not doing a very good job. Hearing things from supervisors that are very inappropriate. Good ol' boys club attitude. Don't know what those next steps are, but know we need to make some.

3. What would you need to see to feel like the county is more committed to DEI?

- Mandatory training to establish baseline/common language/values
- Public acknowledgment: City of Eureka has had to step forward and name issues and that is when any org publicly acknowledges that they are working on it, that brings it to a whole other level of accountability
- Having a convo like this is a good start and continuing the initiative needs to happen. Have it be part of the dialogue ongoing.
- HUM21 is still going, but it concerns me b/c it is not institutionalized, it's on the outside. I am not sure what the commitment is to HUM21. Do dept heads really care about it? If they really cared about it, it would be institutionalized. Needs to move beyond HUM21. People having the space to bring ideas in an equitable space, that is how HUM21 was created, and keep that going. Ongoing commitment to HUM21.
- By being accountable, and following up the work and share the results with the county staff. There are too many secrets and a lack of transparency.
- This is something that has happen, this is what we are going to address, and this is how we will deal with it moving forward. The County as a whole of naming things and closing loops. There is a lack of cohesiveness, we have lost that as a community.
- Having conversations like this to show that DEI matters. Is Hum21 important and institutionalized within the county

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