



King County

Department of Natural Resources and Parks
Wastewater Treatment Division



Strategies to Diversify Our Present and Future
Workforce

April 2022

A Business Case for Diversification

Whether its Diversity, Equity & Inclusion (DEI) or Equity & Social Justice (ESJ):

- Intentional efforts to diversify = strong organizational and business outcomes
- Focusing on DEI/ESJ is not only smart - its also the right thing to do

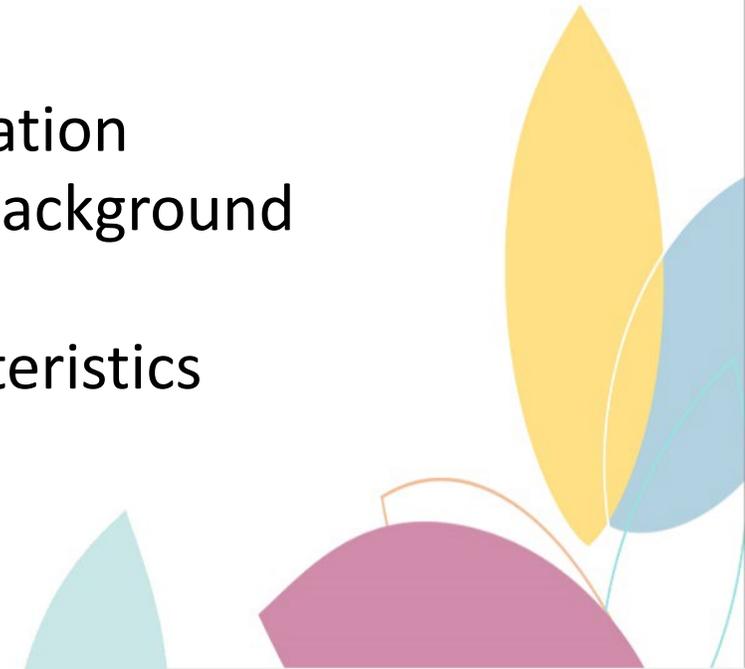




What do we mean by having a diverse workforce?

Diversity is an intentional effort to identify, recruit, screen, hire and develop a workforce comprised of individuals with a range of characteristics:

- Age
- Race
- Gender & Gender-identity
- Religion
- Ethnicity
- Sexual orientation
- Educational background
- Ableness
- Other characteristics



Benefits of a Diverse Workforce

- **Improved Innovation**

- A diverse workforce meets needs in different ways and from a variety of perspectives
- Creates the opportunity to take on new challenges and meet emerging needs in new ways

- **Become an Employer of Choice**

- Diverse employees seek a workplace with career opportunities
- Seek employers that support skill development create positive challenges
- Diverse workforces attract a broad array of prospective employees seeking this type of environment



Benefits (cont.)

- **Better Employee Performance**
 - Diverse workforces create a greater sense of inclusion and belonging
 - These work environments lead to happier and more productive employees
- **Clearer Understanding of Customer Needs**
 - We live in a region and society that is becoming more diverse
 - King County's racial profile is 66% White and 44% Black, Indigenous and People of Color
 - The needs of diverse communities differ
 - As public servants, we must understand and meet those needs



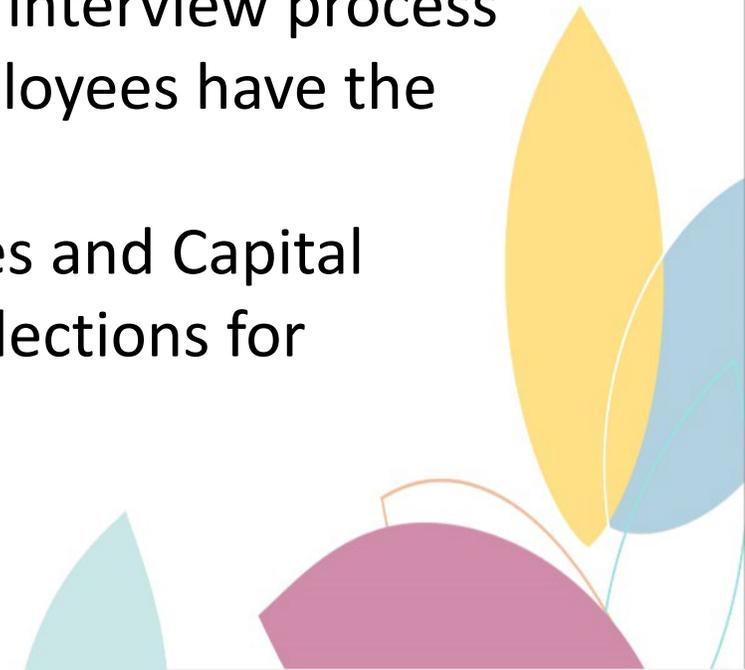
Strategies to Diversify our Workforce

- Revamped our recruitment strategies
- Built relationships with Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC) communities and leaders
- Targeted outreach with job announcements in specific communities to attract gender, gender identity and disabled communities
- In-person visits to community events and institutions where diverse populations gather
- Eliminated information that may indicate a potential candidate's gender, race or orientation



Strategies to Diversify (cont)

- Diversified the pool of candidates conducting the initial screening of applicants for minimum qualifications
- Ensured that all interview panels are populated with diverse co-workers
- Trained a group of BIPOC employees to support the interview process
- Updated on-boarding procedures to ensure all employees have the tools and resources needed to succeed
- Initiated specialized programs in our Operator Series and Capital Programs to create equitable approaches on the selections for Operators and Capital Program employees



Creating Recruitment Enhancements

- **Outreach**
 - Community Partnerships to Create Diverse Pipelines
 - Grassroots Activities with Underserved/Underrepresented Communities
- **Equity Standards for Marketing and Branding**
 - Emphasis on Competencies and Values Rather than Years of Experience and Education
 - Constant Presence of Employment Marketing in Underrepresented Communities



Recruitment Enhancements (cont.)

- **Proactive Recruiting for Diversity**
 - Focus on Leadership and Top 20% Paying Jobs
 - Focus on Difficult to Fill Positions and STEM
- **Equity Standards for Interviewing and Hiring**
 - Standards on Achieving Racial/Gender/Lifestyle Diversity Throughout Each Step of Process
 - Fair and Equitable Talent Assessment Tools for Application Review and Interviews
 - Affinity Built Through Diverse Interview Panel Pools
- **Equity Standards for Pay**
 - Fair and Equitable Compensation Negotiation Tools



Results from our Efforts

- 95% of all interview panels consisted of at least one BIPOC staff member
- BIPOC applicants increased by 13% from 2016 – 2020
- BIPOC staff increasing by 18% between 2018 – 2020
- Operationalized equity actions into many businesses processes



Diverse Workforces Bring Challenges

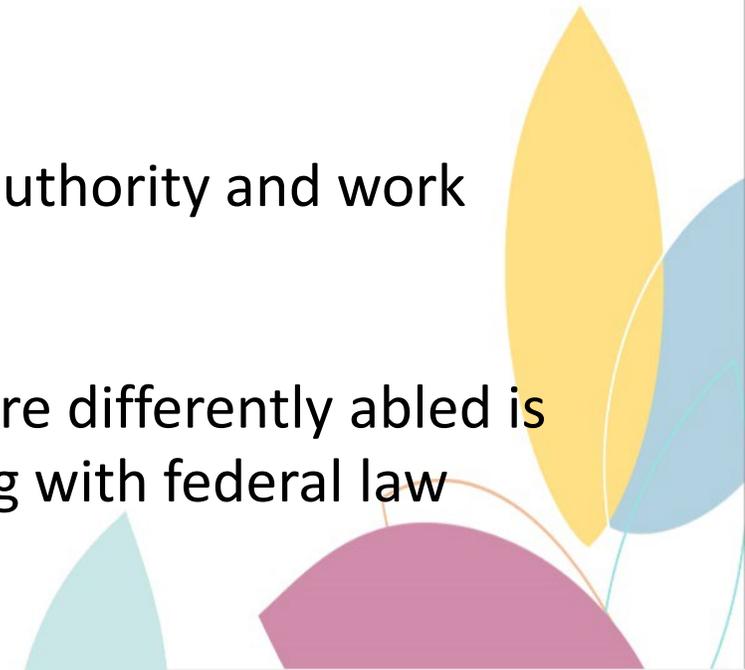
- Being open to different lifestyles other than our own has presented some challenges
- Bias, prejudice and microaggressions have occurred and have created harm and pain
- Racial, ethnic and cultural differences must be understood and accepted...not just tolerated
- Gender and gender-identity are growing elements of our workplaces and employees need awareness and skills to work effectively

Policies, training and tools are important to address workplace harassment and discrimination



Diverse Challenges (cont)

- Language and communication barriers exist and require training and understanding to ensure our workforce communicates and collaborates effectively
- In today's workplace, we have five different generations at work (Traditionalists, Boomers, Gen X, Millennials and Gen Z)
- These generational mindsets toward the organization, authority and work styles influence our workplaces in many ways
- Supporting and meeting the needs of co-workers who are differently abled is important to fairness, working effectively and complying with federal law



Diversity Requires Change

- Shaping our workplace culture to ensure a welcoming, respectful and inclusive work environment
- Creating training programs promoting respectful communications and collaborations
- Created training program specifically for our field workforce recognizing that work cultures among teams are often unique and long standing
- Raising awareness among our employees of the diversity in our workplace
- Addressing microaggressions and other insensitive behaviors



Diversity Changes (cont)

- Created policies that acknowledges a diverse workforce
 - Gender Identity policy
 - Anti-Harassment policy
 - Equity & Social Justice policy
- Developed and regularly focus on workplace behavior guidelines
- Created manager and supervisor equity & social justice expectations
- Established a 4-hour per year equity and social justice training requirement for all employees
- Create monthly Blog on equity and race awareness topics for use by all work teams
- Expectation of regular team discussions exploring and equity-related topics





Call to Action

- ## According to Profiles in Diversity Journal
- Bring your Best Self to work
 - Be mindful of your behavior and remain open to new perspectives
 - Actively engage in your organization's diversity, equity and inclusion efforts
 - Become diversity competent – the more you know and understand the more your workplace relationships will grow
 - Become an advocate for diversity efforts and programs in your organizations
 - Commit to continuous improvement – keep learning, growing and applying what you learn

Questions

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