



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

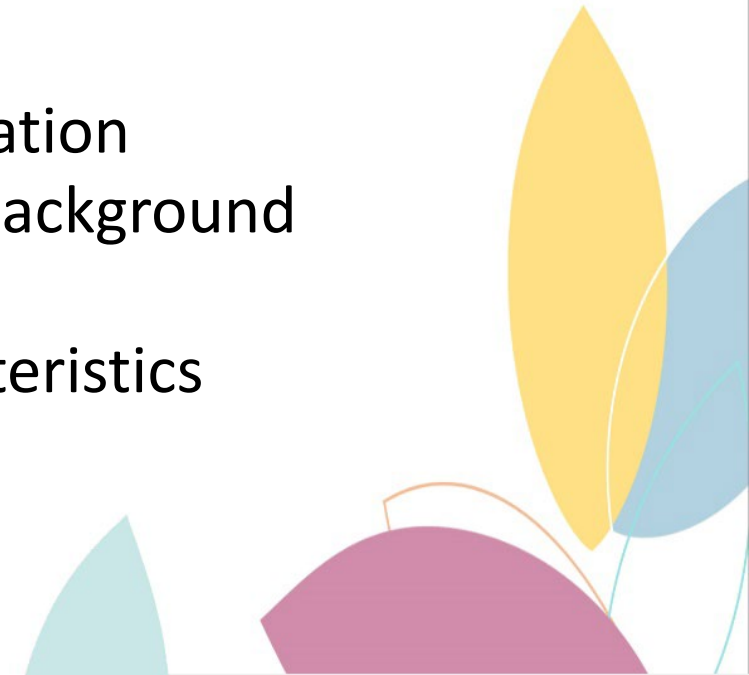




Diversity is an intentional effort to identify, recruit, screen, hire and develop a workforce comprised of individuals with a range of characteristics:

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

What do we mean by having a diverse workforce?



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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