

*Frederick County, Maryland*

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Diversity, Equity,  
Inclusion  
and Belonging  
**Workforce Plan**

*July 2023*



*“An investment in diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging will pay off not only for individual residents but for the*

## **COUNTY AS A WHOLE.”**

*- Michael Hughes  
Frederick County Chief Equity and Inclusion Officer*

*Portions of this report reflect the work of consultant KL Scott, which provided a draft report in November 2022. Frederick County Government built upon their work for this updated publication.*



## A Message from the County Executive

This administration is committed to incorporating accountability, inclusion, and sustainability into everything we do. This is not just rhetoric – these are the values by which we will grow as an organization and better serve our residents.

Frederick County Government conducted an employee survey which was completed in February of 2022. The purpose of the survey was to determine how our workforce experiences our culture through the lens of diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging. When employees were invited to take the survey, they were promised that “once the data is in, we will share the results with the entire organization so you can see for yourselves how we are doing.” On January 25, 2023, I honored that commitment by releasing the data to our workforce and the public.

The survey showed that we value the idea of diversity and the talents and contributions of our employees. It also showed we need to do more to be inclusive and to promote fairness in the workplace, especially with regard to opportunities for employees to achieve and advance within our organization. The survey showed where we do well-- and where we must be better.

We are using the survey results to hold ourselves accountable for creating a culture that values diversity and equity and builds an inclusive environment where everyone truly belongs. This plan is a first step on that journey.

Frederick County is a vibrant and growing community. We have a vision for a Frederick County where all people can live, work, and thrive while feeling a strong sense of place and belonging. Working together, we will build a culture in Frederick County Government that helps us move closer to making that vision a reality.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jessica Fitzwater".

**Jessica Fitzwater**  
**County Executive**



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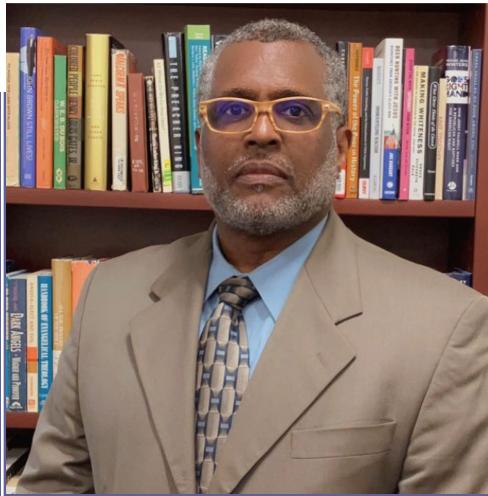
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*"In seeking to attain equity, we help position ourselves to serve the public in a culturally competent and responsive way."*

## A Message from the Chief Equity and Inclusion Officer

While Frederick County does indeed have a "Rich History," it has taken hundreds of years to truly begin to cultivate a "Bright Future" for all residents. Historically, America hasn't lived up to its promises of liberty or equality. Yet, we press forward to leverage recent shifts in increased public awareness to eliminate disparities experienced by historically oppressed populations to create a more just and equitable society. We recognize that a large part of this movement is giving a voice to those who have been marginalized, while including and inviting everyone to engage about ideals and the reality of our challenges—and to move forward together.

The move toward this level of inclusion could be labeled a "heavy lift" for Frederick County, where we have 287,000 residents and over 2,700 government employees. However, an investment in diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging (DEIB) will pay off not only for individual residents, but for the County as a whole. Too often cultures, perspectives, and histories have been missing from the conversation. In seeking to attain equity, we help position ourselves to serve the public in a culturally competent and responsive way.

Today, our country is once again provided with the opportunity to do what is right, just, and fair. The leadership of Frederick County Government has expressed its commitment to achieving equitable outcomes for all residents and employees. Examining our policies, procedures, and practices through an equity lens is good for business, legally necessary, and, most importantly, the ethical and moral way to conduct ourselves and operate as an institution.

While these outcomes are hugely important, we must also admit to ourselves that in the face of historical oppression and subsequent marginalization, prioritizing DEIB is ultimately the right thing to do. Removing barriers of oppression involves lifting structurally marginalized voices and seeking historical justice. Oppression and divisiveness negatively affect all of us; overcoming them means we win—together.

## When Frederick County Government invests in DEIB:

1

We communicate that County employees are valued and promote mutual respect.

2

County employees are positioned to advance their careers.

3

County employees can be more effective in serving the population to whom they are accountable.

4

The County expresses respect for, and acknowledges the humanity of, our residents.

5

We communicate that County residents are respected and valued.

6

Communities are better positioned to be unified and made stronger.

7

Investment in the community is encouraged.

8

The County flourishes and businesses are provided with increased capacity for growth.

The County is responsible for leading change and our senior leadership is committed to this vision of Frederick County's future. We have created the following plan to strategically guide us forward with the intention to avoid wasted resources, unintended consequences, and disparate outcomes. I deeply desire for us to recognize our shared humanity, as we learn from our past and work collectively to ensure that those who have been historically oppressed are provided with opportunities for success.



**Michael Hughes**  
Chief Equity and Inclusion Officer

# Executive Summary

Frederick County Government's leadership is people-centered and committed to promoting a high quality of life for residents. Frederick County offers excellent public education and learning opportunities and is a safe place to live, work, and play. As a growing community with more than 270,000 residents, Frederick County's population has rapidly grown to become more ethnically and racially diverse over the last 10 years. This continued demographic change provides residents with opportunities for global connectiveness and greater social and cultural enrichment.

*Frederick County's population has rapidly grown to become more ethnically and racially diverse over the last 10 years.*

Along with the opportunities provided by growth and change come the challenges that inevitably accompany these shifts. Watching the murder of George Floyd at the hands of a former Minneapolis police officer finally elevated awareness across the country of widespread injustices experienced by those who have been marginalized in our society and oppressed for centuries. The outrage over the murder of George Floyd was global. In response, one measure taken by Frederick County Government was to codify the position of the Office of Equity and Inclusion, the Chief Equity and Inclusion Officer, and the Equity and Inclusion Commission to lead the County's efforts in addressing systems of marginalization and oppression and existing injustices, disparities, and inequitable outcomes, while providing a voice for those most vulnerable.

In March of 2021, former County Executive Jan H. Gardner, Public Health Officer Dr. Barbara Brookmyer, and then County Council President M.C. Keegan-Ayer (District 3) signed a joint declaration of racism as a public health crisis, stating:

*"Specific individuals and communities are unfairly disadvantaged by racism while unfairly giving advantages to other individuals and communities and undermines society as a whole by weakening the health and economy in Frederick..."*

The declaration also listed statements for policies to produce equitable outcomes and inform public discourse on racism within the County, including one outlining how the County Government itself will incorporate DEIB priorities into its employment procedures:

*"It will be the policy of Frederick County to continue identifying specific objectives to incorporate anti-racism principles across County agencies, and increase diversity in leadership, staffing and procurement to produce a County Government that represents the community it serves."*

To begin putting this policy into place, the County conducted an audit of the current DEIB efforts within County Government's workforce. The objective of the audit was to identify potential opportunities and



# Executive Summary

recommendations to improve the County's DEIB posture and establish an environment that will educate and promote a diverse and equitable workforce. The study was aided by County leadership in collaboration with a consulting firm. It focused on staff recruitment, workforce climate and culture, internal operations and policies, and community outreach.

Based on this evaluation of Frederick County's workplace environment, the County will incorporate the following Strategic Workforce Plan to ensure the County Government attracts and retains a more diverse workforce and ensures a culture of equity, inclusion and belonging.

## Workforce Vision

**Frederick County Government leads with a diverse and culturally competent workforce, delivering services in a manner that helps ensure equitable outcomes for all.**

## Workforce Mission

**Frederick County Government embraces its responsibility to meet the needs of the community and serve everyone in our community in an equitable manner that fosters inclusion and belonging.**

## Workforce Values

**E**nsure everyone in our community is recognized and valued.

**E**nsure everyone in our community is empowered to fully participate in building and shaping our community.

**B**e open, honest, frequent, and consistent when engaging the community.

**E**mbrace cultures and demonstrate cultural competence.

**F**rame success through differences in ideas, strengths, interests, and cultural backgrounds.

**E**ncourage healthy debate when there are differences of opinion.

**S**olve problems and conflicts with creative, open minds.

**R**ecognize opportunities for improvement and exercise preparedness to make necessary changes.

**V**alue innovative thinking.

**E**njoy our work.

**M**ake equity and inclusion the standard approach for all matters.

# Background

Frederick County has a rich history that begins with the Indigenous People of North America, such as the Piscataway, the Susquehannock, and the Tuscarora Tribes, using the Upper Potomac and Monocacy River and their surrounding valleys to hunt, establish encampments and villages, and institute trade routes. The Tuscarora and Piscataway people lived in the land now known as Frederick County until they were displaced by war, and their land was taken and occupied by colonizing Europeans.

The Piscataway, now known as the people of the Piscataway Indian Nation and Tayac Territory, was one of largest and most powerful Native societies of the Chesapeake Bay region, with territory north of the Potomac River, including an area near Point of Rocks in Frederick County. Although the larger tribe was destroyed as an independent, sovereign polity, descendants of the Piscataway survived. Some were forced northward by English occupation, but a small group formed alliances with others in the area, including indentured servants of European ancestry and free or enslaved people of African ancestry. Today, two Maryland-recognized Tribes represent the Piscataway Indian Nation and Tayac Territory: the Piscataway-Conoy Tribe of Maryland and the Cedarville Band of Piscataway.

In 1748, the English established Frederick County, formed from parts of Baltimore and Prince George's Counties and named after Frederick Calvert, 6th Lord of Baltimore. Like the rest of the state, Frederick County owes much of its early prosperity to those of African ancestry who were enslaved, oppressed and brutally forced into hard labor.



Piscataway Indian Nation and the Piscataway Conoy Tribe recognized by Governor Martin O'Malley



The most recent uncovering of this extensive history in Frederick involved the Catoctin Furnace, which is an industrial site that functioned from 1776–1903 and was operated at least partially by an enslaved workforce until about 1850 when it shifted to paid European laborers. A cemetery including 35 graves from which the remains of 32 individuals identified with African ancestry were excavated in 1979-1980 during construction of a highway that impacted the site. Since then, the human remains have been under the stewardship of the Smithsonian's National Museum of Natural History, as they are currently attempting to generate DNA of 27 individuals from the cemetery. The analysis of the Catoctin individuals is part of a long-term study dedicated to restoring knowledge of the identity, origins, and legacy of the enslaved and free African Americans who labored and were buried at Catoctin Furnace.

Catoctin Iron Furnace, Ruins of the Ironmaster's House

## Background

By 1860, in Frederick County, the number of freed Black people surpassed that of those who were enslaved, with 4,967 freed and 3,243 enslaved Black people. For the people of Frederick County who were enslaved, freedom came at different times and in different forms for a mixture of reasons, such as manumissions, a social shift in the area toward abolition, and Frederick's agricultural industry being centered around grain rather than cotton and tobacco crops. Maryland's enslaved population was officially declared free only a few months before Congress would approve the 13th Amendment abolishing slavery.

The Reconstruction Era in Frederick County saw tremendous growth in the number of Black towns, churches, cemeteries, schools, and political associations. As Reconstruction ended, the Jim Crow era was met by the County's Black community with the creation of important institutions to address their needs in medicine, education, religion, culture, economics, politics, and social concerns.

Manufacturing, boosted by the two world wars, significantly shaped the development of Frederick County. Post-war development of the Washington, D.C. and Baltimore metropolitan area with government research and administrative facilities, as well as many corporate headquarters, became a significant employment source in the region. Frederick County has hosted significant industries and today, it exhibits the relationships between technology and natural resources, local and national commerce, and agriculture and manufacturing.

Frederick County is home to six Maryland-designated Main Street communities and 12 municipalities, and contains 90 national, state, county, and municipal parks. It is within the third largest biosciences cluster in the U.S. and serves as the northern anchor of the I-270 Technology Corridor. It is home to Fort Detrick, the Frederick National Laboratory, 3,400+ businesses, and more than 80 bioscience companies. The largest employer in Frederick County is Fort Detrick, with around 8,780 employees. It also hosts the historic Maryland School for the Deaf, Camp David, a segment of the Appalachian Trail, and is a major throughway from Washington, D.C. to points north.



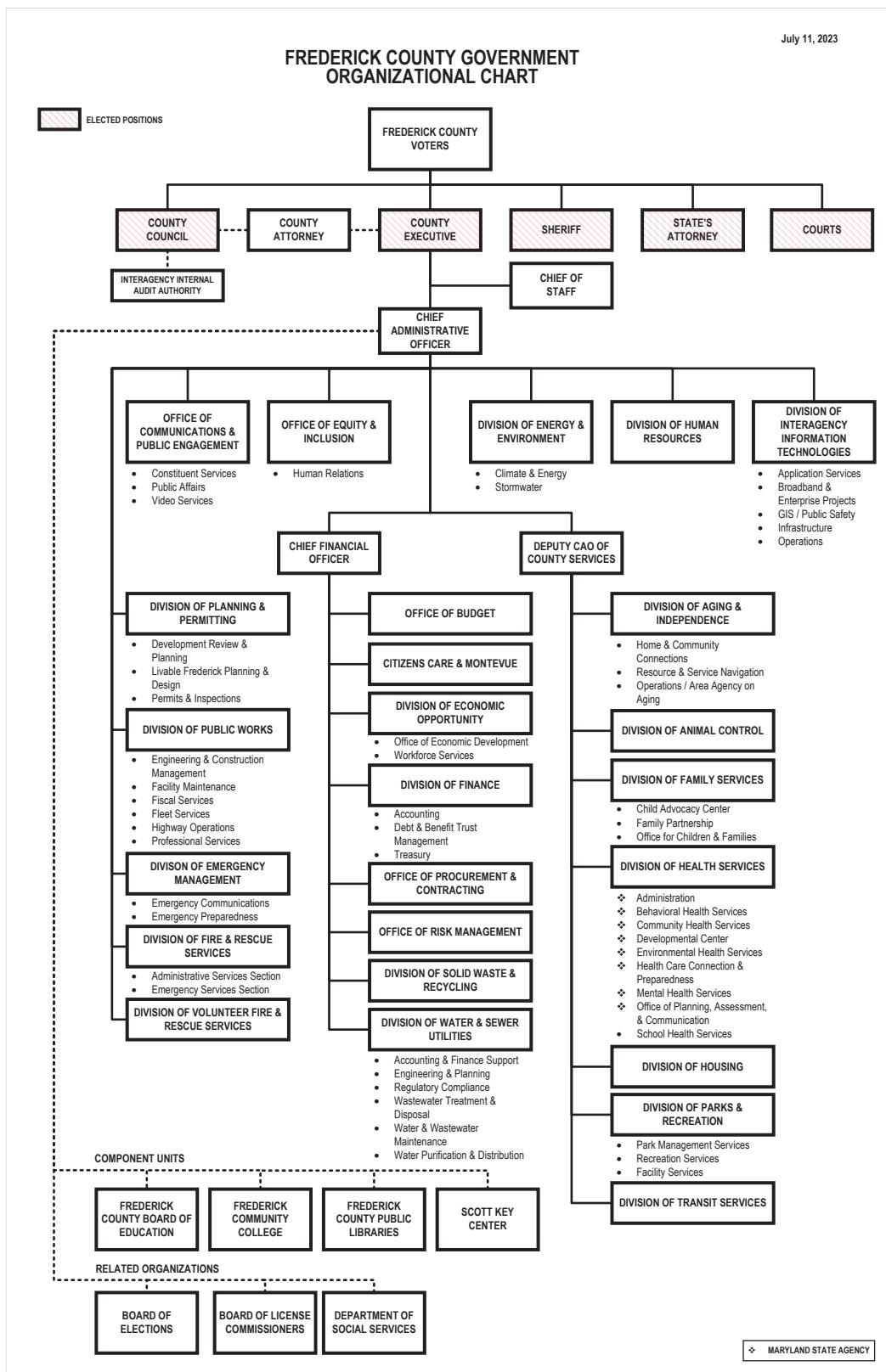
The small house at L'Hermitage Slave Village Archaeological Site, also known as the Best Farm, Monocacy National Battlefield



View west along the westbound lanes of Interstate 70 from the overpass for the Appalachian Trail in Wolfsville Crossing

## Background

### FREDERICK COUNTY GOVERNMENT ORGANIZATIONAL CHART



Frederick County operates with 20 specific organizational units as illustrated in the organizational chart to the left.

Frederick County has a charter government led by the elected County Executive and seven County Council members. Five County Council members represent each of the five districts, and two represent Frederick County at-large. Other elected officials can be found on the County website at [frederickcountymd.gov/1649/Elected-Officials-List](http://frederickcountymd.gov/1649/Elected-Officials-List).

This organizational chart includes Frederick County Government's allied agencies.

## Background

Over the past 10 years, the County has grown by approximately 40,000 residents according to the U.S. Census. While the majority of the County population is white, it is seeing a significant shift in racial and ethnic demographics. Census data show that overall, minority populations are growing. It is crucial that Frederick County recognize and address this shift by seeking to build organizational commitment and infrastructure across all organizational units and allied agencies to demonstrably advance diversity and inclusion-based transformation. The County established an Equity and Inclusion Leadership Team (comprised primarily of members of the community), to provide the framework, actions, and timelines, and recommend the funding to implement actions. Based on those recommendations, County Executive Gardner committed County resources and efforts to achieving the goals recommended by the Equity and Inclusion Leadership Team.

### U.S. Census Data for Frederick County, Maryland - Demographic Profile 2010 and 2020

Race / Ethnicity	Pop 2010	Pop 2020	% 2010	% 2020
White alone (NH)	181,645	183,636	77.83%	67.58%
Black or African American alone (NH)	19,611	27,007	8.40%	9.94%
Native American or Alaska Native alone (NH)	512	401	0.22%	0.15%
Asian alone (NH)	8,876	13,427	3.80%	4.94%
Pacific Islander alone (NH)	92	154	0.04%	0.06%
Some Other Race alone (NH)	405	1,445	0.17%	0.53%
Mixed Race/Multi-Racial (NH)	5,109	13,528	2.19%	4.98%
Hispanic or Latino (any race)	17,135	32,119	7.34%	11.82%
<b>Total</b>	<b>233,385</b>	<b>271,717</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

Note: NH = Non-Hispanic. The U.S. Census treats Hispanic/Latino as an ethnic category. This table excludes Latinos from the racial categories and assigns them to a separate category. Hispanics/Latinos can be of any race.



# Advancing Equity

## Over the past three years, the County has:

- ✓ Formally created, through codification, an Office of Equity and Inclusion (OEI)
- ✓ Created an Equity and Inclusion Commission to be an ongoing community voice
- ✓ Created an Immigrant Affairs Commission to be an ongoing community voice
- ✓ Transitioned the Human Relations Commission, an ongoing community voice, under the OEI
- ✓ Evaluated the workplace environment and began designing efforts to attract and retain a more diverse workforce and establish a culture of inclusion and belonging within County Government
- ✓ Expanded minority business outreach and leadership development
- ✓ Contracted with a company to conduct a Disparity Study
- ✓ Had a team of staff and administrators participate in GARE's (Government Alliance on Race and Equity) 12-month Introductory Learning Cohort in 2022 and sent an additional team for 2023
- ✓ Initiated a data dashboard project through our partnership with GARE
- ✓ Invested in acknowledging and telling the stories of our history via investments in the African American Resources Cultural Heritage Society's new Heritage Center
- ✓ Established state-mandated Police Accountability Board
- ✓ Hired a Coordinator of Equity and Inclusion

Members of Frederick County Government, in collaboration with an independent social equity consulting firm, initiated a DEIB study with internal stakeholders and external stakeholders to inform the development of a DEIB strategy. (See Appendix A: Stakeholder Interview Report.) Qualitative data collected through interviews was supplemented by quantitative data collected from a survey of Frederick County Government employees. That information was analyzed and used to produce a Current State Analysis. (See Appendix B: Current State Analysis.)

The audit showed the following key takeaways for development of the DEIB Strategic Workforce Plan:

- ✓ Implement recruitment and hiring practices that promote a diverse workforce
- ✓ Racially diversify the Frederick County Government workforce at all levels to match the demographics of the community
- ✓ Take actions to create an inclusive environment of belonging
- ✓ Provide opportunities for increased representation of diverse groups to reflect the diversity of the community
- ✓ Provide DEIB leadership training and professional development opportunities
- ✓ Provide DEIB training to staff and evaluate these efforts
- ✓ Improve communication and updates on the DEIB initiatives
- ✓ Implement practices of behavior that build communities of belonging within every division



In addition to the findings of the consultant, Frederick County Government's Office of Equity and Inclusion sought further stakeholder feedback by conducting several DEIB Survey Employee Listening Sessions, engaging with the internal Diversity and Inclusion Committee regarding the qualitative and quantitative survey data, gaining insight from external stakeholder comments through the Equity and Inclusion and Immigrant Affairs Commissions, and receiving direct input from County Executive Fitzwater's Transition Team.

*The Office of  
Equity and  
Inclusion  
identified  
seven areas for  
improvement that  
should allow us to  
focus our efforts  
and have the best  
impact with our  
resources.*





Analysis of the feedback provided by these resources led the OEI to identify seven areas that should allow us to focus our efforts and have the best impact with our resources.

- ▷ A workforce that does not reflect the demographics of the County it serves
- ▷ Failure to consistently operate with fairness regarding personnel matters
- ▷ Unestablished, unenforced, and/or inconsistent application of Policies/Procedures
- ▷ A non-inclusive climate that fails to create a culture of belonging
- ▷ Failure to effectively and properly supervise personnel
- ▷ Lack of clarity and consistency in communicating the County's DEIB efforts, values, and goals
- ▷ Inconsistent exercise of professional behaviors as a workforce

**The following workforce plan provides more detail on the goals, priorities for action, and implementation.**

# Goals and Objectives

Frederick County Office of Equity and Inclusion will:



Serve as the subject matter experts and primary source for DEIB resources



Develop processes to provide equity-informed planning, policy development, decision making, and systems examination



Incorporate DEIB data and analysis into government operations, while applying an equity lens to policies and decisions

## AREAS OF CONCERN 1

- Lack of clarity and consistency in communicating the County's DEIB efforts
- Inconsistent exercise of professional behaviors as a workforce
- A non-inclusive climate that fails to create a culture of belonging

## GOAL TO ADDRESS AREAS OF CONCERN 1

**Establish the Office of Equity and Inclusion as the hub for all matters related to Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging; leading the charge of providing informed education, inclusive expertise, sharing current best practices, and ongoing training for FCG's workforce in partnership with the Department of Human Resources.**

*A. Ensure Office of Equity and Inclusion staff are thoroughly equipped to deliver the systems, expertise, instruction, and leadership required to achieve established DEIB goals and objectives.*

- Build and utilize regional and national network of DEIB professionals and organizations as resources for consultation and for remaining abreast of current best practices
- Identify and attend conferences and participate in other formal DEIB and leadership training opportunities
- Identify and utilize self-directed learning opportunities and materials

*B. The Office of Equity and Inclusion will build upon the commitment of a large number of DEIB volunteers from the County's workforce to build a DEIB Partnership Engagement Program whose participants will serve in a formal capacity in advancing DEIB initiatives.*

The Office of Equity and Inclusion will:

- Recruit a diverse team of volunteers from various divisions to participate in the DEIB Partnership Engagement Program
- Develop and implement training programs for each component of the Partnership Engagement Program that provides both DEIB and operational information, instruction, resources and materials
- Monitor and provide oversight for the Program and its participants

The three branches of the DEIB Partnership Engagement Program that will support the initiatives and services of the Office of Equity and Inclusion are the DEIB Ambassadors Program, DEIB Strategic Council, and DEIB Project Teams.

Members of the Ambassadors Program will leverage (within the FCG work environment) their influence and contacts to

- Advance the County's DEIB commitment & philosophy
- Promote OEI initiatives, services, events, and opportunities for engagement
- Monitor the DEIB pulse of FCG divisions, departments, employees
- Recruit staff for DEIB engagement

The DEIB Strategic Council will provide support for the OEI initiatives:

- Through strategy development
- Through design of employee DEIB professional development plans
- Through the design and development of long-term enterprise-wide projects and plans that serve in building an inclusive culture of belonging

DEIB Project Teams will:

- Operate simultaneously and independent of one another
- Be assigned projects/tasks to be completed over a period of 2-6 weeks
- Be formed based upon emerging needs
- Dissolve upon completion of an assigned project/task
- Be provided with tailored training to equip them in their work

*C. Maintain a one-on-one, open-door DEIB counseling program that provides a confidential space to have private and sometimes difficult conversations about DEIB.*

- Provide Frederick County Government staff with confidential space to discuss DEIB-related concerns and ask DEIB-related questions and provide guidance and support.
- Explore options for staff to both contact/communicate with them anonymously, as well as anonymously report DEIB workforce incidents/concerns. Based on these conversations and reports, OEI will deliver feedback and guidance to leadership to help the County improve. These services will be available immediately upon the launch of the DEIB Strategic Workforce Plan.
- Post related information on the Equity and Inclusion webpage. The OEI will share information about these services during trainings and presentations, and the Division of Human Resources will add it to the onboarding materials.

**Best Practices:**

- o Proactively and regularly message and encourage participation of new and current staff to:
- o Remind them that OEI is there for their education and as a resource
- o Offer a safe environment for insights, suggestions, and complaints
- o Offer DEIB resources and opportunities to review those resources with the OEI
- o Remind them of processes to schedule sessions and how to do so anonymously, if requested

*D. Establish executive coaching/training for leadership and management to foster awareness of DEIB matters, including microaggressions, biases, anti-harassment, anti-racism, cultural competency, conflict management.*

- The OEI will establish a training and executive coaching plan for leadership and management. The plan will identify available resources including funding and service providers for executive coaching. HR will facilitate the execution of the trainings and executive coaching sessions.

**Best Practices:**

- o Create a regular schedule to update trainings
- o Partner with subject matter experts to lead content creation for the above
- o Make training mandatory and part of performance evaluation

*E. Institute a coaching/training program for all staff on DEIB and related topics*

- The OEI, in partnership with HR, will establish a training plan for all staff on DEIB and related topics, such as shared knowledge, cultural competence, systemic racism, and bias conversations. Once the OEI determines resources and areas of need, experts will be engaged to assist in creating and delivering the training content. HR, in partnership with the OEI, will facilitate the trainings. Prior to the training, the OEI and the Communications and Public Engagement Office will create a mini-campaign to educate staff about DEIB training opportunities.

**Best Practices:**

- o Use intranet or SharePoint to provide class/course access
- o Add DEIB class/course requirements to Employee Performance Evaluation process
- o Utilize DEIB committees and teams to promote training opportunities

*F. Create repository/central location on the Frederick County Government website and intranet for DEIB resources and materials*

- The OEI will lead efforts to create an Equity and Inclusion webpage on Frederick County Government's website to house DEIB resources and materials. Resources and materials on the webpage will include DEIB trainings, book reviews and recommended readings, updates on the current efforts of the OEI in advancing DEIB, information and editorials on local and national DEIB related news, events, emerging trends and issues of interest, and profiles of individuals and groups leading DEIB efforts.

**Best Practices:**

- o Establish a content calendar of regular updates to ensure that information stays current
- o Promote a dedicated DEIB online space for employees (such as intranet or SharePoint) so they can access employee DEIB resources and trainings

## AREAS OF CONCERN 2

- Failure to effectively and properly supervise personnel
- A workforce that does not reflect the demographics of the County it serves
- Failure to consistently operate with fairness re: personnel matters

## GOAL TO ADDRESS AREAS OF CONCERN 2

### **Create a Frederick County Government culture of inclusion and belonging.**

*A. Establish trust between FCG's workforce and the County's systems, leadership, and structures, in partnership with the Human Resources Division.*

- Repair the Human Resources Division's reputation for distrust in managing conflict and grievances.
- Train supervisors and hold them accountable for identifying and effectively managing conflicts to produce beneficial outcomes.
- Design and implement procedures to examine and update policies through an equity lens and conduct analysis of policy implementation to help identify if there are inequitable outcomes.
- Create a robust employee engagement plan that lays the foundation for building an inclusive culture of belonging.
- Restructure county policies for managing conflict and grievances to ensure they support the county's commitment to DEIB and that all employees can understand and trust the process.
- The OEI will lead effort in conducting initial and ongoing review and analysis of quantitative and qualitative data to identify barriers to advancing inclusion and belonging.

*B. Support the enfranchisement of the historically marginalized populations.*

- Seek out and utilize the wisdom, lived experience, and influence of historically oppressed and marginalized populations within the Frederick County Government workforce.
- Develop systems of inclusive engagement that facilitates empowerment, removal of barriers, and building systems of trust and accountability.
- The OEI will lead the development and implementation of this DEIB Strategic Workforce Plan. The plan defines inclusive involvement goals and features guidance on how to develop inclusive processes and increase participation from historically underserved personnel.

### **Best Practices:**

- o Create partnerships with communities in marginalized areas to further promote employment opportunities and share best practices

*C. Establish Employee Affinity Groups.*

- Educate the workforce on the role and benefits of Affinity Groups.
- Facilitate opportunities for the Affinity Groups to become established.

**Best Practices:**

- o Gauge interest by surveying employees.
- o Review demographics of organization and identify gaps.
- o Regularly hold Employee Affinity Group information sessions to provide information about the groups and encourage participation.
- o Provide opportunities for Affinity Groups to form and support/enhance their DEIB efforts.
- o Reach out to other counties and municipalities in Maryland and other states to share lessons learned, cultivate wisdom, and exchange ideas.

*D. Establish and implement a DEIB recognition program to highlight employee narratives and acknowledge employee efforts in promoting DEIB.*

- Recognize DEIB champions.
- Celebrate employee individuality and diversity.
- The OEI will develop an annual recognition program to highlight leaders and staff within the government that are advancing DEIB.

**Best Practices:**

- o Create a committee to build an annual DEIB recognition program.

*E. Continue establishing and implementing the recommendations of subcommittees to improve the employee experience.*

- These subcommittees were small teams that completed their work in 2022, bringing an equity lens to understand and evaluate the FCG employment experience to include Recruiting, Hiring, Onboarding, Inclusion-Belonging-Retention-Exit, Performance Evaluation, Employment Data, and Policy Review. (See Appendix C: Subcommittee Charges)

*F. Promote the benefits of advancing DEIB.*

- The OEI and Communications and Public Engagement Office (CPEO) will partner to promote the benefits of advancing DEIB through communications and outreach. Content would include narratives around DEIB data, training, education, as well as human impact.

**Best Practices:**

- o Create campaigns about the importance and value of DEIB.
- o Support campaigns through data and stories.
- o Prepare leadership to speak about the benefits of DEIB practices.
- o Highlight successes.

*G. Update personnel manual with inclusive language and DEIB emerging and best practices.*

- HR and the OEI will review and update the Frederick County Government's HR Policy and Procedures Manual and HR Personnel Rules Manual for inclusive language and to ensure that these documents are fully accessible and consistent with DEIB principles.

**Best Practices:**

- o Establish peer review to ensure policy language and practices express cultural competence, helping to ensure that the historically marginalized are not disadvantaged.

## AREAS OF CONCERN 3

- Unestablished, unenforced, and/or inconsistent application of Policies/Procedures.

## GOAL TO ADDRESS AREAS OF CONCERN 3

**Utilize data to inform the County's DEIB efforts, while applying an equity lens to policies and decisions.**

- A. Identify available DEIB data and incorporate its analysis into Frederick County Government systems.*
- B. Build a dashboard that will be used as a tool to accurately analyze current issues and future goals.*
- The initial Frederick County Government Alliance on Race and Equity (GARE) cohort will, in collaboration with the Interagency Information Technology (IIT) division, build and implement a user-friendly dashboard to analyze the County's DEIB issues and goals. The cohort will construct narratives and create visuals to tell the story of the data in a relatable way. These stories will be developed on an ongoing basis and used to demonstrate the cause and effect of prioritizing DEIB in County messaging. The OEI will routinely update the dashboard.

**Best Practices:**

- Identify goals and priorities and based on these, ensure they accurately measure current DEIB status.
- C. The OEI will develop and provide FCG leaders with a racial equity tool to be used in applying an equity lens to their decisions, plans and strategies.*
  - D. Develop Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) that detail processes and procedures for recruitment, hiring, training, and other internal operations that create diversity and equity at every level in FCG's workforce.*
  - The OEI will ensure that an equity lens is applied to the development of SOPs that detail processes and procedures for recruitment, hiring, onboarding, inclusion/belonging/retention/exit, performance evaluation, data, policy, training, and other internal operations.
  - The OEI and Human Resources will collaborate to develop materials that will include a DEIB recruitment strategy, a promotion policy, a structured DEIB accountability program, and DEIB-related updates to the HR Personnel Rules and Policies and Procedures Manual. Training and implementation on the SOP will be provided by the OEI. Random accountability checks will occur through each division on a quarterly basis.

**Best Practices:**

- OEI collaboration with HR, leadership, and subcommittees to identify process areas in need of DEIB-related language improvements.
- Ensure trainings are accessible and inclusive.
- Document inclusive recruiting strategies.

- o Utilize various recruitment resources to attract a diverse pool of applicants.
- o Track the demographics of candidates selected for interview in the hiring process.
- o Establish and implement objective measure to evaluate candidates.

*E. Human Resources will collaborate with the OEI to develop Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) that detail processes and procedures for managing employee complaints/grievances.*

*F. Create and add OEI approved DEIB performance metrics to employee performance evaluations.*

- To increase accountability with executing DEIB initiatives, HR will update performance evaluation forms to include DEIB.

**Best Practices:**

- o Require employees to take an established number of classes/courses provided by the County or equivalent learning opportunities offered by other entities (such as LinkedIn Learning).
- o Ensure core competencies are reflected in performance evaluations.

*G. Review of staff compensation for internal pay equity.*

- The first general compensation study was completed in January 2021. On a biennial basis, HR will ensure that a DEIB related compensation study is conducted to ensure staff is compensated equitably and to benchmark challenges and improvements.

**Best Practices:**

- o Conduct compensation study on a regular basis to continue to identify areas of improvement and track progress towards pay equity

Overall DEIB progress across Frederick County Government will be evaluated in several ways to gauge the effectiveness of this plan and adjust, if needed, accordingly. It is our intention to create an equitable environment for all our employees and to adequately reflect the community in which we serve.

When we experience outcomes that exhibit an increase in...

- Positive communication between management and staff in each division,
- Requests to engage in events that celebrate diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging for all
- Interest to participate and supervisory encouragement to take trainings that promote diversity
- Full transparency to converse regarding concerns that must be addressed to achieve forward momentum

...we will be on a targeted path to achieving success as a valued employer and true community asset.

# Implementation Schedule

## Spring 2023

- Identify and provide the nation's best training to position each OEI staff member to be effective in fulfilling their role, position to serve as the next level, and equipped to help the OEI to achieve established DEIB goals and objectives.
- Identify staff/administrators to participate in the GARE Cohort Introductory Training.
- Institute a one-on-one, open-door DEIB counseling program that provides a confidential space to have difficult conversations about DEIB.
- Dissolve the current internal Diversity and Inclusion Committee and institute a new structure that maximizes the skills and DEIB interests of staff and administrators to more effectively advance DEIB under the direction of the OEI.
- Work together with leadership from HR to determine their unique responsibilities and identify opportunities to support one another.
- Conduct initial and ongoing review and analysis of quantitative and qualitative data to identify barriers to advancing inclusion and belonging.
- Begin planning outreach opportunities.

## Summer 2023

- Begin implementing a DEIB Strategic Workforce Plan.
- Plan foundational DEIB training for all Frederick County Government personnel.
- Create a campaign to educate general staff about DEIB training opportunities.
- Develop DEIB content for the Frederick County Government's website to build awareness of activities, accomplishments, and resources.
- Recruit and begin equipping DEIB Ambassadors, DEIB Council Members, DEIB Project Team Members from various divisions.
- Relaunch efforts to build a DEIB data dashboard.
- Promote and support employee affinity groups.
- Promote the benefits of advancing DEIB.
- Partner with Human Resources to develop Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) that detail processes and procedures for equitable and inclusive hiring, training, and other internal operations.
- Support the effort to begin discussions on identifying uniform data sets for data collection and evaluation.

## Fall 2023

- Continue constructing narratives and creating visuals to tell the story of the data.
- Begin departmental implementation of SOPs for hiring, training, and other internal operations through a DEIB lens.

- Establish executive coaching/training for leadership and management to foster awareness of DEIB matters, including microaggressions, biases, anti-harassment, anti-racism, cultural competency, conflict management, etc.
- Institute a coaching/training program for all staff on DEIB and related topics.
- Establish uniform data sets for data collection and evaluation.
- Design and implement a new employee DEIB survey to track progress across the organization and in each division.
- Draft comprehensive implementation plan for DEIB ambassadors, DEIB council, DEIB project teams.
- Work with IIT to ensure quantitative data on DEIB is being collected in a uniform manner to allow for consistent analysis organization wide.

## Winter 2023

- Partner with the Office of Procurement to review and refresh procurement practices and processes, including DEIB policy, evaluation, systems, best practices, and legal requirements.
- Lead in developing procedures to examine and update policies through equity lens.
- Implement a racial equity tool to evaluate Frederick County Government's major systems of influence through a DEIB lens.
- Begin updating the personnel manual with inclusive language and DEIB emerging and best practices

## Spring 2024

- Develop and implement recruiting strategies designed to increase the diversity of applicant pools.
- Begin creating a process for adding DEIB performance metrics to staff evaluations.
- Begin formal analysis of collected DEIB data and identifying strategies to be accomplished.

## Summer 2024

- Establish and implement a DEIB recognition program.
- Develop training that supports employee success in their DEIB performance for staff evaluations.

## Within the First Year

- Develop and implement a public engagement plan to ensure the public is aware of, and gather public feedback on, the County's DEIB Workforce Plan and related efforts and resources.
- Support the enfranchisement of the historically marginalized populations through inclusive engagement that facilitates empowerment, removal of barriers, and building systems of accountability.

## Biennially

- Review staff compensation for internal pay equity.

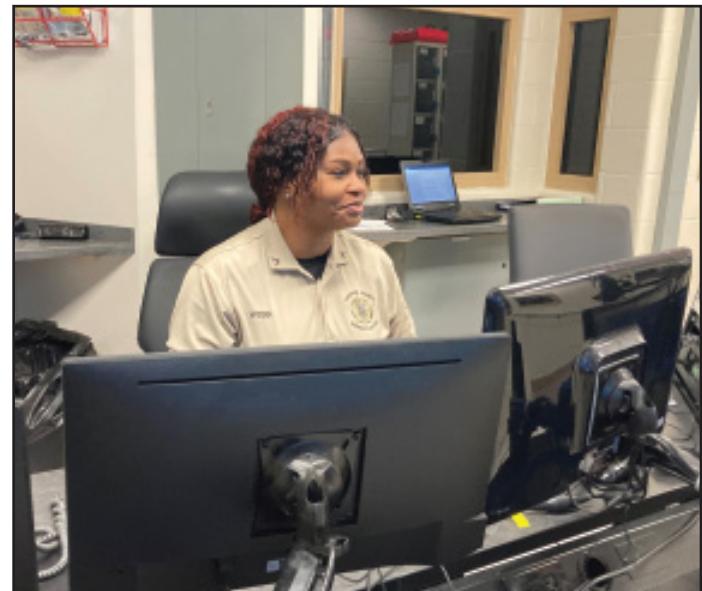
## Annually/Ongoing

- Maintain an open-door DEIB counseling program.
- Deliver executive coaching/training.
- Deliver coaching/training program for all staff.
- Add new and updated resources and materials the website.
- Review/update groups established to support OEI efforts.
- Review/update training plan.
- Review/update procurement practices and processes.
- Maintain data dashboard.
- Review/update racial equity tool.
- Promote the benefits of advancing DEIB.
- Review/update personnel manual.
- Review/update SOPs.
- Review/update recruiting, hiring, onboarding, inclusion/belonging/retention/exit, performance evaluation, data, policy, training, and other internal operations.
- Expand current engagement initiatives.
- Review/update DEIB performance metrics to staff evaluations.
- Execute DEIB recognition program.
- Review/update Affinity Groups responsibilities and reporting structure.
- Support the enfranchisement of the historically marginalized populations.
- Conduct a DEIB compensation study.

# Conclusion

As we welcome and support economic growth within the County, we must recognize that County demographics have changed. We stand ready to match these changes in the County workforce by looking at how we approach all activities—from staff recruitment, compensation, policy development and execution, and communication within the County Government—through a DEIB lens. Studies consistently provide evidence that diverse populations and representation yield higher organizational performance and those that choose to ignore DEIB will be left behind.

Frederick County does not believe DEIB is a “check-the-box” compliance exercise. We are invested in bringing our workforce and community together truly as one. DEIB is an ongoing journey of empathy, learning, and unlearning many deep-rooted biases that have manifested for centuries. Though our efforts may not completely eradicate systematic inequities entirely, we will remain consistent and steadfast in our pursuit of that objective.



## Leadership Acknowledgments

*Jessica Fitzwater, County Executive*

*Michael Hughes, Chief Equity and Inclusion Officer*

*Lakisha Wade, Equity and Inclusion Coordinator*

*Shannon Powell, Acting Director of Division of Human Resources*

*Equity and Inclusion Commission Leadership Team*

*John Peterson, Chief Administrative Officer*

*Dan Lewis, Chief Financial Officer*

*Leslie Barnes-Keating, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer*

*Chelsea Kadish, Chief of Staff*

*Vivian Laxton, Director of Communications and Public Engagement*

### Contact Information:

**Office of Equity and Inclusion**

**Frederick County Government**

**12 E. Church St.**

**Frederick, MD 21701**

**[FrederickCountyMD.gov/Equity](http://FrederickCountyMD.gov/Equity)**

County Executive Fitzwater: [CountyExecutive@frederickcountymd.gov](mailto:CountyExecutive@frederickcountymd.gov)

Constituent inquires can be submitted via FGCFixIt, where they will be directed to the appropriate staff member.

Office of Equity and Inclusion: [Equity@frederickcountymd.gov](mailto:Equity@frederickcountymd.gov)

Chief Equity and Inclusion Officer Michael Hughes: [mwhughes@frederickcountymd.gov](mailto:mwhughes@frederickcountymd.gov)

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County Council Members: [CouncilMembers@FrederickCountyMD.gov](mailto:CouncilMembers@FrederickCountyMD.gov)

### Social Media:

Facebook: <https://www.FrederickCountyMD.gov/facebook>

Instagram: <https://www.FrederickCountyMD.gov/instagram>

Twitter: <https://www.FrederickCountyMD.gov/twitter>

# Glossary of Terms and Concepts

**ACCESSIBILITY** is advanced when barriers are removed, and freedom and support for equitable opportunities for success, achievement and utilization are provided to people with disabilities.

**ANTI-RACISM** refers to the work of actively opposing discrimination based on race by advocating for changes in political, economic, and social life.

**BELONGING** occurs when there is recognition by each member of a group of the rightful and equally qualified presence and engagement of every member of the group/team/community/organization/institution. It is an outcome that naturally occurs when a truly inclusive environment has been created.

**CULTURAL COMPETENCE** refers to the ability of an individual or organization to understand how inequity can be (and has been) perpetuated through socialized behaviors and using that knowledge to disrupt inequitable practices; the ability to function effectively and empathetically as an individual and/or as an organization within the context of the cultural beliefs, behaviors, and needs presented by another's culture.

**DISCRIMINATION** refers to the unequal treatment of members of various groups based on race, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, gender expression, socioeconomic class, sexual orientation, physical or mental ability, religion, citizenship status, a combination of those identified, and/or other categories.

**DIVERSITY** refers to the presence of different and multiple characteristics that make up individual and collective identities, including race, gender, age, religion, sexual orientation, ethnicity, national origin, socioeconomic status, language, and physical ability.

**EQUITY** refers to an intentional and systemic approach to remedy and address historical practices, policies, and structures that have produced distinct

disparate outcomes. These inequitable outcomes have resulted in the oppression, marginalization, hindrance to the success of, and restricted access to opportunities and benefits for historically marginalized and oppressed populations. The goal of equity is achievement of equitable outcomes for all populations and social groups.

**INCLUSION** is more than simply diversity and numerical representation. Inclusion exists when historically oppressed and marginalized groups are empowered to participate in all elements of society in a manner that is culturally relevant to them, and when their full engagement is both welcomed and exercised to the degree that it redefines and helps to shape society and culture. Achievement of true inclusion requires changing or eliminating various historical practices in our society that limit, hinder, and fail to provide opportunities for members of historically oppressed and marginalized groups to contribute, lead, and influence decisions and outcomes.

**MICROAGGRESSIONS** are commonplace ongoing verbal, behavioral or environmental indignities, whether intentional or unintentional, which communicate or imply hostile or derogatory slights and insults toward culturally marginalized groups. (e.g., asking a person of color, "How did you get your job?" to imply they are not qualified).

**SYSTEMIC/STRUCTURAL RACISM** is a term used in reference to systems in which policies, institutional practices, cultural representations, and other norms work in various, often reinforcing ways to perpetuate racial group inequity. It identifies dimension of our history and culture that have allowed privileges associated with ideology of "whiteness" and disadvantages associations with "color" to ensure and adapt over time. Structural racism is not something that a few people or institutions choose to practice. Instead, it has been a feature of the social economic and political system in which we all exist.

# Appendix A

## Stakeholder Interview Report



# Stakeholder Interview Report

Presented to Frederick County Maryland  
January 18, 2022



**K.L. SCOTT**  
& ASSOCIATES  
ANALYTICS ANALYSIS ADVICE

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# Executive Summary



**K.L. SCOTT**  
& ASSOCIATES  
ANALYTICS ANALYSIS ADVICE



# Goals and Objectives

The County wishes to build organizational commitment and infrastructure across all agencies to demonstrably advance diversity and inclusion-based transformation.



## DEI Audit

An in-depth analysis of programs and initiatives relative to the County operations to identify racial, gender, age and economic inequities and disparities.



## DEI Strategy

Recommended courses of action informed by the DEI Audit to address racial, gender, age and economic inequities and disparities.



## DEI Implementation

DEI strategic action plan execution support to drive the County towards its stated mission to eradicate inequities that have been identified..





# Methodology



## Interviewees

11 groups  
contacted

9 focus groups  
scheduled

~39 participants



## Timing

60-minute  
sessions

November 2021  
December 2021  
January 2022



## Location

Virtual Meeting  
via Zoom  
Platform



## Questions

Five focus areas:

1. Background/purpose
2. Challenges
3. Impact of DEI
4. Project expectations
5. Implementation readiness



# Key Assessment Takeaways Current-State



- Efforts are being made to get County employees onboard with DEI initiatives.
- Stakeholders would like to align County efforts with changing demographics of the County.
- There is a desire to grow shared knowledge around DEI.
- There is concern about politicizing the effort.
- There is a need for effective communications across diverse multilingual communities.
- The community has a lack of trust in the County government due to historical interactions and policy.
- More data is needed to inform decision making.
- DEI training and inclusive hiring practices are needed for leadership and HR.
- The various DEI Committees could be more diverse. There is a need for how to have inclusive conversations.
- There are many DEI Committees who need better defined missions and coordination with other committees.
- Staffing has been a challenge exacerbated by the pandemic.

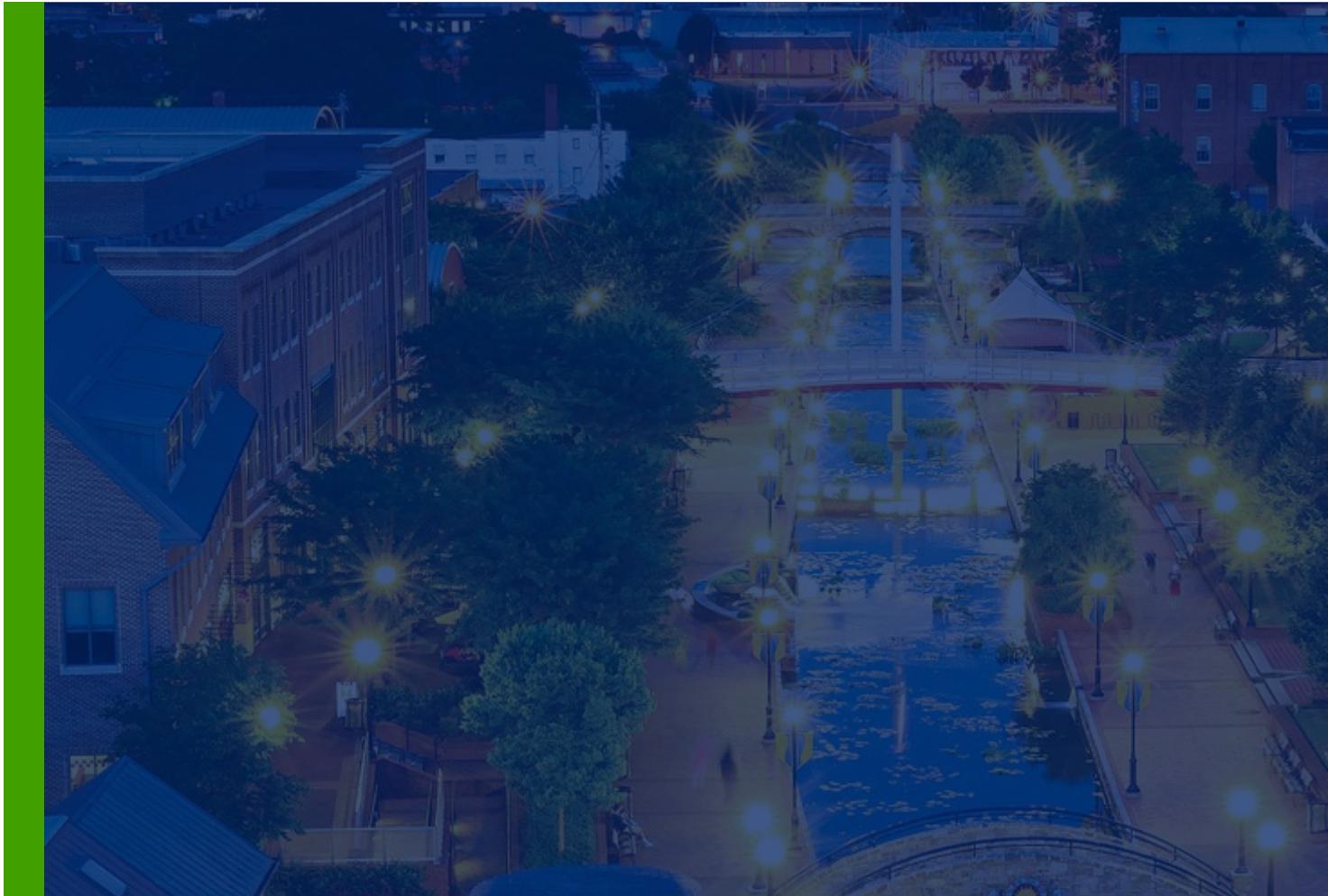


# Key Assessment Takeaways Future-State



## Interviewees want...

- An equitable, diverse and inclusive workplace for County employees
- More opportunity offered to more diverse groups within the community
- More diverse hiring process
- Leadership and management training
- DEI training and evaluation of efforts
- Better communication and updates on the DEI initiative





## Common Themes – What We Heard

Everyone is an important part of this work.

Community has historically been a “bedroom” community that has stayed the same. Sense of belonging has needed to grow.

I want people to feel that they are part of the process and outcome. They need to believe this is a “heartfelt” issue!

How does my role tie into the DEI outcome?

People don’t have the same degree of interest as they did after George Floyd.

Where can we have the most impact with the employer and interact with the community?



# Interview Details



K.L. SCOTT  
& ASSOCIATES  
ANALYTICS ANALYSIS ADVICE



# 1. Organizational Background

## Summary of Comments

- County Executive, Jan Gardner, decided to make equity and inclusion part of the County strategic plan.
- The County has committed to addressing specific actions in the County budget in order to take steps for fully implementing an action plan.
- The County Library has its own established DEI workgroup with goals and objectives, separate from the County, ready for implementation.
- The Human Relation Commission consists of 15-20 County staff members which started meeting January 2021.
- The Human Relation Commission developed a DEI strategic plan to provide guidance and support and create a framework and recommendations.
- There is an Equity Inclusion Leadership Team that has five specific actionable recommendations:
  1. Hire Equity and Inclusion officer (Michael Hughes) and establish office
  2. Modify hiring practices—Employee demographics should mirror County demographics
  3. Award contracts to qualified diverse businesses
  4. Provide professional workforce development opportunities
  5. Expand business support services
- The Equity Inclusion Leadership Team has one Hispanic and one Asian representative, and the rest of the members are African American.
- The Equity Inclusion Leadership Team recruitment was done based on relationships including partnerships, recommended volunteers and community members.

## Summary of Comments

- The Fire Chief is committed to diversity, equity, and inclusion for the County and would like personnel to mirror the demographics of the County. The fire department participates in the Frederick County DEI Employee Committee.
- The hiring process for an EMT takes about 18 months including training, interviews, background checks, and candidates are not completing the process. It can be a challenge for recruitment and retention.
- The County Council sponsored equity legislation to hire an Equity Officer.
- The County Council sees the need to develop legislation through the lens of equity and the importance of DEI.
- The Frederick County Government Alliance on Race and Equity (GARE) Committee members were selected in September 2021 by Michael Hughes because all have a passion for DEI work.
- The GARE Committee serves and works with lower income communities with the goals of professional development, creating DEI champions, and developing programs with lasting impact.
- The Frederick County DEI Employee Committee was formed more than two years ago with the goals of improving metrics around DEI, tracking employee training needs, recruitment and retention training, and providing mental health support and mentoring to employees.
- The Frederick County Miscellaneous Staff members bring more than 10 years working with the County on workforce development, human resources and economic development. This group's goals are to provide DEI education for all County Employees, recruitment and retainment training, increase DEI Awareness, acceptance, and accountability, and support local minority small businesses.



# 1. Organizational Background

Pros	Cons
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Michael Hughes, the Equity and Inclusion Officer, was hired, and the Equity and Inclusion Office was established based on the recommendations made in the Human Relation Commission's framework.</li><li>The Equity and Inclusion Leadership Team provided the framework, actions, and timeline, including who is responsible for various actions, and the budget to implement actions.</li><li>The Frederick Library has already started its own DEI workgroup and efforts and believes it is ready for implementation.</li><li>Michael Hughes actively communicates with many of the working groups and committees. He has relationships with many of the committee members.</li><li>Frederick County DEI Committees have similar primary goals.</li><li>There are many groups and committees focusing on DEI, and they have members who are passionate about implementation of DEI programming and efforts.</li><li>All interviewees are interested in<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Improving County's workforce from DEI perspective</li><li>Celebrating inclusion</li><li>Changing the image that Frederick County because it is not diverse, not reflected on workforce, website, and messaging (communication)</li></ul></li><li>Diversity for interviewees means - race, gender, ethnicity, sexuality, culture, and correcting historical inequities.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>The Frederick County DEI Committees have goals, and there needs to be coordination and streamlining of efforts.</li><li>Frederick County staff/employees do not reflect the diversity in the County (race and ethnicity).</li><li>The Equity and Inclusion Leadership Team started with almost 40 organizations. The size of the organization can make it challenging to move things forward.</li><li>There are disagreements around the purpose and desired outcomes of the Equity and Inclusion Leadership Team.</li><li>The Frederick County Library's DEI initiative is different than the County's.</li><li>The County has historically been a community that has stayed the same. Sense of belonging has needed to grow.</li><li>The Frederick County Miscellaneous DEI Group is not a formal DEI committee and therefore do not meet regularly.</li></ul>



## 2. Challenges to DEI Efforts

Summary of Comments	Summary of Comments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Frederick County is very diverse. The County labor force is not as diverse as the community.</li><li>There are growing tensions and calls for action in the community, but there is a challenge with getting the whole workforce behind this initiative.</li><li>There were challenges in developing the DEI strategic plan and narrowing the scope of the document.</li><li>There is a need for data related to DEI efforts. The County Library would like its own DEI audit.</li><li>There is a need for more training:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>How to write job descriptions</li><li>Path for promotion from within</li><li>Succession planning</li><li>Job performance evaluation</li></ul></li><li>There needs to be accountability following trainings.</li><li>Some interviewees indicated that the topic is politically divisive and there is an interest in being politically neutral.</li><li>The Equity and Inclusion Leadership Team could be more diverse.</li><li>Regular Human Relation Commission meetings stopped in April 2021.</li><li>COVID-19 had complicated DEI committee programming and logistics.</li><li>There is no formal recruitment and retention process.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Frederick County needs to take the larger conversation around DEI and translate it to the local level to its projects and county wide goals in terms of DEI approach to one cohesive project.</li><li>Communication of DEI efforts, purpose, and importance internally (workforce) and externally (community) is one of the biggest challenges.</li><li>Communicating to County employees' opportunities to do DEI work personally, professionally and in the community.</li><li>A survey showed that the perception around DEI is lowest among white men. The biggest challenge is how to incorporate more white men employed in the County to view DEI issues as "our" problems.</li><li>HR's role is avoiding discrimination and lawsuits:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Sees a misalignment of what HR is responsible for</li><li>Wants assistance with outreach efforts</li><li>Sees the need for more tailored messages for diverse groups</li></ul></li><li>Frederick County has permitted a "liberal loose" hiring mentality. Hiring only existing employees.</li><li>Some interviewees indicated an interest in expanding the reach of DEI programming to address the impact of climate change on people and communities of color.</li><li>Interviewees want to build support for the projects and to teach people how to be aware.</li></ul>



## 2. Challenges to DEI Efforts

Pros	Cons
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Interviewees recognize there are challenges to implementing DEI initiatives.</li><li>There is a concentrated effort to focus on hiring process.</li><li>Michael Hughes has worked closely with the Library and is very supportive of its DEI efforts.</li><li>Frederick County DEI Committees agree on the need for DEI to be in the forefront of County strategic planning in order to address historical inequities and inequality.</li><li>All interviewees understand the challenges to DEI efforts exists and it will take various approaches to achieve outcomes.</li><li>There is a shortage of staff meaning there are job opportunities for new candidates.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Difficulty acquiring the buy-in of the entire workforce for DEI efforts</li><li>Ineffective communication of DEI efforts</li><li>Employees do not know the Employee Committee and other DEI committees exist</li><li>HR is not clear of its role in DEI County efforts and wants direction.</li><li>Hiring and recruitment mentality exists that hinders diverse hiring practices.</li><li>Communication of benefits and opportunities DEI efforts will have for Frederick County workforce and the communities it serves.</li><li>There is tension from diverse leadership styles and personality conflicts.</li><li>There is a lack of updated data to inform decision making.</li><li>DEI efforts can be seen as political. There is a need for guidance on how to depoliticize DEI efforts.</li><li>No shared knowledge on terminology as it relates to diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) and equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI).</li><li>Some interviewees indicated that they are not able to secure and attract diverse candidates. Many candidates are white males.</li><li>The hiring process at the County can be cumbersome, and candidates drop out in the middle of the process.</li><li>There is a perceived lack of trust in the County government from underserved populations.</li></ul>



### 3. Anticipated Impact of DEI Efforts

Summary of Comments	Summary of Comments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Some interviewees indicated a desire to see a formal mentoring program established.</li><li>Interviewees expressed the following desired outcomes of DEI efforts:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>More people of color interviewed and hired in Frederick County (including in leadership positions)</li><li>Improved business economy.</li><li>Diverse decision making.</li><li>Diversity in contracts allowing new, minority-owned small businesses to win contracts.</li><li>Affordable housing and accessible transportation for all County residents.</li><li>More diverse workforce throughout the County.</li><li>Decrease in disparities in healthcare.</li><li>Space to be able to talk about racism and have the structure to address and resolve it (policy, procedures, etc.).</li><li>Comfortable space for diverse staff.</li><li>Increased awareness of employment opportunities at the County.</li><li>Increased participation in community events.</li><li>Understanding and integration of DEI values and principles in the County's daily work.</li><li>More transparency and communication across the board.</li><li>Stronger workforce support and community buy-in.</li></ul></li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Interviewees expressed the following desired outcomes of DEI efforts (continued):<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Employment opportunities for everyone with skills and abilities.</li><li>Increased community comfort towards government regarding issues related to DEI.</li><li>Community members engaged in decision making.</li><li>Increased Frederick County employee and HR staff training.</li><li>More effective, practical, equitable, and diverse recruitment strategies.</li><li>Culture among the workforce who values and sees short- and long-term benefits of DEI.</li><li>Establishment of a DEI framework addressing (as stated from stakeholder's) "Good Ol' Boys Club" mentality within Frederick County.</li><li>Personal, professional, and community growth.</li></ul></li></ul>



### 3. Anticipated Impact of DEI Efforts

Pros	Cons
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Interviewees see the DEI efforts made internally directly impacting the overall County (externally).</li><li>These efforts increase in the County's economy and social services including housing, public transportation, and healthcare.</li><li>The Equity and Inclusion Leadership Team knows it needs help with key initiatives in order to create impact internally and externally.</li><li>Some interviewees interest in proactively creating a more welcoming environment.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>The County does not have control over the school system.</li><li>There are not inclusive and diverse interviewing processes in place.</li><li>The County lacks essential training on work culture, job performance evaluation, succession planning</li><li>The make up of leadership and upper management does not look like or reflect that of the diverse community.</li><li>The Equity and Inclusion Leadership Team does not want to include the Justice system and police system in their DEI efforts.</li><li>People currently don't have the language and comfort to engage in difficult conversations concerning DEI and inequities.</li><li>Stakeholder's comments- "Good Ol Boys Club" mentality exists and hinders effective and diverse hiring practices.</li><li>Unable to recruit females to EMT positions.</li><li>Neighboring jurisdiction pay higher for some positions making recruitment harder.</li><li>It is expensive to live in Frederick County meaning it can be challenging to offer competitive pay.</li></ul>



## 4. Expectations of KLS&A's role in relation to DEI efforts

Summary of Comments	Summary of Comments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>The Frederick County DEI Committee's goal is to implement the remaining 5 recommendations provided by the Equity Inclusion Leadership Team.</li><li>Interviewees would like to work with Michael Hughes and provide him with any needed support.</li><li>The DEI Plan should position the County as a leader in DEI.</li><li>There is interest in changing the perceptions of working for the County and make it a desired place to work.</li><li>There is a need to highlight the wins with DEI work as they happen in order to show progress.</li><li>Guidance on the Human Relation Commission's role is needed.</li><li><i>KLS&amp;A</i> should provide:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Guidance on encouraging employees to adopt DEI principles</li><li>Assistance with change management</li><li>Realistic and achievable milestones</li><li>Feedback on the County's ideas</li><li>Review to ensure the final document is comprehensive of all types of diversity</li><li>Different perspectives on recommendations</li><li>Guidance on accountability and how to do it</li><li>Best practices and resources on how best to communicate:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Hiring systems and procedures</li><li>Development of job descriptions</li><li>Workforce development procedures and initiatives</li><li>Inclusive employment recruitment and retention strategies</li></ul></li></ul></li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><i>KLS&amp;A</i> should provide (continued):<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Relevant DEI qualitative and quantitative resources (metrics and data)</li><li>Project timeline and deliverables</li><li>Training metrics to measure improvement and experiences</li><li>Clear communication</li><li>Short-term strategies that can be completed by everyone reinforcing that "everyone is important part of this work"</li><li>Best practices on hiring process for diverse candidate pool</li><li>Help with development of referral and mentoring program</li><li>Keep stakeholders updated on process, provide recommendations, current assessment and action steps</li></ul></li></ul>



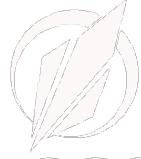
## 4. Expectations of KLS&A's role in relation to this DEI effort

Pros	Cons
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• One of the most urgent recommendations has already been completed—the hiring of Equity and Inclusion Officer (Michael Hughes) and an established and funded Equity and Inclusion Office.</li><li>• There is a lot of interest in supporting Michael Hughes.</li><li>• Accountability is important to interviewees.</li><li>• Interviewees see themselves as part of the solution and want to be actively involved in the work that is needed to meet outcomes.</li><li>• Many interviewees agree that knowledge of best practices and resources are essential to reach DEI project goals.</li><li>• Clear and consistent communication are important to interviewees.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Interviewees had no clear understanding of KLS&amp;A's contracting role and deliverables.</li><li>• Interviewees indicated that not everyone is on the same page with what is expected from this DEI effort.</li></ul>



## 5. Tools Needed to Implement DEI Strategy

Summary of Comments	Pros	Cons
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>County leaders need to support the DEI recommendations and strategic plan in order to be successful.</li><li>Tools are needed to measure performance (qualitative and quantitative metrics) related to the DEI strategy.</li><li>Some interviewees indicated that they would like a timeline for implementing DEI efforts.</li><li>Resources needed to help promote understanding and buy-in from Frederick County employees.</li><li>Interviewees would like to receive updates, outcomes, information, and materials electronically as well as in person.</li><li>Regular meetings are necessary for internal support (Frederick County employees) and to share the initiative externally (community).</li><li>Support from local radio talk shows with diverse audiences could be helpful in getting buy in from the community.</li><li>Sharing information and materials through emails or a shared file server (such as Google Docs) could help keep interviewees apprised of project progress.</li><li>Sharing information with leadership first and then disseminating to staff members will ensure buy in at the executive level.</li><li>One interviewee indicated a micro video could be a great way to connect with employees via intranet.</li><li>Emails should come from a known sender in order to get attention.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Interviewees would like regular updates on progress.</li><li>Interviewees would like to be inclusive and collaborative with this process.</li><li>There is a desire to measure and report progress.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>The audience of communications efforts needs to be defined. There are mixed opinions on whether this initiative should be widely promoted among the public.</li><li>One interviewee indicated that the current communication vehicles used by the County are outdated and the additional effort to reach underserved communities is not taken.</li><li>Emails from unknown senders are often overlooked.</li></ul>



# Next Steps

1

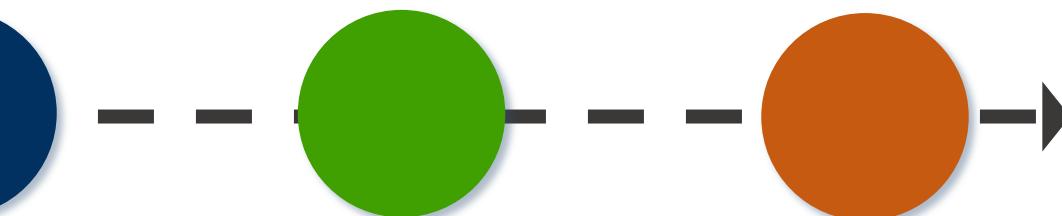
2

3

Present  
Stakeholder  
Interview  
Report

Conduct  
Survey

Complete  
Audit  
Report



## Appendix A: Interviewees

- Working with the County, KLS&A identified the following focus group participants:

### **Internal Stakeholders**

HR Director

Equity Officer

Fire Chief

Frederick County GARE DEI Committee

Frederick County Employees DEI Committee

Frederick County “Miscellaneous” Members

### **External Stakeholders**

Equity Inclusion Leadership Team

Frederick County Public Library Directors

Human Relation Commission

County Council

# Appendix B

## Current State Analysis

DRAFT

# Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Current State Analysis/Audit Report

Presented To: Frederick County, MD  
April 22, 2022

# Agenda

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	Summary Report.....	5
	Demographic Summary.....	7
	SOAR Analysis.....	9
	Recommendations.....	11
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# Executive Summary



## Frederick County Overview

- Government Structure: County Charter
- Departments: 21
- Population: Approximately 259,547
- Demographics
  - ~72% Caucasian
  - ~10% African-American/Black
  - ~8% Hispanic/Latino
  - ~5% Asia/Asian-American
  - ~3% Other



## Analysis - Areas of Focus

- Staff Recruitment
- Training
- Internal Operations, Policies, and Governance
- Community Outreach



## Current State Summary Analysis

### Findings

- DEI committee formed 2019
- Compensation policy last updated 2021
- Evidence of coaching
- Lack of equity policies
- No evidence of revised job descriptions
- No evidence of documented recruitment strategy
- No evidence of leadership or compliance training
- Personnel manual last update 2015

### Recommendations

- Update personnel manual – bi-annually
- Develop an inclusive recruitment strategy
- Expand DE&I trainings to key stakeholders
- Provide DE&I Awareness to staff and leaders
- Establish a centralized DE&I resource repository
- Review existing County policies through a DE&I lens
- Leverage DE&I community feedback to develop actionable activities

### Next Steps

- Develop County's DE&I mission, vision and values statement
- Align County initiatives with strategic goals
- Develop a DE&I action plan and strategy

# Summary Report

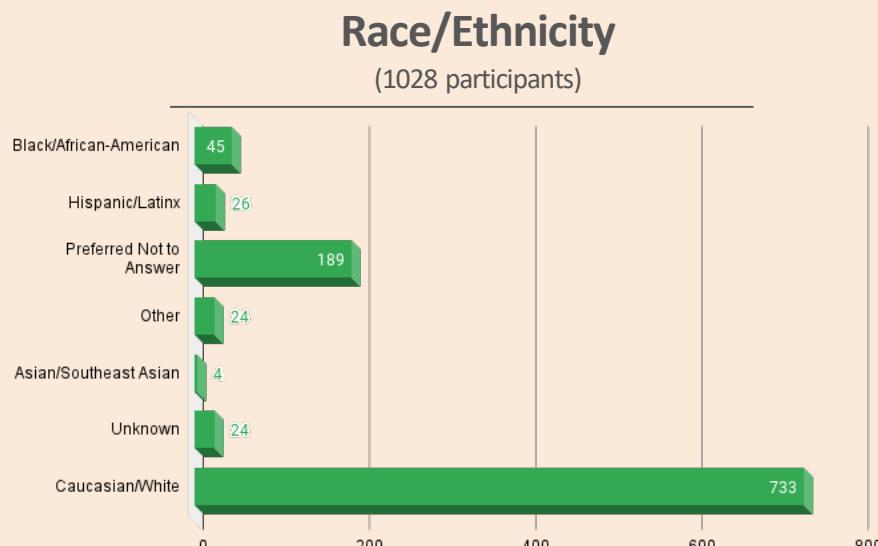
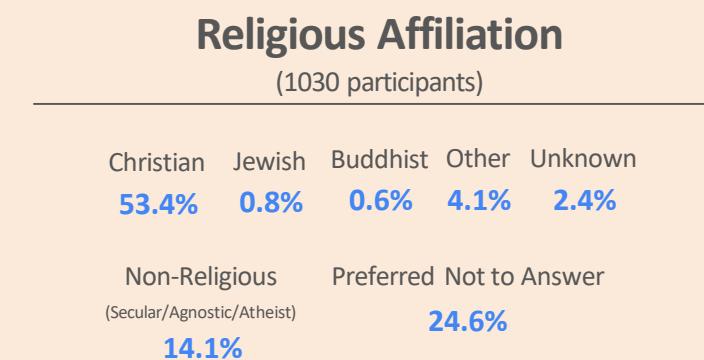
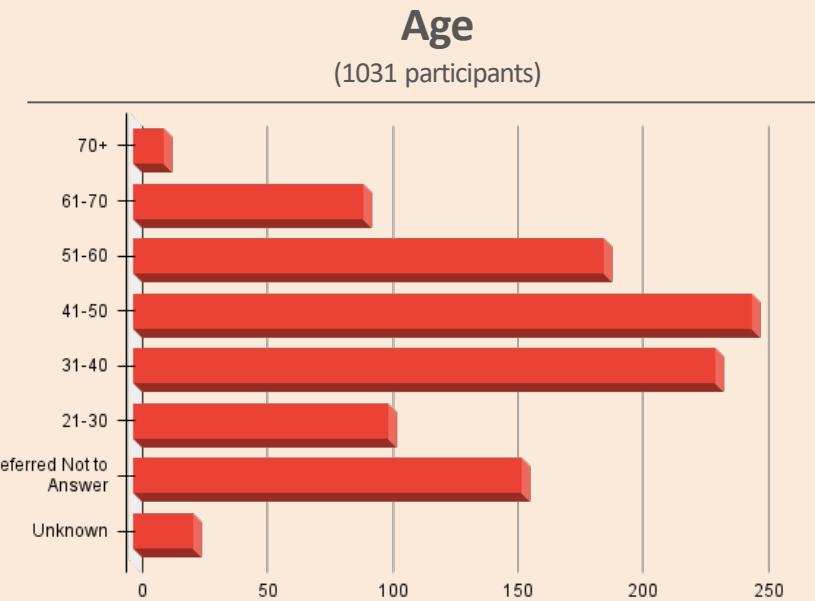
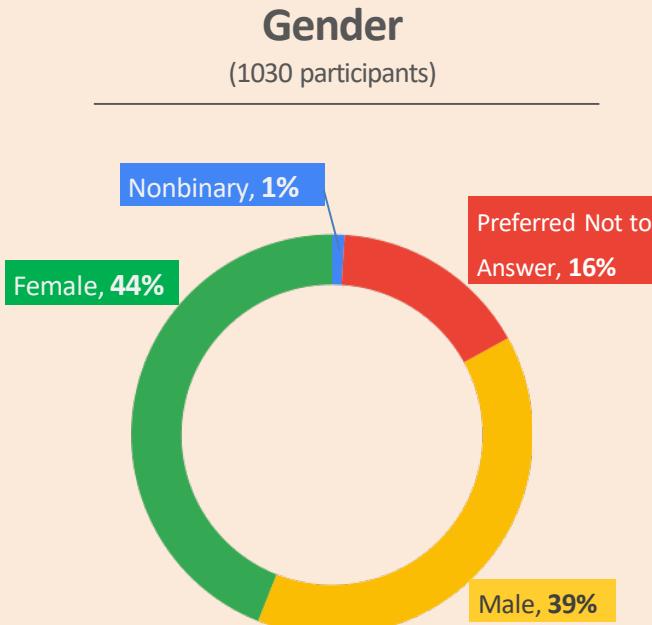
**2,703 Frederick County MD employees received a  
DE&I Maturity Assessment™ Survey.**

**1,055 Responded.**

# Demographic Summary

# Demographics of the DE&I Maturity Assessment Participants

QUANTITATIVE DATA BASED ON 1055\* PARTICIPANTS



### Sexual Orientation

(1031 participants)

Orientation	Percentage
Asexual	7.6%
Bisexual	2.5%
Gay/Lesbian	0.9%
Heterosexual	62.8%

Category	Percentage
Other	1.1%
Unknown	2.3%
Preferred Not to Answer	22.7%

\*Note: there are instances where some participants skipped a survey statement. Actual number of participants is cited above in each section.

# SOAR Analysis



## **Strengths: What can we build on?**

- Expand the framework, actions and timeline developed by the Equity and Inclusion Leadership Team
- Explore synergies with the DE&I workgroup established by the Frederick County Public Library
- Implement intentional and inclusive hiring efforts
- Strategic, impactful and holistic DE&I efforts (i.e., economy, housing, education, public transportation and healthcare)

## **Opportunities: What are our stakeholders asking for?**

- Coordination and streamlining of DE&I efforts internally and across entities/departments
- Increase diversity (race and ethnicity) amongst staff/employees
- Identify opportunities to increase a sense of belonging within communities
- Transparency and communication on diverse hiring plans and initiatives
- Provide DE&I training opportunities on DEI Foundations, psychological safety, allyship, career pathing, and mentoring to promote a sense of belonging
- Equip key stakeholder and leaders on how to have brave conversations with staff

## **Aspirations: What do we care deeply about?**

- Clear and consistent communications on the County's DE&I efforts
- Promote opportunities for all
- Create a workplace where inclusivity is embraced and accepted
- Increased usage of inclusive language and practices in communications outlets, and expanded reach into underserved communications
- Keep DE&I top of mind and embedded in everyday work

## **Results: How do we know we are succeeding?**

- SOAR goals (Strengths, Opportunities, Aspiration, Results)
- Demographic makeup of employees are representative of the community
- Inclusive policies are implemented
- Employee turnover rate is less than 10%
- Leaders can provide a safe environment for brave conversations
- DE&I is part of the annual performance evaluations
- Leaders and employees are recognized for their efforts
- Training results in changed behaviors
- Increased community and staff/employee engagement

# Recommendations

# Recommendations Based on Observations and Findings

*Focused on internal operations, policy development, staff recruitment, employee training and community partnerships*

01

## Develop Standard Operating Policy & Procedures

- Develop a SOP document that details processes and procedures for hiring, training, and other internal operations
- This is a living document that will continuously be revised as process improvements arise

02

## Classification and Compensation Study

- Participate in a compensation and classification study to baseline job descriptions, career ladders, pay equity, and compensation that is competitive in the labor market.

03

## Employee Recognition Program

- Establish an employee recognition program for staff members that are change champions and impacting DE&I adoption

04

## Ongoing DE&I Training and Executive Coaching

- Establish DE&I training for onboarding new employees
- Establish annual DE&I training and certification program for existing employees
- Establish executive coaching for Management and Supervisory staff to manage and become aware of DE&I aspects such as microaggressions, unconscious bias, etc.

05

## Expand and Promote “Safe Place” for DE&I Conversations

- Establish and promote the understanding that employees to report incidents of concern without being reprimanded or ostracized



# Recommendations Based on Observations and Findings

*Focused on internal operations, policy development, staff recruitment, employee training, and community partnerships*

06

## DE&I Presence Internally & on Public Website

- Develop content on the website that is dedicated to DE&I and builds internal and external stakeholder awareness of DE&I activities and accomplishments
- Establish one formal committee with a clear & concise purpose

07

## DE&I Knowledge Repository

- Centralize documentation that provides best practices, articles, training content that is accessible to County staff to promote self-pace learning

08

## County DE&I Policy Detailed Review

- Administer a detailed policy review across all departments to identify any potential bias or inequities present in the content, wording or execution of the policy

09

## Streamline Recruiting Process

- Establish a uniformed process for recruiting and retaining staff across all departments

10

## Establish a Mentoring Program for New Hires

- Ensure success of new hires by establishing a mentorship program that provides ongoing support and coaching

11

## Expand Community Surveys

- Expand current community feedback surveys to be proactive in its support of community needs
- Provide a continuous loop to develop activities to improve DE&I

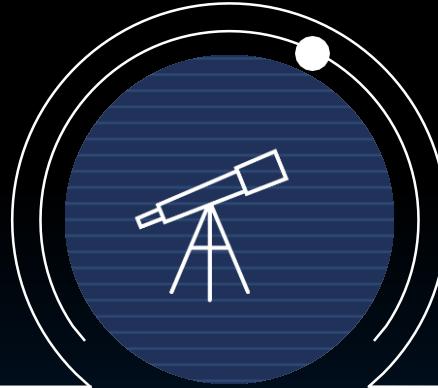


# Next Steps

# Next Steps



Completed Current State Assessment –  
SOAR & Recommendations



Collapse the DE&I Vision,  
Mission, and Value Statement



Prioritize Strategic Plan  
Goals and Initiatives

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# Appendix C

## Subcommittee Charges

# Subcommittee Charges

A series of subcommittees were established to address each phase of the employment experience for FCG personnel. Each Subcommittee made recommendations to apply an equity lens to the efforts listed below.

## Recruitment

- o Develop an employee recruitment system that communicates to prospective candidates FCG's value for and commitment to advancing DEIB
- o Develop an employee recruitment system that increases the diversity of our pool of candidates
- o Develop an employee recruitment system that reduce occurrences of bias on the part of decision-makers

## Hiring

- o Develop processes and procedures that will be applied institutionally that communicate FCG's commitment to DEIB
- o Develop culturally competent processes and procedures that will be promoted and applied institutionally
- o Develop processes and procedures that are designed to eliminate biases and barriers; helping to ensure that the best candidates are selected for the position

## Onboarding

- o Resolutely communicate FCG's commitment to inclusion and belonging for each new employee
- o Provides a foundational knowledge of DEIB for personnel
- o Invites and encourages DEIB engagement and learning

## Inclusion/Belonging/Retention/Exit

- o Develop a methodology for assessing FCG's climate of inclusion and belonging
- o Assist in developing trainings that advance Inclusion/Belonging/Retention
- o Design a system for conducting stay/exit interviews in a manner that assists with retention

## Building DEI into the Performance Evaluation Process

- o Develop a method for incorporating DEIB into FCG's Performance Evaluation Process
- o Develop an implementation strategy to support the established method
- o Develop a set of DEIB core competencies for performance metrics

## Data Team

- o Develop a methodology for collection, analysis and utilization of data that can be applied institutionally
- o Build a DEIB case for making FCG a data driven institution
- o Describe benefit of and approach for bringing qualitative data alongside quantitative data

## Policy team

- o Conduct research to identify best practices for reviewing institutional policies and procedures through an equity lens
- o Design an ongoing review process that ensures every FCG policy is examined biennially through an equity lens
- o Establish and maintain a diverse DEIB policy review team; drawing upon lived experience and training to effectively evaluate policies

## Training Team

*(working in conjunction with other subcommittees)*

- o Assist in developing training delivery methods across FCG's workforce
- o Assist in developing a communication campaign to promote the Program
- o Help to create engaging learning opportunities that advance cultural competence and professional development