

Strategic Lean Project Report

Improvements in Respect and Inclusion

Agency: Office of Financial Management

Partners and Customers: OFM Staff and all Washington state agencies

Project Impact

There was an 8% increase in OFM staff who believed they were respected and included from the Respect and Inclusion Survey question (*"Staff are respectful to those who are different from them."*) conducted in the first part of 2019 compared to the fall 2019 State Employee Engagement Survey question (*"At my workplace, I feel valued for who I am as a person."*). In a January 2020 workforce demographics resurvey effort, we also found significant increases in staff self-identifying as:

- Having a disability (from 3.3% to 6.3%),
- African American (from 1.6% up 5.5%),
- Asian/Pacific Islander (from 4.9% to 13.7%),
- American Indian (from .5% to 1.4%),
- Hispanic/Latino (from 3.0% to 4.6%).

We hope these increases are a result of our hard work to improve culture and psychological safety and trust in our workplaces.

We used the Respect and Inclusion survey results and focus group feedback to inform and prioritize the work that our action committees conducted. This work resulted in an anti-bullying policy, meeting norms, DEI statement for job postings, DEI workshops for leaders and staff, creation of a DEI Council and DEI interview questions.

Impact to Washingtonians:

- Staff and supervisors now have a defined process to follow when they experience or witness bullying or harassment.
- Supervisors and staff can use training and workshops to build their communication skills and become allies during a conflict.
- OFM can better attract a diverse workforce by emphasizing this inclusive culture in recruitment efforts and job postings.

Project Summary

OFM conducted its first Respect and Inclusion Study in February 2019 to understand how employees perceive respect and inclusion. To develop a comprehensive overview of our workplace culture, OFM used the survey, focus groups, and an open forum to explore the following:

- What are the employee, supervisor and management attitudes, opinions, beliefs and experiences about respect and inclusion?
- What current recruitment and retention efforts foster respect and inclusion?
- What does the physical, psychological and sociological workspace look like at OFM?

Overall, most staff feel respected and welcomed. Yet, more than half feel they have few opportunities to socially interact with others who are not like themselves. Interacting with people different than you helps foster an understanding of differences and similarities. Employees also said they need coworkers and managers who listen to each other's concerns. Finally, most staff feel physically and emotionally safe.

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About 15% of the employees said they need OFM to better communicate that bullying and/or harassment is not acceptable. Staff also indicated the groups most underrepresented at OFM were people of color, people with disabilities, LGBTQ, females in leadership and millennials.

The action committees explored a number of themes that emerged from survey responses and focus groups:

- Psychological safety
- Social interaction
- Diversity, equity and inclusion, or DEI
- Leadership (advocacy, kindness, support, visibility, trust and diversity)
- Recruitment (hiring, new employee orientation and onboarding)
- Training

Summary of Action Committees:

- The DEI Council Action Committee created the governance and charter for the first OFM DEI Council. With the approval and support from executive management, a DEI work group reviewed applications and appointed staff from each division to the DEI Council.
- The Leadership and Training Committees coordinated workshops on authentic leadership and values for agency leaders and DEI training for all staff.
- The Recruitment Committee developed a new DEI statement for job postings.
- The Psychological Safety Committee proposed a new anti-bullying policy, which is under final review, and meeting norms.

Project Results



Increased the percentage of OFM staff who agree that the agency consistently demonstrated support for a diverse workforce **from 80% to 84%**.



We used staff feedback to develop a new DEI statement for job postings and DEI interview questions.



Increased the percentage of OFM staff who believe staff are respectful and value each other for who they are **from 76% to 84%** during February 2019 to October 2019.



About 100 staff attended eight focus groups with special emphasis on respect and inclusion, women in leadership, people of color, people with disabilities and people identifying as LGBTQ+.

Project Details

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