

WESP

renewal steering committee

Topic 2: Restructuring
Capture
August 2023



Project Background

The WESP Renewal Steering Committee oversees the research, design, and proposal of the new iteration of [the Workforce Equity Strategic Plan](#). In addition, [the WESP renewal structure](#) will create a process to co-design recommendations, expand engagement and ensure we center the voices of those most impacted by racial disparities in the workplace.

In the next 5 months, we are committed to deliver a **Specific, Measurable, Actionable and Accountable Strategic Plan** to be adopted by the Board of County Commissioners in December 2023.

At [the team retreat in June](#), we determined our Community Care Agreements, Decision-Making Processes, and the Steering Committee's working format throughout the WESP Renewal.

We identified 7 topic areas to address, including: Accountability, Restructuring, Retention, Training, Compensation, Practice, and Data.

This capture shares the summary of our work session on the topic 2: Restructuring. In the session, we explored the design challenge: **How might we design County structures and reporting relationships to support the efforts of the WESP and achieve Racial Justice and Equity?**

Restructuring Session Participants

Steering Committee members met at the June Key Delta Center on August 22 and 24 to discuss the second focus area topic: Restructuring.

Subject Matter Experts were invited to join the Steering Committee in designing recommendations.

SC Attendees

Ari Alberg
Joseph Almond
James Anderson
Eboney Bell
Walle Brown
Eve Buchanan
Jonathan Cruz
Andrea Damewood
Rosa Garcia
Shannon Goulter
Angel Harp
Timothy Ho
Chris Lenn
Ronald
Montgomery
Estelle Norris

Jenny O'Meara
Carlos Richard
Kalisha Stout
Arnita Tucker-McFarland
Larry Turner
Paty Vasquez Pacheco

Subject Matter Experts

JR Lilly
Sonja Ervin
Karla Hernandez
Stephen Graves
Emily Nelson
Jane Williams
Alayna Wilson
Sophie Wilson

ODE/ MIL Facilitation Team

Veronica Cano
Joy Fowler
Alejandro Juárez
Trisa Kelly
Mary Li
Erika Molina-Rodriguez
Maya Noble
Jooyoung Oh
Sam Silverman
Terralyn Wiley

Two Days At-a-glance

Day 1

Review of Main Themes

The Steering Committee's first day highlighted main themes related to restructuring that were identified at the June Retreat. We looked at the current structure of the County and discussed [key challenges](#).

Current Structure and Interactions

We identified key challenges in our current structure, what we are missing, such as roles and resources, and discussed how white supremacy characteristics are embedded in our current practices.

Ideal Model

We used different shapes and props to design an ideal model for the County's structure, considering all levels of the organization and what the relationships between them should look like.

Day 2

Circle Wisdom

We challenged our traditional white supremacy approaches to dismantling white supremacy by creating two circles: The "inner" circle discussed challenges in the current structure to identify ~10 recommendations they could agree upon. The "outer" circle were silently present to listen intently and take notes on the conversation. This allowed us to center the wisdom of those experiencing the most intersectional forms of oppression to speak with authority and be heard.

The second round allowed for the "outer" circle participants to step in and switch a seat with "inner" circle participants to balance out the two circles.

Madlib

Based on the recommendations from the Circle Wisdom, teams came up with action statements with measurable outcomes to lead us toward the future vision.





Recommended Actions

The following slides summarize the guidance the committee members prioritized for each theme.* We identified overarching themes and suggested recommended actions, identified responsible parties, and suggested measures for success.

The following recommended actions will serve as guidelines for further review and final recommendation drafting.

*[Further details about main themes and key challenges available here](#)

Four Themes from the Work Session

- Investing in equity teams
- Clarifying equity roles and responsibilities
- Enhancing structural collaboration
- Countywide accountability for equity

Investing in Equity Teams

Current State

- Twelve Equity Analysts positions on Departmental Equity Teams
- Budgetary investments in WESP funded initiatives

SC Recommended Action

Increase capacity and develop a baseline for staffing departmental equity teams.

Prioritize equity investments to develop equity teams across the County regardless of budget constraints.

Clarifying Roles and Responsibilities

Current State

- Core Competencies
- Equity and Empowerment Lens
- Departmental WESP project management
- Data Analysts and ERU

SC Recommended Action

Clarify the responsibilities and the scope of work for equity teams and identify equity responsibilities and expectations for all county position descriptions.

Structural Collaboration

Current State

- CIU Complaints Review Committee
- Departmental HR Complaints Processes
- Organizational Learning Mediation
- Departmental Equity Team Coaching and Training

SC Recommended Actions

Establish a structural collaboration between directors, HR, CIU, and equity teams to address complaints, investigations, discipline, and support.

Review HR/admin procedures and update them regularly to reflect growth, efficiency, equity, and expectations.

Countywide Accountability for Equity

Current State

- County Auditor Ombudsman Position
- Departmental Equity Committees
- WESP Renewal Committee
- WESP Committee

SC Recommended Actions

Create an equity council or an equity ombudsman team that implements tangible movement towards accountability for WESP initiatives and addresses concerns from employees.

Appendices

Details on Work Session Activities:

- Current Structure and Interactions
- Ideal Structure
- Circle Wisdom
- Madlibs

Reflection of our Current Structure

What We Did

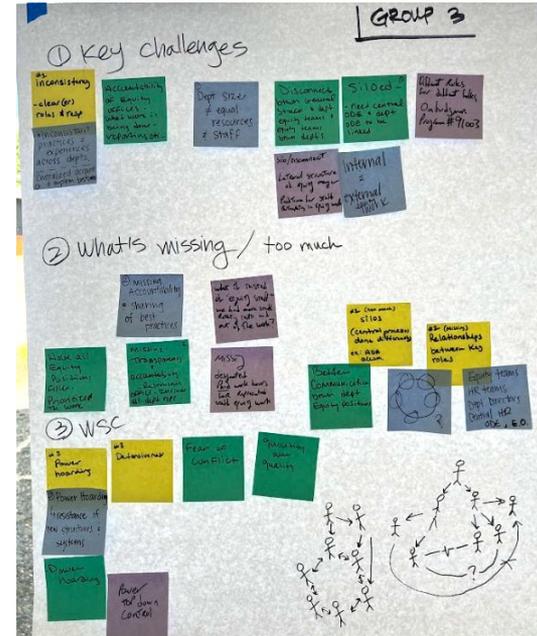
We broke into small groups to ask ourselves the questions:

- What are the key three challenges in our current structures? How might we address them?
- What is currently missing? Or what do we have too much of?
- What are the white supremacy cultural characteristics embedded in our current structure?

What We Learned

Key challenges

- Insufficient acknowledgement of racism and commitment to address racism from leadership across the organization.
- Equity work across the county is decentralized and siloed leading to inconsistent budget investment in equity.
- Lack of clarity and transparency regarding decision making and too much decision making power concentrated at the top.



Reflection of our Current Structure

What is Missing

- Consistent and transparent application of policies and practices for executive and senior leadership.
- Lack of clarity on the relationship between key county roles. (i.e. COO, CDEO, Chief of Staff, CHRO and Dept. Directors)
- Siloed structure leads to inconsistent application of equity principles, practices and policies across departments.
- Lack of transparency in assessment and reporting is a barrier to understanding what practices and policies are working.

White supremacy cultural characteristics embedded in our current structure

- Lack of accountability for leadership leads to inconsistent implementation of equity practices and policies, and duplication of efforts.
- Inconsistent prioritization of equity across the organization leading to varying commitment to address racism and disparities.
- Lack of role and relationship clarity between executive leaders and equity managers adds to inconsistency in roles, decision making power and actions across departments.

Ideal Structure: Roles

Equity Manager

- Need more resources, eg. staff, budget
- Dotted lines from Equity Managers to everyone; not power or authority but collaboration

Department Director

- Create accountability for department directors: Equity Manager and Director have equivalent status
- If it is left to Director to make final decision, there has to be accountability for that decision if it runs counter to Equity and HR Manager

Central HR

- Move out of DCM/out from under COO into its own department, reporting directly to Chair
- Increase collaboration with CIU, Equity Managers, etc.
- Should have authority over Department HR for accountability

Department HR

- Department HR and Equity Managers having same requirements
- Move HR Managers into Central HR
- The way Central HR and Department HR communicates has to change

Ideal Structure: Roles

Chair/COO

- A staff grading system for the Chair, COO, and Commissioners
- What about the bottleneck of power in the COO/Chair area?
 - shared power structure of final decision-making means asking the Chair to cede power
- COO as a Department Director poses conflict of interest, add a DCM Director

ODE

- The Department Equity Offices and issues are centered and supported by ODE, CHR, and CIU
- Move Equity Managers into ODE

Equity Ombudsman

- Ombudsman or investigator general: neutral position to keep the county accountable and active in equity work and with set goals (e.g., resource allocation, policy development)
 - Equal authority as the Chair, Commissioners, and COO

CIU

- CIU doesn't have a shift in reporting structuring but if the COO was only the COO, would go back to how CIU came to be originally

Ideal Structure: Equity & Inclusion

Missing Connections

- We don't know a lot about the Sheriff, Auditor, or DA offices; having relationships would help include them so they're not their own entity
- Non-Departmental Office equity staff often don't show up in this process, also need to be held accountable
- Unions and ERGs need to be embedded in everything

Equity Values & Principles

- The County is built upon a flawed foundation of white supremacy culture, genocide, slavery; anything built on top of this will be fundamentally flawed
- How do we apply the Equity and Empowerment Lens to the front of the discussion rather than the end to give the facade this is a fair and equitable process?
- Cultural competency is impossible, cultural humility means you need to frame your decisions for the culture that you are impacting with your decisions

Ideal Structure: Accountability & Community

Power & Accountability

- Who is holding us accountable and making sure equity shows up in everything we do?
- Is it that the more power you have, the more accountability you have?
- From the top of the food chain all the way down, especially with how resources are allocated, what voices are/aren't present in the room around policy
- Reframe from ideal structure to sources of power: how holds the power and who should be sharing that?
- When you are the keepers of countywide data and you are in the department that holds one of these positions (eg. COO), there are perceptions of how the data is used; we need more transparency

Collaboration & Communication

- Get away from hierarchy structure and move into relationship, recognize that communication flows in and out like a tide
- Shared vision and priority for everyone with stronger collaboration, communication, and accountability
- We're all siloed, how do we uplift best practices? There is amazing work happening in departments, but we don't get to share it out.
- We need more collaboration between all the parts: HR, CIU, ODE, chair
- Build communication between Equity managers to facilitate collaboration.

Circle Wisdom: Eight themes for recommendations

- Baseline of support for Staffing across Equity Teams
- Baseline of support for Budget across Equity Teams
- Updated position descriptions for equity roles / tasks
- HR Structure
- Countywide council for Equity to inclusively drive WESP/Equity efforts
- Supporting /Enhancing the CIU
- Support for an Equity Ombudsman
- Tangible movement toward Accountability

Madlib! (1/6)

What We Did

We worked in small groups to fill in Madlib-style worksheets that would define our major themes by a practice, a data measure, and an impact/outcome. We used the eight recommendations from the Circle Wisdom activity to guide us toward actionable steps Multnomah County can take to achieve our desired outcomes.

What We Learned

To transform the County structure, there must be significant changes to position descriptions, class specifications, mandated collaboration for Equity Managers, HR Managers, and Department Directors. We need an oversight body with the authority to hold us accountable to equity work.

Multnomah county will _____
Come up with a practice

as measured by _____
Come up with a data measure

so that _____.
Add impact/ outcome

See an Example here

The County will increase the number of staff responsible for training and learning specific to ILWR as measured by new positions created and filled so that every employee experiences cognitive behavioral therapy related to white supremacy culture or internalised oppression

Madlib! (2/6)

Support for Staffing across Equity Teams

- Provide minimum equity staffing for each department as measured by Equity Manager and Equity Analyst positions in all departments so that [they have] the resources and tools to adequately implement the WESP.
- Add a number of FTE Equity Analysts and Equity Manager, measured by completing assessments in 2024-2025 so that there is parity to equity manager staffing to address equity concerns and implementation of the WESP in all County agencies.

Support for Budget across Equity Teams

- Invest in developing a baseline equity staffing ratio, as measured by equity positions to department FTE so that there is adequate support and consultation within the department.
- Invest in minimum staffing guaranteed to each department, as measured by every department having what they need independent of the budget so that it doesn't fluctuate based on the department's budget for the year.
- Invest in creating a baseline model for staffing equity teams across the County as measured by a dedicated budget to fund positions to that there is better consistency of equity practices.

Madlib! (3/6)

Updated Position Descriptions for Equity Roles/Tasks

- Add/clarify equity roles and responsibilities for each equity team, as measured by updated position descriptions, classifications, and class specifications so that there is better consistency of equity practices across the county.
- Set expectations in all county position descriptions, including director level positions, as measured by all county position descriptions so that we have consistency in roles, set expectations, support inclusive recruitment practices, and promote accountability.
- Develop consistent class specifications/position descriptions for HR Manager, Director, and Equity Manager to reflect partnering between roles, as measured by updated class specs for Equity Manager are more reflective of work for all departments so that clear expectations and role clarity of how all three positions work together and are accountable to WESP work.
- Develop consistent class specifications/position descriptions for recruitment, including Equity Manager having authority to make recommendations that must be adhered to in Director's decision making process, as measured by having a class specification for Equity Managers written, reviewed and approved within 6-months of receiving recommendations so that depts all have the same baseline for Equity Manager's roles/tasks across agency.

Madlib! (4/6)

Equity Manager/HR/Director Collaboration

- Require collaboration between equity and HR teams and managers, as measured by reclassifications and updated position descriptions for Equity Manager and HR Managers, so that equity lens and practices and manager are infused in HR processes.
- Require the coordination and consultation of equity staff, HR Managers, and Directors/managers in areas of retention, hiring, discipline, and organizational culture, as measured by 100% completion of updated class specs and position descriptions so there is equity in consistency in practices and priorities.

- Require a structural collaboration between directors, HR, CIU, and equity teams, as measured by defined and documented policies and procedures so that there is documented consistency in outcomes and clear inclusion of equity practices and decision making.

New HR Structure

- Review HR/admin procedures, update regularly to reflect growth, efficiency, equity and expectations, as measured by new HR customer service report/survey so that employees, managers, and HR teams receive prompt, reliable, equity informed responsive services.

Madlib! (5/6)

Countywide Council for Equity to Inclusively Drive WESP/Equity efforts

- Create an equity council or ombudsman team that implements tangible movement towards accountability, as measured by separation/discipline of “bad actors” so that the workplace/environment reflects safety, trust and belonging.
- The council should be independent with decision-making power
- We could be elevating the CDEO position to play the role of equity ombudsman
- Create a countywide council to drive WESP making progress towards the goals of the WESP, as measured by the deadlines set and progress reports so that we have an outside entity to hold us accountable.
- Offer an elected ombudsman position at the level of the County Chair, as measured by a filled ombudsman position by 2024 that is structured to report to voters so that they can convene a countywide council focused on driving WESP/equity efforts.

Madlib! (6/6)

Countywide council for Equity to inclusively drive WESP/Equity efforts

- Convene a countywide equity council comprised of an elders council that echoes the voices of communities of color to advise and consult senior leaders on issues/programming that impacts staff, as measured by the presence and engagement with senior leaders so that the voices and experiences of the global majority are uplifted and inform decisions.
- Convene a countywide equity council comprised of frontline staff, ERG reps, union reps, and Equity Managers, as measured by investment in council activities for FY 2025, including it in the budget and scheduling monthly meetings so that council members can collaborate and align across depts in all the stakeholder groups. Countywide reporting on the council activities resulting in them making best practices recommendations.

Thanks

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