

Countywide Equity Audit

Multnomah County shows commitment to equity; more accountability is crucial for ensuring meaningful progress



Multnomah County Auditor's Office

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Report Highlights

Multnomah County shows commitment to equity; more accountability is crucial for meaningful progress

What We Found



There are systemic issues that limit accountability and feedback



Several departments do not perform equity data analysis



There are different outcomes for employees based on their demographic groups



There is a lack of formal accountability of the Workforce Equity Strategic Plan (WESP)

Why This is Important

Without accountability and feedback, toxic behaviors can persist, harming morale and productivity. Lack of anonymous feedback stifles honest reporting, preventing issues from being addressed.

Effective equity work relies on expertise to measure progress. Without data analysis, departments can't identify disparities, evaluate the success of programs, or hold themselves accountable. This undermines the purpose of equity efforts.

Countywide, Asian employees are less likely to be supervisors, Black or African American employees are less likely to pass the trial service period and are more likely to be fired, and LGBTQIA2S+ employees are more likely to quit.

The WESP lacks clear accountability and has faced implementation challenges. This is significant because the WESP is the county's overarching plan for addressing equity. Without consistent implementation and a clearly responsible party, it risks becoming a symbolic document rather than a driver of real change.

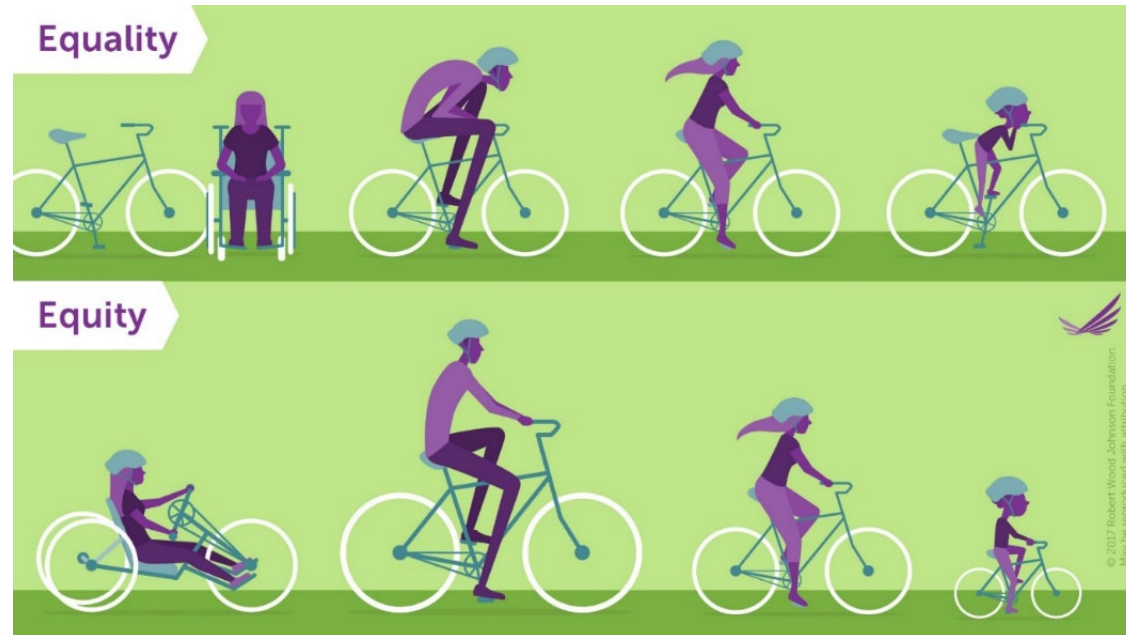
Acknowledgement

We acknowledge that the pursuit of equity is a complex and ongoing process that demands dedication, resources, and a willingness to confront challenging realities. This audit benefited greatly from the generous contributions of many individuals and groups. We express our gratitude to the staff at the Office of Diversity and Equity, department equity staff, department HR managers, union staff, and other county employees for their guidance and expertise, and the Employee Resource Groups for their passionate advocacy and insightful feedback. Your collective contributions were essential to assessing the county's progress toward equity and identifying areas for improvement.

Why does equity work matter?

Equity work is important because it helps ensure that the county serves all of its residents fairly and effectively, and that all employees are given opportunities to be successful, recognizing that historical and ongoing systems of oppression can create unequal starting points. Studies have shown that when people with different backgrounds and experiences work together, it leads to more innovation. This is especially important for communities that have been marginalized or excluded through institutional practices and power imbalances. For example, a public health agency that is culturally competent is better equipped to understand the health disparities that exist in our society. This can lead to better health outcomes for all members of the community.

The definition of equity we used for this audit recognizes that we do not all have the same advantages and we must customize our support to ensure everyone has the tools they need to thrive. A common image used when describing equity is the one below. It shows that giving everyone the same bicycle does not help if the bicycle is not customized to individual needs.



Source: Robert Wood Johnson Foundation

Examples of obstacles that prevent people from being on a level playing field include poverty, trauma, and/or discrimination based on race, gender and gender identity, sexual orientation, or disabilities. However, this list is not exhaustive. For this audit, we measured outcomes for groups when we had information available, which was for race, gender, sexual orientation, and disability status. We recognize that there are other factors at play that cannot be captured with data, and we interviewed people to add additional context to our analysis.

Equity work at Multnomah County

Multnomah County has demonstrated a commitment to equity through several key initiatives. The Board of County Commissioners has affirmed this dedication in both email communications and public statements. This commitment is further underscored by having an Office of Diversity and Equity, the presence of designated equity managers in most county departments, and high employee attendance

at equity training programs. The county also supports Employee Resource Groups, which are groups for employees to connect with others who have a shared lived experience.

Another important aspect of equity comes from the Workforce Equity Strategic Plan (WESP). In April 2018, the Board of County Commissioners adopted the first WESP. In that plan, Multnomah County Employee Resource Group leaders wrote, "We entered collectively into this process with hope and trepidation. This wasn't the first time that Multnomah County asked us to share our stories, or surveyed us for our experiences. We have seen previous efforts start and stop. And we hope and expect that this time is different."

Unfortunately, some of those fears came to pass. The 2021-2022 Multnomah County WESP Annual Report found that the county struggled to implement goals related to manager training; manager and human resource disability focused training; employee training focusing on cultural responsiveness and inclusionary practices; and reviewing job descriptions. Additionally, employees we interviewed described the painful effects of the WESP not being fully realized. However, the WESP annual report also showed some progress, including hiring equity managers, expanding employee survey questions about belonging, and incorporating cultural responsiveness, equity, and racially just practices in management-level hiring.

Then in 2023, the Office of Diversity and Equity collaborated with others at the county to develop the WESP Steering Committee to devise a new WESP. They intended it to be an addition to, rather than a replacement of, the original WESP. The Board of County Commissioners adopted it in 2024.

Employees expressed concern that this version may also fall short of full implementation. This concern led us to include WESP accountability in our audit objectives. However, because the WESP renewal process was happening during our audit, we limited our audit scope to avoid disrupting it. We interviewed WESP Renewal Steering Committee members to understand the current state of the WESP and ensure our audit complemented, rather than duplicated, ongoing efforts.

This audit is not intended to cover every aspect of equity. Based on employee interviews, our objectives became:

- Evaluate each department's progress and current standing within an equity maturity model framework.
- Identify and analyze disparities in turnover rates, wages, and management representation across demographic groups.
- Assess the WESP's goal-setting and accountability framework.
- Evaluate the adequacy of resources and support for equity initiatives and accountability.



Department Equity Assessments

Department Equity Assessments

Each department has a unique approach to equity. This makes sense since every department serves unique populations and performs distinct jobs. Even with customized equity processes for each department, there are still best practices that apply countywide. The following sections evaluate the employee outcomes and equity maturity model for each department.

Why use employee outcome measures?

A common theme we heard during audit interviews is that people are exhausted from trying to prove that different groups have different outcomes. Data analysis is beneficial because it gives people answers about these different outcomes and then the conversation can move past trying to prove that a problem exists and move forward to finding solutions.

For this audit, we analyzed human resources data from July 1, 2019 through July 1, 2024 from Workday, the county's HR and enterprise resource planning system. This time period allowed us to see trends that occurred over time, instead of looking at shorter periods that were potentially impacted by a one-time event. To ensure consistency, we utilized demographic descriptors from Workday. We acknowledge that these terms may not always be preferred. We spoke with the Multnomah County Evaluation and Research Unit to ensure we had a shared understanding of the data definitions in Workday. Additionally, we chose to show data from small groups of people because, as explained by groups such as the Native Data Transparency Project (a group which promotes accurate and authentic collecting and reporting of Indigenous data), omitting small groups from reporting is a form of erasure.

The amount of information in Workday differs based on the demographic. Some demographics have high response rates, with only 4% of employees choosing "Decline to Answer" or leaving it blank for race or ethnicity; and for gender, only 2% have "Prefer Not to Answer." However, some demographics have less information, which could limit the analyses. For example, for sexual orientation, 62% of employees selected "Prefer Not to Answer" or left it blank; and for disability status, 74% selected "I prefer not to answer", "I don't know", or left it blank.

We used multiple regressions to see if there were differences in outcomes. Those with a p-value less than 0.05 were considered statistically significant. In other words, there is a low likelihood that this difference in outcomes was due to chance. The statistically significant differences are the only ones noted in the employee outcome measures. Data in orange indicates a worse outcome for that demographic group, dark blue indicates a better outcome, and gray means that the difference in outcomes was not statistically significant.

We evaluated the following outcome measures based on suggestions from people we interviewed:

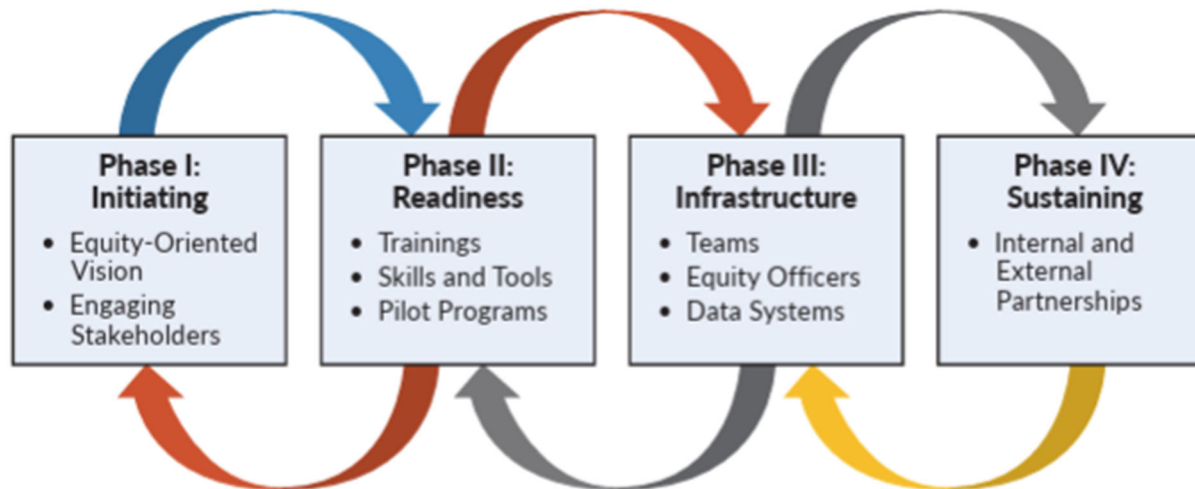
- **Rate of Being Hired 2019–2024:** This measure looks at how often each demographic group was hired. We reviewed all applicants who applied for a job opening at the county from July 1, 2019 to July 1, 2024. We only included those who were considered for the job. We did not include those who were disqualified due to things such as not meeting the minimum qualifications, failing a background check or entrance exam, or having an incomplete application. Some columns will say “no data” for this outcome measure because fewer demographics are collected during the hiring phase.
- **Rate of not Passing Trial Service Period 2019–2024:** This measure looks at how often employees from each demographic group did not pass their trial service period. We reviewed employees who worked at the county from July 1, 2019 to July 1, 2024. We counted anyone with a termination reason of “Probationary Dismissal” in Workday.
- **Rate of Being Fired 2019–2024:** This measure looks at how often each demographic group was fired. We reviewed employees who worked at the county from July 1, 2019 to July 1, 2024. We counted anyone with an involuntary termination in Workday, except those with a probationary dismissal.
- **Rate of Quitting 2019–2024:** This measure looks at how often each demographic group quit. We reviewed employees who worked at the county from July 1, 2019 to July 1, 2024. We counted anyone with a voluntary termination in Workday, except those who were retiring.
- **Rate of Being Promoted 2019–2024:** This measure looks at how often each demographic group was promoted. We reviewed employees who worked at the county from July 1, 2019 to July 1, 2024. We counted anyone with a promotion in Workday.
- **Change in Pay from 2019 to 2024:** This measure looks at the numeric change in pay from 2019 to 2024. We reviewed the same employees who worked at the county on July 1, 2019 and July 1, 2024. We converted pay to an hourly rate so that those

who changed the number of hours worked per week during that time would not skew the results. For each individual, we examined how much their pay changed from July 1, 2019 to July 1, 2024.

- **Rate of Having a Supervisory Position in 2024:** This measure looks at the percentage of employees who are supervisors. We reviewed employees who worked at the county on July 1, 2019 and July 1, 2024. We included anyone who has an employee who reports to them.

Why use the equity maturity model framework?

To guide our evaluation, we adopted the "Governing for Equity" framework developed by Dr. Benoy Jacob, the director of the community development institute at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Dr. Jacob's research explores the development and governance of cities, with a focus on public finance, the relationship between states and localities, and social equity. This framework, published by the International City/County Management Association (ICMA), provides a framework for measuring and driving progress towards equity.



Source: Dr. Benoy Jacob – Governing for equity

Dr. Jacob's model outlines four key phases:

- **Initiating Equity:** This phase involves actively creating and adopting an equity-oriented vision, and meaningfully engaging with community stakeholders on equity issues.
- **Readiness:** This phase involves the organization's readiness to implement equity initiatives.
- **Establishing an Equity Infrastructure:** This phase focuses on developing the organizational infrastructure necessary for equity implementation.
- **Sustaining Equity:** The final phase ensures the long-term success of equity initiatives by embedding them into the organization's culture and practices.

To ensure an impartial assessment of departmental equity initiatives, we used this standardized framework grounded in best practices and research. This framework provides a consistent methodology for evaluating progress, identifying strengths and areas for growth, and offering a roadmap for continued improvement. While acknowledging the unique context and goals of each department, this approach ensures fairness in our analyses and provides valuable insights for advancing equity across the county. Using an equity maturity model framework and incorporating data from the 2023 countywide employee survey, we assessed and categorized departmental equity progress.

Description of Criteria:

Each department's progress in meeting equity maturity model requirements is classified as Implemented, In Process, or Not Implemented.

- Implemented indicates successful fulfillment of these requirements, evidenced by a documented equity vision and strategic plan, consistent equity data collection and analysis, a comprehensive equity training plan, routine reporting and evaluation of equity initiatives, and integrated equity practices into decision-making processes.
- In Process signifies ongoing efforts towards meeting these requirements, with progress being made in developing an equity vision and strategic plan, implementing equity data collection and analysis, establishing a comprehensive equity training plan, tracking of equity initiatives, and integrating equity practices into decision-making.

- Not Implemented shows that the department has not yet initiated or demonstrated progress towards meeting the requirements, with key components such as those listed for the Implemented classification being absent.

In addition to the maturity model, the department's performance in specific areas is also categorized based on the 2023 countywide employee survey: Above Average, Average, or Below Average.

- Above Average signifies that the department is in the upper third for the percent of employees who reported having opportunities to provide feedback to their supervisor, feeling a strong sense of belonging within their department, and perceiving their workload as properly distributed within their unit.
- Average demonstrates that the department is in the middle third for these same measures.
- Below Average signifies that the department is in the bottom third.

	Definition	Above Average or Implemented	Average or In Process	Below Average or Not Implemented
Phase I: Initiating Equity				
Equity vision	The department has a written vision for promoting equity, diversity, and inclusion in all its activities and services.	Department has a written equity vision.	Department is developing an equity vision.	Department does not have a written equity vision.
Equity data collection and analysis	Department collects and analyzes data related to equity, including any metrics or indicators used.	Department conducts comprehensive data collection and analysis of equity data.	Department conducts limited data collection and analysis of equity data.	Department does not conduct data collection and analysis of equity data.
Phase II: Readiness				
Equity plan	The department has a comprehensive, actionable plan with goals, strategies, and accountability measures to advance equity. This plan can be a stand-alone equity strategic plan or be fully integrated into the department's overarching strategic plan.	Comprehensive equity plan is in place.	Equity plan is being developed.	No equity plan exists.
Equity training participation	Data comes from Workday and looks at the percent of employees who have taken an equity training. It does not include on-call staff, interns, limited duration, or temporary positions.	75% or more of staff have taken an equity training.	Between 50% and 75% of staff have taken an equity training.	Less than 50% of staff have taken an equity training.
Equity staff	The department has an equity manager and dedicated equity support staff.	Department has two or more dedicated equity employees, including an equity manager.	Department has one dedicated equity employee.	Department has no dedicated equity employees.

	Definition	Above Average or Implemented	Average or In Process	Below Average or Not Implemented
Phase III: Establishing an Equity Infrastructure				
Equity training plan	The department has developed comprehensive training programs and initiatives aimed at promoting equity.	Department has a comprehensive equity training plan.	Department is developing an equity training plan.	Department does not have an equity training plan.
Regular tracking of equity initiatives	How frequently the department tracks the effectiveness of its equity initiatives, including through WESP tracking.	Department regularly tracks equity initiatives.	Department infrequently tracks equity initiatives.	Department does not track equity initiatives.
Percent who say they have opportunities to provide feedback to their supervisor	Data comes from the 2023 countywide employee survey and measures the percent of employees who agree with the statement, "I have opportunities to provide feedback to my supervisor."	The department is in the upper third. For this question, to be in the upper third of departments, 92% or more of employees agreed or strongly agreed with the statement.	The department is in the middle third. For this question, to be in the middle third of departments, between 87% and 92% of employees agreed or strongly agreed with the statement.	The department is in the bottom third. For this question, to be in the bottom third of departments, less than 87% of employees agreed or strongly agreed with the statement.
Phase IV: Sustaining Equity				
Percent who say they feel like they belong in their department	Data comes from the 2023 countywide employee survey and measures the percent of employees who agree with the statement, "I feel like I belong in my department."	The department is in the upper third. For this question, to be in the upper third of departments, 84% or more of employees agreed or strongly agreed with the statement.	The department is in the middle third. For this question, to be in the middle third of departments, between 81% and 84% of employees agreed or strongly agreed with the statement.	The department is in the bottom third. For this question, to be in the bottom third of departments, less than 81% of employees agreed or strongly agreed with the statement.

	Definition	Above Average or Implemented	Average or In Process	Below Average or Not Implemented
Percent who say their work unit appropriately responds to discriminatory behavior	Data comes from the 2023 countywide employee survey and measures the percent of employees who agree with the statement, "My work unit appropriately responds to discriminatory behavior."	The department is in the upper third. For this question, to be in the upper third of departments, 85% or more of employees agreed or strongly agreed with the statement.	The department is in the middle third. For this question, to be in the middle third of departments, between 82% and 85% of employees agreed or strongly agreed with the statement.	The department is in the bottom third. For this question, to be in the bottom third of departments, less than 82% of employees agreed or strongly agreed with the statement.
Percent who say the workload in their unit is properly distributed	Data comes from the 2023 countywide employee survey and measures the percent of employees who agree with the statement, "The workload in my work unit is properly distributed."	The department is in the upper third. For this question, to be in the upper third of departments, 60% or more of employees agreed or strongly agreed with the statement.	The department is in the middle third. For this question, to be in the middle third of departments, between 53% and 60% of employees agreed or strongly agreed with the statement.	The department is in the bottom third. For this question, to be in the bottom third of departments, less than 53% of employees agreed or strongly agreed with the statement.
Equity practices are embedded in decision-making processes	The department embeds equity considerations into decision-making processes, for example, in its hiring and budgeting processes.	Department has embedded equity practices across all key decision-making processes.	Department has embedded equity practices in a few decision-making processes.	Department has not embedded equity practices in decision-making processes.

Department of Community Justice Employee Outcome Measures

		Rate of Being Hired 2019–2024	Rate of not Passing Trial Service Period 2019–2024	Rate of Being Fired 2019–2024	Rate of Quitting 2019–2024	Rate of Being Promoted 2019–2024	Change in Pay from 2019 to 2024	Rate of Having a Supervisory Position in 2024
Race or Ethnicity	African	Less Often			More Often		Larger Pay Increase	More Often
	American Indian or Alaska Native							
	Asian							
	Black or African American	More Often		More Often				
	Latino or Hispanic							
	Middle Eastern							
	Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander							
	Slavic				More Often			
	Two or More Races (Not Hispanic or Latino)							
	White							
	Decline to Answer/Blank							

Source: Auditor's Office analysis of Workday data. Note: We have noted only statistically significant differences in outcomes. Data in orange indicates a worse outcome for that demographic group, dark blue indicates a better outcome, and gray means that the difference in outcomes was not statistically significant. Statistically significant means that there is a low likelihood that the difference in outcomes was due to chance. Our analysis shows only outcomes, not their underlying causes.

Department of Community Justice

Employee Outcome Measures

		Rate of Being Hired 2019–2024	Rate of not Passing Trial Service Period 2019–2024	Rate of Being Fired 2019–2024	Rate of Quitting 2019–2024	Rate of Being Promoted 2019–2024	Change in Pay from 2019 to 2024	Rate of Having a Supervisory Position in 2024
Gender	Men							
	Transgender and Gender Diverse							
	Women							
	Prefer Not to Answer							
Sexual Orientation	Heterosexual	No data						
	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Queer, and/or additional categories	No data			More Often			
	Decline to Answer/Blank	No data						
Disability Status	Does not have a disability	No data						
	Has a disability	No data						
	Prefer not to answer/Blank/I don't know	No data				Less Often		

Source: Auditor's Office analysis of Workday data. Note: We have noted only statistically significant differences in outcomes. Data in orange indicates a worse outcome for that demographic group, dark blue indicates a better outcome, and gray means that the difference in outcomes was not statistically significant. Some outcome measures have no data because this demographic information is not collected during the hiring phase. Statistically significant means that there is a low likelihood that the difference in outcomes was due to chance. Our analysis shows only outcomes, not their underlying causes.

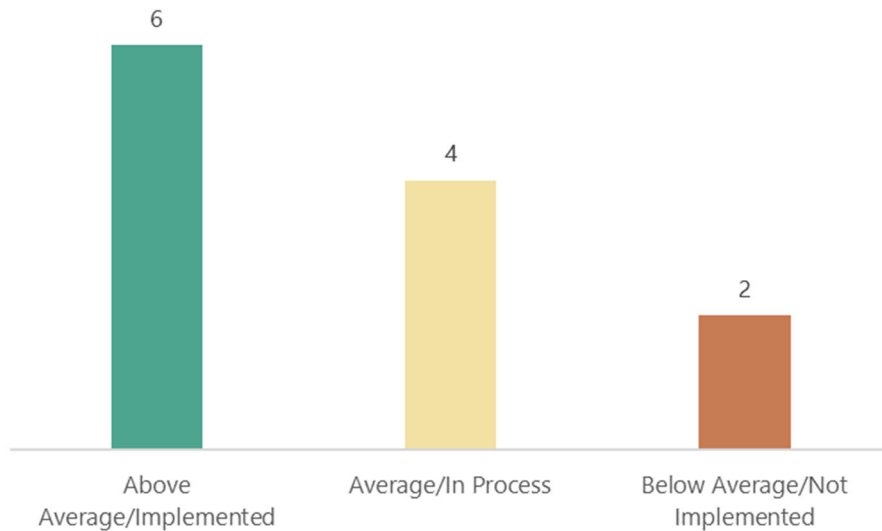
Department of Community Justice

Equity Maturity Model Performance

Phase I: Initiating Equity	Performance	Description
Equity vision	Implemented	DCJ has an equity vision.
Equity data collection and analysis	In Process	DCJ conducts limited data collection and analysis of equity data.
Phase II: Readiness		
Equity plan	Implemented	DCJ has a comprehensive action plan for meeting the goals of the WESP.
Individuals have taken equity trainings	Above Average	Nearly 94% of DCJ employees completed training in Workday.
Equity staff	Implemented	DCJ has two funded FTE including a WESP Project Manager and Equity Manager.
Phase III: Establishing an Equity Infrastructure		
Comprehensive equity training plan	Implemented	DCJ has an equity training plan.
Regular tracking of equity initiatives	Implemented	DCJ regularly tracks equity initiatives.
Percent who say they have opportunities to provide feedback to their supervisor	Average	The 2023 countywide employee survey found that 89% of DCJ employees have opportunities to provide feedback to their supervisor.
Phase IV: Sustaining Equity		
Percent who say they feel like they belong in their department	Below Average	The 2023 countywide employee survey revealed that 77% of DCJ employees feel a sense of belonging within their department.
Percent who say their work unit appropriately responds to discriminatory behavior	Below Average	The 2023 countywide employee survey found that 80% of DCJ employees feel their work unit appropriately responds to discriminatory behavior.
Percent who say the workload in their unit is properly distributed	Average	According to the 2023 countywide employee survey, 59% of DCJ employees indicated that the workload in their unit is properly distributed.
Equity practices are embedded in decision-making processes	Average	DCJ has embedded equity practices in a few decision-making processes, such as having equity managers present across departmental budget meetings.

The Department of Community Justice (DCJ) shows a commitment to equity in multiple ways: an equity vision, a comprehensive action plan for meeting the goals of the WESP, and high employee equity training completion rates. They have established an equity infrastructure with two funded FTE including a WESP Project Manager and an Equity Manager, have a comprehensive equity training plan, and regularly track equity initiatives. They have integrated equity considerations into their budgeting processes. But DCJ conducts limited data collection and analysis of equity data, and has some areas for improvement in employee feedback on belonging, response to discriminatory behavior, and workload distribution.

Maturity model overview – Department of Community Justice



Source: Auditor’s Office analysis

We recommend that the **Department of Community Justice**, no later than March 1, 2026:

1. Investigate the concerns raised in the countywide employee survey regarding belonging and report to department staff on findings and steps for improvement.
2. Investigate the concerns raised in the countywide employee survey regarding responding to discriminatory behavior and report to department staff on findings and steps for improvement.
3. Embed equity practices in all decision-making processes.

Department of Community Services

Employee Outcome Measures

		Rate of Being Hired 2019–2024	Rate of not Passing Trial Service Period 2019–2024	Rate of Being Fired 2019–2024	Rate of Quitting 2019–2024	Rate of Being Promoted 2019–2024	Change in Pay from 2019 to 2024	Rate of Having a Supervisory Position in 2024
Race or Ethnicity	African							
	American Indian or Alaska Native							More Often
	Asian							
	Black or African American							
	Latino or Hispanic							Less Often
	Middle Eastern							
	Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander							More Often
	Slavic							
	Two or More Races (Not Hispanic or Latino)							
	White							
	Decline to Answer/Blank							

Source: Auditor's Office analysis of Workday data. Note: We have noted only statistically significant differences in outcomes. Data in orange indicates a worse outcome for that demographic group, dark blue indicates a better outcome, and gray means that the difference in outcomes was not statistically significant. Statistically significant means that there is a low likelihood that the difference in outcomes was due to chance. Our analysis shows only outcomes, not their underlying causes.

Department of Community Services Employee Outcome Measures

		Rate of Being Hired 2019–2024	Rate of not Passing Trial Service Period 2019–2024	Rate of Being Fired 2019–2024	Rate of Quitting 2019–2024	Rate of Being Promoted 2019–2024	Change in Pay from 2019 to 2024	Rate of Having a Supervisory Position in 2024
Gender	Men							
	Transgender and Gender Diverse							
	Women				More Often		Larger Pay Increase	
	Prefer Not to Answer							
Sexual Orientation	Heterosexual	No data						
	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Queer, and/or additional categories	No data	More Often					
	Decline to Answer/Blank	No data						
Disability Status	Does not have a disability	No data						
	Has a disability	No data						
	Prefer not to answer/Blank/I don't know	No data					Smaller Pay Increase	

Source: Auditor's Office analysis of Workday data. Note: We have noted only statistically significant differences in outcomes. Data in orange indicates a worse outcome for that demographic group, dark blue indicates a better outcome, and gray means that the difference in outcomes was not statistically significant. Statistically significant means that there is a low likelihood that the difference in outcomes was due to chance. Our analysis shows only outcomes, not their underlying causes.

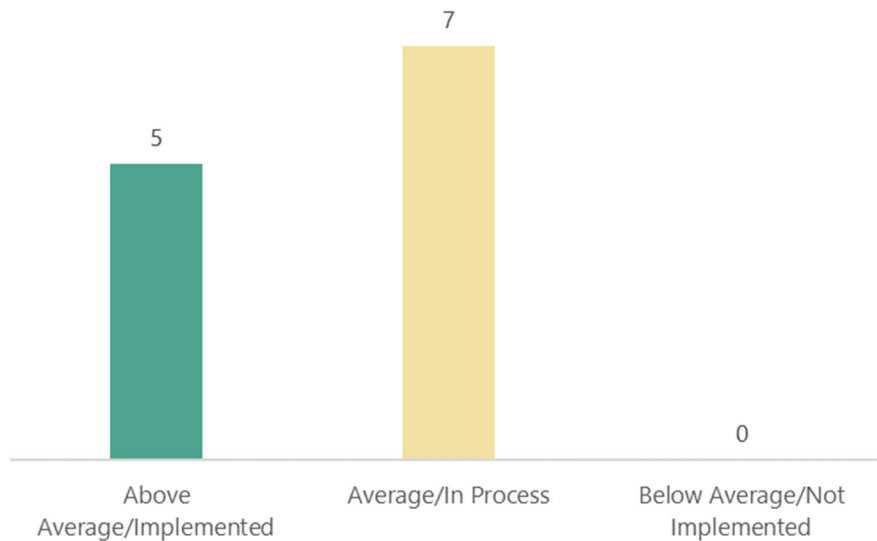
Department of Community Services

Equity Maturity Model Performance

Phase I: Initiating Equity	Performance	Description
Equity vision	Implemented	DCS has an equity vision.
Equity data collection and analysis	In Process	DCS conducts limited data collection and analysis of equity data.
Phase II: Readiness		
Equity plan	Implemented	DCS has an equity plan and a 2024-2028 WESP implementation schedule and plan.
Individuals have taken equity trainings	Average	66% of DCS employees completed training in Workday.
Equity staff	In Process	DCS has one dedicated equity employee.
Phase III: Establishing an Equity Infrastructure		
Comprehensive equity training plan	Implemented	DCS has an equity training plan.
Regular tracking of equity initiatives	Implemented	DCS regularly tracks equity initiatives.
Percent who say they have opportunities to provide feedback to their supervisor	Average	The 2023 countywide employee survey found that 88% of DCS employees have opportunities to provide feedback to their supervisor.
Phase IV: Sustaining Equity		
Percent who say they feel like they belong in their department	Average	The 2023 countywide employee survey revealed that 82% of DCS employees feel a sense of belonging within their department.
Percent who say their work unit appropriately responds to discriminatory behavior	Average	The 2023 countywide employee survey found that 84% of DCS employees feel their work unit appropriately responds to discriminatory behavior.
Percent who say the workload in their unit is properly distributed	Above Average	According to the 2023 countywide employee survey, 61% of DCS employees indicated that the workload in their unit is properly distributed.
Equity practices are embedded in decision-making processes	Average	DCS has embedded equity practices in a few decision-making processes, such as decision making through community engagement and budget prioritization.

The Department of Community Services (DCS) demonstrates a commitment to equity through an established equity vision, a comprehensive equity plan (including a 2024-2028 WESP implementation schedule), a comprehensive equity training plan, and the integration of equity practices into a few decision-making processes, such as community engagement and budget prioritization. DCS also regularly tracks equity initiatives. While they have one dedicated equity employee and a significant portion of employees have completed equity training, DCS conducts limited data collection and analysis of equity data. Employee survey results indicate a positive work environment with high rates of employees having opportunities to provide feedback to their supervisor. However, perceptions of belonging and response to discriminatory behavior, along with concerns regarding workload distribution, suggest areas for improvement. Despite a strong focus on employee development and generally positive work environment indicated by the countywide employee survey results, the limited data analysis capacity may hinder DCS's ability to fully measure progress and ensure accountability in their equity work.

Maturity model overview – Department of Community Services



Source: Auditor’s Office analysis

We recommend that the **Department of Community Services** implement the following, no later than March 1, 2026:

1. Advocate to the Board for funding to build capacity for equity data collection and analysis to inform equity efforts.
2. Embed equity practices in all decision-making processes.

Department of County Assets Employee Outcome Measures

	Rate of Being Hired 2019–2024	Rate of not Passing Trial Service Period 2019–2024	Rate of Being Fired 2019–2024	Rate of Quitting 2019–2024	Rate of Being Promoted 2019–2024	Change in Pay from 2019 to 2024	Rate of Having a Supervisory Position in 2024
Race or Ethnicity	African						
	American Indian or Alaska Native						
	Asian			More Often			Less Often
	Black or African American						
	Latino or Hispanic		More Often			Smaller Pay Increase	Less Often
	Middle Eastern						
	Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander					More Often	
	Slavic						
	Two or More Races (Not Hispanic or Latino)					Larger Pay Increase	More Often
	White						
	Decline to Answer/Blank		More Often				

Source: Auditor's Office analysis of Workday data. Note: We have noted only statistically significant differences in outcomes. Data in orange indicates a worse outcome for that demographic group, dark blue indicates a better outcome, and gray means that the difference in outcomes was not statistically significant. Statistically significant means that there is a low likelihood that the difference in outcomes was due to chance. Our analysis shows only outcomes, not their underlying causes.

Department of County Assets Employee Outcome Measures

		Rate of Being Hired 2019–2024	Rate of not Passing Trial Service Period 2019–2024	Rate of Being Fired 2019–2024	Rate of Quitting 2019–2024	Rate of Being Promoted 2019–2024	Change in Pay from 2019 to 2024	Rate of Having a Supervisory Position in 2024
Gender	Men							
	Transgender and Gender Diverse					More Often	Larger Pay Increase	
	Women					More Often		
	Prefer Not to Answer							
Sexual Orientation	Heterosexual	No data						
	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Queer, and/or additional categories	No data						
	Decline to Answer/Blank	No data					Smaller Pay Increase	
Disability Status	Does not have a disability	No data						
	Has a disability	No data						
	Prefer not to answer/Blank/I don't know	No data						

Source: Auditor's Office analysis of Workday data. Note: We have noted only statistically significant differences in outcomes. Data in orange indicates a worse outcome for that demographic group, dark blue indicates a better outcome, and gray means that the difference in outcomes was not statistically significant. Statistically significant means that there is a low likelihood that the difference in outcomes was due to chance. Our analysis shows only outcomes, not their underlying causes.

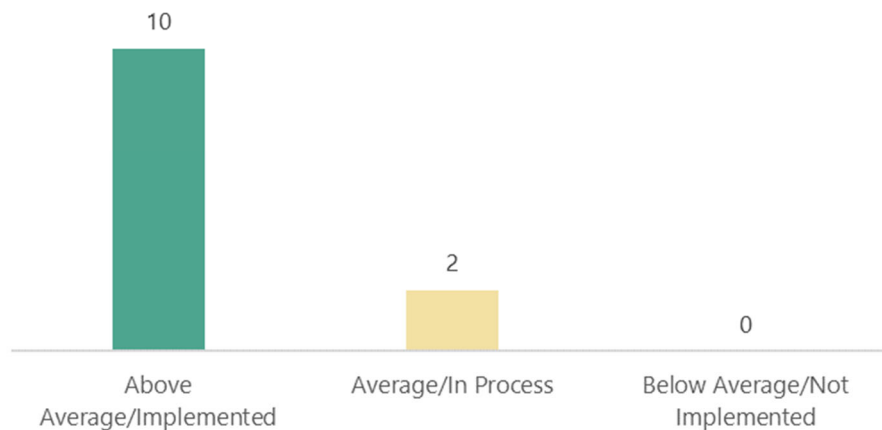
Department of County Assets

Equity Maturity Model Performance

Phase I: Initiating Equity	Performance	Description
Equity vision	Implemented	DCA has an equity vision.
Equity data collection and analysis	In Process	DCA conducts limited data collection and analysis of equity data.
Phase II: Readiness		
Equity plan	Implemented	DCA has a comprehensive equity plan that is embedded into DCA’s Departmental Strategic Plan.
Individuals have taken equity trainings	Above Average	100% of DCA employees completed training in Workday.
Equity staff	Implemented	DCA has two dedicated equity employees, including an equity manager.
Phase III: Establishing an Equity Infrastructure		
Comprehensive equity training plan	Implemented	DCA has an equity training plan.
Regular tracking of equity initiatives	Implemented	DCA regularly tracks equity initiatives.
Percent who say they have opportunities to provide feedback to their supervisor	Above Average	The 2023 countywide employee survey found that 93% of DCA employees have opportunities to provide feedback to their supervisor.
Phase IV: Sustaining Equity		
Percent who say they feel like they belong in their department	Above Average	The 2023 countywide employee survey revealed that 87% of DCA employees feel a sense of belonging within their department.
Percent who say their work unit appropriately responds to discriminatory behavior	Above Average	The 2023 countywide employee survey found that 85% of DCA employees feel their work unit appropriately responds to discriminatory behavior.
Percent who say the workload in their unit is properly distributed	Above Average	According to 2023 countywide employee survey, 72% of DCA employees indicated that the workload in their unit is properly distributed.
Equity practices are embedded in decision-making processes	Average	DCA has embedded equity practices in a few decision-making processes, such as budgeting and interview panels.

The Department of County Assets (DCA) demonstrates a strong commitment to equity through an established equity vision, a comprehensive equity plan embedded into DCA’s Departmental Strategic Plan, a dedicated team of two equity employees, and high employee equity training completion rates. The 2023 countywide employee survey results indicated a positive work environment, with high rates of employees feeling a sense of belonging and having opportunities to provide feedback to their supervisor, along with positive perceptions of workload distribution. While equity practices are embedded in a few decision-making processes, such as budgeting and interview panels, further integration is needed to strengthen their equity framework.

Maturity model overview – Department of County Assets



Source: Auditor’s Office analysis

We recommend that the **Department of County Assets** implement the following, no later than March 1, 2026:

1. Embed equity practices in all decision-making processes.

Department of County Human Services Employee Outcome Measures

	Rate of Being Hired 2019–2024	Rate of not Passing Trial Service Period 2019–2024	Rate of Being Fired 2019–2024	Rate of Quitting 2019–2024	Rate of Being Promoted 2019–2024	Change in Pay from 2019 to 2024	Rate of Having a Supervisory Position in 2024
Race or Ethnicity	African		More Often				
	American Indian or Alaska Native	More Often			Less Often	More Often	
	Asian	More Often					
	Black or African American	More Often	More Often	More Often		Larger Pay Increase	
	Latino or Hispanic					Larger Pay Increase	
	Middle Eastern		More Often				
	Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander					More Often	
	Slavic						
	Two or More Races (Not Hispanic or Latino)	More Often		More Often			
	White						
	Decline to Answer/Blank	More Often					

Source: Auditor's Office analysis of Workday data. Note: We have noted only statistically significant differences in outcomes. Data in orange indicates a worse outcome for that demographic group, dark blue indicates a better outcome, and gray means that the difference in outcomes was not statistically significant. Statistically significant means that there is a low likelihood that the difference in outcomes was due to chance. Our analysis shows only outcomes, not their underlying causes.

Department of County Human Services

Employee Outcome Measures

		Rate of Being Hired 2019–2024	Rate of not Passing Trial Service Period 2019–2024	Rate of Being Fired 2019–2024	Rate of Quitting 2019–2024	Rate of Being Promoted 2019–2024	Change in Pay from 2019 to 2024	Rate of Having a Supervisory Position in 2024
Gender	Men							
	Transgender and Gender Diverse							
	Women	More Often						
	Prefer Not to Answer							
Sexual Orientation	Heterosexual	No data						
	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Queer, and/or additional categories	No data		Less Often				
	Decline to Answer/Blank	No data						
Disability Status	Does not have a disability	No data						
	Has a disability	No data						Less Often
	Prefer not to answer/Blank/I don't know	No data				Less Often	Smaller Pay Increase	

Source: Auditor's Office analysis of Workday data. Note: We have noted only statistically significant differences in outcomes. Data in orange indicates a worse outcome for that demographic group, dark blue indicates a better outcome, and gray means that the difference in outcomes was not statistically significant. Statistically significant means that there is a low likelihood that the difference in outcomes was due to chance. Our analysis shows only outcomes, not their underlying causes.

Department of County Human Services

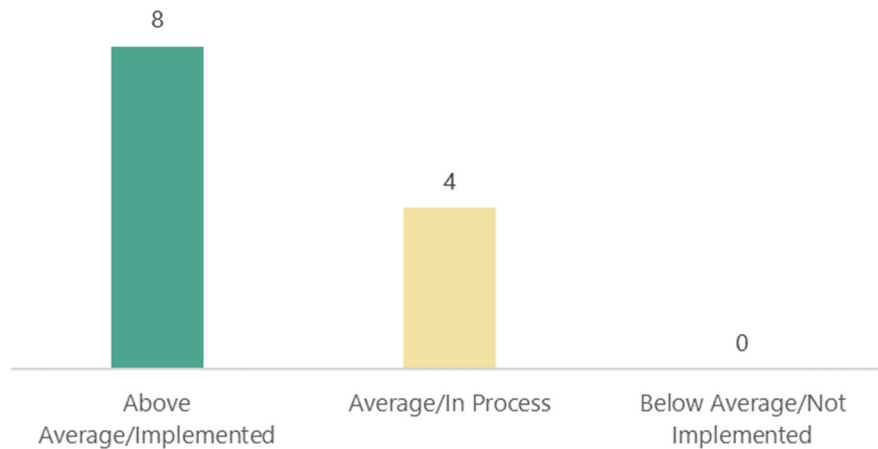
Equity Maturity Model Performance

Phase I: Initiating Equity	Performance	Description
Equity vision	Implemented	DCHS has an equity vision.
Equity data collection and analysis	In Process	DCHS conducts limited data collection and analysis of equity data.
Phase II: Readiness		
Equity plan	Implemented	DCHS has an equity plan.
Individuals have taken equity trainings	Average	62% of DCHS employees completed training in Workday. See note below.
Equity staff	Implemented	DCHS has two dedicated equity employees, including an equity manager.
Phase III: Establishing an Equity Infrastructure		
Comprehensive equity training plan	Implemented	DCHS has an equity training plan.
Regular tracking of equity initiatives	Implemented	Department regularly tracks equity initiatives.
Percent who say they have opportunities to provide feedback to their supervisor	Above Average	The 2023 countywide employee survey found that 92% of DCHS employees have opportunities to provide feedback to their supervisor.
Phase IV: Sustaining Equity		
Percent who say they feel like they belong in their department	Above Average	The 2023 countywide employee survey revealed that 84% of DCHS employees feel a sense of belonging within their department.
Percent who say their work unit appropriately responds to discriminatory behavior	Average	The 2023 countywide employee survey found that 83% of DCHS employees feel their work unit appropriately responds to discriminatory behavior.
Percent who say the workload in their unit is properly distributed	Above Average	According to the 2023 countywide employee survey, 60% of DCHS employees indicated that the workload in their unit is properly distributed.
Equity practices are embedded in decision-making processes	Average	DCHS has embedded equity practices in a few decision-making processes, such as having Equity Manager's participation in leadership team meetings, policy reviews, and budgeting.

Note: For the training performance measure of our equity maturity model, we used equity training data from Workday to score departments to maintain uniform audit criteria. During our audit, DCHS provided a list of equity training they had offered to staff, but participation in these trainings was not recorded in Workday. DCHS should consider getting this information entered into Workday.

The Department of County Human Services (DCHS) demonstrates a commitment to equity, as evidenced by their established equity vision and equity plan. They have two dedicated equity staff, a comprehensive training plan in place, and regularly track equity initiatives. Employees also report high rates of opportunities to provide feedback to their supervisor. DCHS has embedded equity practices in a few decision-making processes, such as the Equity Manager's participation in leadership team meetings, policy reviews, and budgeting. However, DCHS conducts limited data collection and analysis of equity data. Additionally, we heard concerns from staff about their pronouns not being used correctly. Overall, DCHS needs to strengthen its data infrastructure, enhance a sense of belonging and response to discriminatory behavior, and prioritize broader embedding of equity practices in decision-making.

Maturity model overview – Department of County Human Services



Source: Auditor’s Office analysis

We recommend that the **Department of County Human Services** implement the following, no later than March 1, 2026:

1. Embed equity practices in all decision-making processes.

Department of County Management Employee Outcome Measures

	Rate of Being Hired 2019–2024	Rate of not Passing Trial Service Period 2019–2024	Rate of Being Fired 2019–2024	Rate of Quitting 2019–2024	Rate of Being Promoted 2019–2024	Change in Pay from 2019 to 2024	Rate of Having a Supervisory Position in 2024
Race or Ethnicity	African						
	American Indian or Alaska Native						More Often
	Asian						Less Often
	Black or African American				More Often		
	Latino or Hispanic					More Often	
	Middle Eastern						
	Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander					Larger Pay Increase	More Often
	Slavic						
	Two or More Races (Not Hispanic or Latino)						
	White						
	Decline to Answer/Blank					More Often	

Source: Auditor's Office analysis of Workday data. Note: We have noted only statistically significant differences in outcomes. Data in orange indicates a worse outcome for that demographic group, dark blue indicates a better outcome, and gray means that the difference in outcomes was not statistically significant. Statistically significant means that there is a low likelihood that the difference in outcomes was due to chance. Our analysis shows only outcomes, not their underlying causes.

Department of County Management Employee Outcome Measures

		Rate of Being Hired 2019–2024	Rate of not Passing Trial Service Period 2019–2024	Rate of Being Fired 2019–2024	Rate of Quitting 2019–2024	Rate of Being Promoted 2019–2024	Change in Pay from 2019 to 2024	Rate of Having a Supervisory Position in 2024
Gender	Men							
	Transgender and Gender Diverse							
	Women							
	Prefer Not to Answer							
Sexual Orientation	Heterosexual	No data						
	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Queer, and/or additional categories	No data						
	Decline to Answer/Blank	No data						
Disability Status	Does not have a disability	No data						
	Has a disability	No data						
	Prefer not to answer/Blank/I don't know	No data			Less Often			Less Often

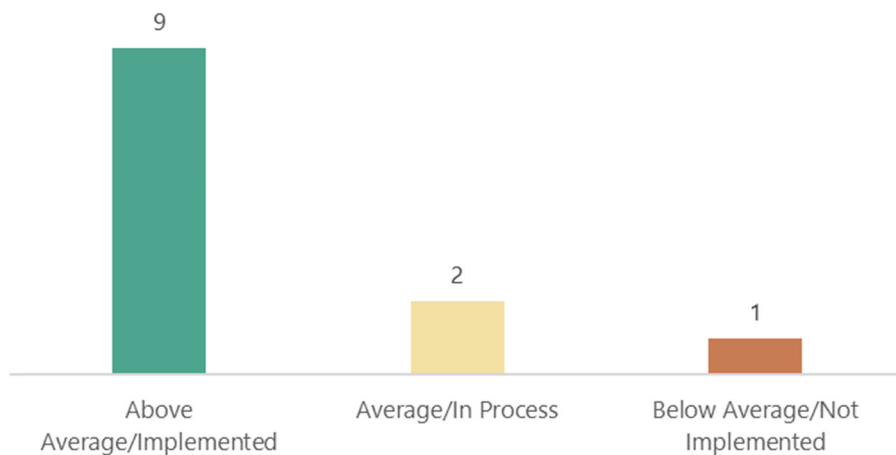
Source: Auditor's Office analysis of Workday data. Note: We have noted only statistically significant differences in outcomes. Data in orange indicates a worse outcome for that demographic group, dark blue indicates a better outcome, and gray means that the difference in outcomes was not statistically significant. Statistically significant means that there is a low likelihood that the difference in outcomes was due to chance. Our analysis shows only outcomes, not their underlying causes.

Department of County Management Equity Maturity Model Performance

Phase I: Initiating Equity	Performance	Description
Equity vision	Implemented	DCM has an equity vision.
Equity data collection and analysis	Not Implemented	DCM does not conduct data collection and analysis of equity data.
Phase II: Readiness		
Equity plan	Implemented	DCM has an equity plan.
Individuals have taken equity trainings	Average	66% of DCM employees completed training in Workday.
Equity staff	Implemented	DCM has two dedicated equity employees, including an equity manager.
Phase III: Establishing an Equity Infrastructure		
Comprehensive equity training plan	Implemented	DCM has an equity training plan.
Regular tracking of equity initiatives	Implemented	Department tracks equity initiatives.
Percent who say they have opportunities to provide feedback to their supervisor	Above Average	The 2023 countywide employee survey found that 93% of DCM employees have opportunities to provide feedback to their supervisor.
Phase IV: Sustaining Equity		
Percent who say they feel like they belong in their department	Above Average	The 2023 countywide employee survey revealed that 86% of DCM employees feel a sense of belonging within their department.
Percent who say their work unit appropriately responds to discriminatory behavior	Above Average	The 2023 countywide employee survey found that 92% of DCM employees feel their work unit appropriately responds to discriminatory behavior.
Percent who say the workload in their unit is properly distributed	Above Average	According to the 2023 countywide employee survey, 72% of DCM employees indicated that the workload in their unit is properly distributed.
Equity practices are embedded in decision-making processes	Average	DCM has embedded equity practices in a few decision-making processes, such as budgeting.

The Department of County Management (DCM) has established a good foundation for equity work with a clear vision, a departmental equity plan, two dedicated equity staff (including an equity manager), and a comprehensive equity training plan. They also regularly track equity initiatives. Employee survey data reveals positive perceptions of workplace belonging, responsiveness to discriminatory behavior, and high rates of employees having opportunities to provide feedback to their supervisor, all indicating strong commitment. However, implementation and infrastructure gaps remain. Specifically, DCM does not conduct equity data collection and analysis, hindering its ability to measure progress and ensure accountability comprehensively. While 66% of DCM employees have completed equity training, and equity practices are embedded in a few decision-making processes such as budgeting, employees report concerns regarding workload distribution. Formalizing comprehensive data analysis and evaluation processes, along with broader integration of equity into all key decision-making processes, is needed.

Maturity model overview – Department of County Management



Source: Auditor's Office analysis

We recommend that the **Department of County Management** implement the following, no later than March 1, 2026:

1. Advocate to the Board for funding to build capacity for equity data collection and analysis to inform equity efforts.
2. Embed equity practices in all decision-making processes.

District Attorney’s Office Employee Outcome Measures

		Rate of Being Hired 2019–2024	Rate of not Passing Trial Service Period 2019–2024	Rate of Being Fired 2019–2024	Rate of Quitting 2019–2024	Rate of Being Promoted 2019–2024	Change in Pay from 2019 to 2024	Rate of Having a Supervisory Position in 2024
Race or Ethnicity	African							
	American Indian or Alaska Native							
	Asian							
	Black or African American							
	Latino or Hispanic							
	Middle Eastern		More Often					
	Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander							
	Slavic				More Often			
	Two or More Races (Not Hispanic or Latino)	Less Often	More Often					More Often
	White							
	Decline to Answer/Blank							

Source: Auditor’s Office analysis of Workday data. Note: We have noted only statistically significant differences in outcomes. Data in orange indicates a worse outcome for that demographic group, dark blue indicates a better outcome, and gray means that the difference in outcomes was not statistically significant. Statistically significant means that there is a low likelihood that the difference in outcomes was due to chance. Our analysis shows only outcomes, not their underlying causes.

District Attorney's Office Employee Outcome Measures

		Rate of Being Hired 2019–2024	Rate of not Passing Trial Service Period 2019–2024	Rate of Being Fired 2019–2024	Rate of Quitting 2019–2024	Rate of Being Promoted 2019–2024	Change in Pay from 2019 to 2024	Rate of Having a Supervisory Position in 2024
Gender	Men							
	Transgender and Gender Diverse							
	Women						Smaller Pay Increase	
	Prefer Not to Answer							
Sexual Orientation	Heterosexual	No data						
	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Queer, and/or additional categories	No data			More Often			
	Decline to Answer/Blank	No data			More Often			
Disability Status	Does not have a disability	No data						
	Has a disability	No data						
	Prefer not to answer/Blank/I don't know	No data						

Source: Auditor's Office analysis of Workday data. Note: We have noted only statistically significant differences in outcomes. Data in orange indicates a worse outcome for that demographic group, dark blue indicates a better outcome, and gray means that the difference in outcomes was not statistically significant. Statistically significant means that there is a low likelihood that the difference in outcomes was due to chance. Our analysis shows only outcomes, not their underlying causes.

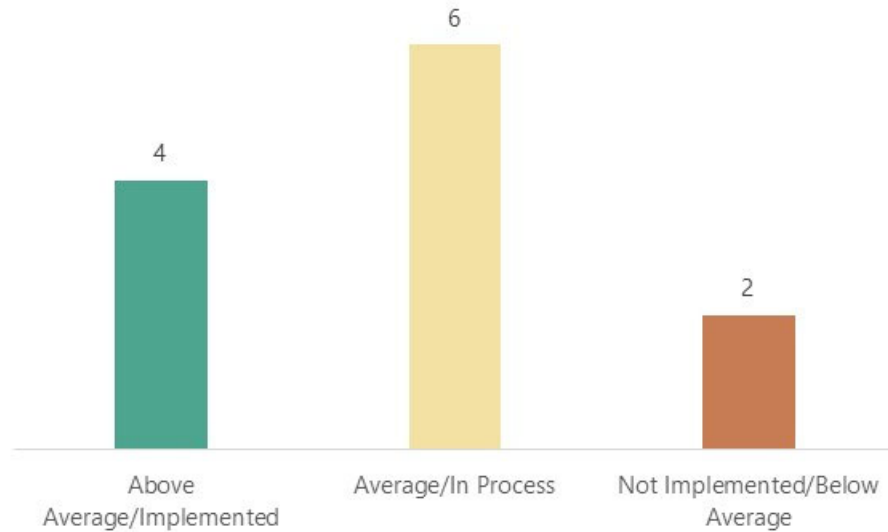
District Attorney’s Office

Equity Maturity Model Performance

Phase I: Initiating Equity	Performance	Description
Equity vision	Implemented	The DA’s Office has an equity vision.
Equity data collection and analysis	In Process	The DA’s Office conducts limited data collection and analysis of equity data.
Phase II: Readiness		
Equity plan	Implemented	The DA’s Office has an equity plan.
Individuals have taken equity trainings	Above Average	77% of DA employees completed training in Workday.
Equity staff	In Process	The DA’s Office only has one equity employee.
Phase III: Establishing an Equity Infrastructure		
Comprehensive equity training plan	Implemented	The DA’s Office has an equity training plan.
Regular tracking of equity initiatives	Not Implemented	The DA’s Office does not track equity initiatives.
Percent who say they have opportunities to provide feedback to their supervisor	Below Average	The 2023 countywide employee survey found that 82% of DA employees have opportunities to provide feedback to their supervisor.
Phase IV: Sustaining Equity		
Percent who say they feel like they belong in their department	Average	The 2023 countywide employee survey revealed that 81% of DA employees feel a sense of belonging within their department.
Percent who say their work unit appropriately responds to discriminatory behavior	Average	The 2023 countywide employee survey found that 82% of DA employees feel their work unit appropriately responds to discriminatory behavior.
Percent who say the workload in their unit is properly distributed	Average	According to the 2023 countywide employee survey, 53% of DA employees indicated that the workload in their unit is properly distributed.
Equity practices are embedded in decision-making processes	Average	The DA’s Office told us they have embedded equity practices in a few decision-making processes, such as conflict resolution practices and trauma informed training and mediation.

While the District Attorney’s Office (DA) has established a foundation for equity work with a defined vision and high completion rates for employee training, several key areas require attention to solidify their equity infrastructure and ensure sustainable progress. Although data collection and analysis efforts were initiated in previous years, the DA’s Office told us these were paused during the transition to a newly elected District Attorney. Although a strategic plan was developed in 2024, its effective implementation hinges on securing adequate staffing, including filling the vacant equity analyst position. Additionally, the DA should prioritize developing a robust system for regular reporting and evaluation of equity initiatives to track progress, measure impact, and ensure accountability.

Maturity model overview – District Attorney’s Office



Source: Auditor’s Office analysis

We recommend that the **District Attorney's Office** implement the following, no later than March 1, 2026:

1. Hire an equity analyst.
2. Establish a centralized system for monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of all equity initiatives. This system should include clear metrics, standardized reporting procedures, and a mechanism for collecting feedback from both employees and the community.
3. Embed equity practices in all decision-making processes.

Health Department Employee Outcome Measures

		Rate of Being Hired 2019–2024	Rate of not Passing Trial Service Period 2019–2024	Rate of Being Fired 2019–2024	Rate of Quitting 2019–2024	Rate of Being Promoted 2019–2024	Change in Pay from 2019 to 2024	Rate of Having a Supervisory Position in 2024
Race or Ethnicity	African							
	American Indian or Alaska Native	More Often						
	Asian							Less Often
	Black or African American	More Often	More Often	More Often				
	Latino or Hispanic	More Often			Less Often	More Often	Smaller Pay Increase	
	Middle Eastern							
	Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander							
	Slavic							
	Two or More Races (Not Hispanic or Latino)							
	White							
	Decline to Answer/Blank		More Often					

Source: Auditor's Office analysis of Workday data. Note: We have noted only statistically significant differences in outcomes. Data in orange indicates a worse outcome for that demographic group, dark blue indicates a better outcome, and gray means that the difference in outcomes was not statistically significant. Statistically significant means that there is a low likelihood that the difference in outcomes was due to chance. Our analysis shows only outcomes, not their underlying causes.

Health Department Employee Outcome Measures

		Rate of Being Hired 2019–2024	Rate of not Passing Trial Service Period 2019–2024	Rate of Being Fired 2019–2024	Rate of Quitting 2019–2024	Rate of Being Promoted 2019–2024	Change in Pay from 2019 to 2024	Rate of Having a Supervisory Position in 2024
Gender	Men							
	Transgender and Gender Diverse							Less Often
	Women	More Often					Smaller Pay Increase	Less Often
	Prefer Not to Answer	More Often						
Sexual Orientation	Heterosexual	No data						
	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Queer, and/or additional categories	No data			More Often	More Often		
	Decline to Answer/Blank	No data			More Often			
Disability Status	Does not have a disability	No data						
	Has a disability	No data	More Often					Less Often
	Prefer not to answer/Blank/I don't know	No data	More Often		Less Often		Smaller Pay Increase	Less Often

Source: Auditor's Office analysis of Workday data. Note: We have noted only statistically significant differences in outcomes. Data in orange indicates a worse outcome for that demographic group, dark blue indicates a better outcome, and gray means that the difference in outcomes was not statistically significant. Statistically significant means that there is a low likelihood that the difference in outcomes was due to chance. Our analysis shows only outcomes, not their underlying causes.

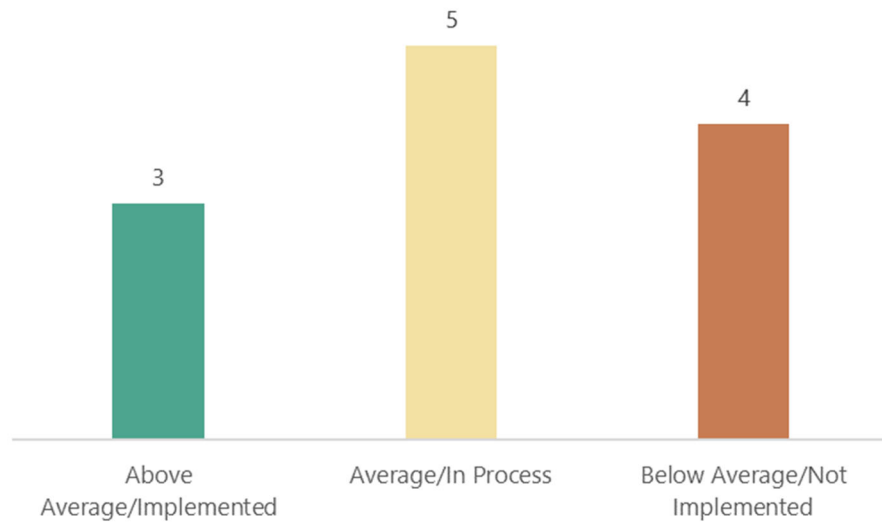
Health Department

Equity Maturity Model Performance

Phase I: Initiating Equity	Performance	Description
Equity vision	Implemented	HD has an equity vision.
Equity data collection and analysis	Not Implemented	HD does not conduct data collection and analysis of equity data.
Phase II: Readiness		
Equity plan	Not Implemented	HD does not have an equity plan.
Individuals have taken equity trainings	Above Average	75% of HD employees completed training in Workday.
Equity staff	In Process	While HD has recently hired a Deputy Director of Policy, Strategy, and Equity position, the department currently lacks an equity manager.
Phase III: Establishing an Equity Infrastructure		
Comprehensive equity training plan	Implemented	HD has an equity training plan.
Regular tracking of equity initiatives	Not Implemented	HD does not track equity initiatives
Percent who say they have opportunities to provide feedback to their supervisor	Average	The 2023 countywide employee survey found that 87% of HD employees have opportunities to provide feedback to their supervisor.
Phase IV: Sustaining Equity		
Percent who say they feel like they belong in their department	Average	The 2023 countywide employee survey revealed that 82% of HD employees feel a sense of belonging within their department.
Percent who say their work unit appropriately responds to discriminatory behavior	Below Average	The 2023 countywide employee survey found that 78% of HD employees feel their work unit appropriately responds to discriminatory behavior.
Percent who say the workload in their unit is properly distributed	Average	According to the 2023 countywide employee survey, 56% of HD employees indicated that the workload in their unit is properly distributed.
Equity practices are embedded in decision-making processes	Average	HD has embedded equity practices in a few decision-making processes, such as recruitment and budgeting processes.

The Health Department (HD) has taken initial steps towards establishing an equity framework, as evidenced by their equity vision and an equity training plan. A significant portion of HD employees have also completed equity training. While HD has recently hired a Deputy Director of Policy, Strategy, and Equity, the department currently lacks an equity manager and does not conduct equity data collection and analysis. Furthermore, HD does not yet have a formal equity plan or regular tracking of equity initiatives, which impedes progress and accountability. Although HD has embedded equity practices in a few decision-making processes, such as recruitment and budgeting, a more robust infrastructure with dedicated equity leadership, comprehensive planning, and ongoing tracking of equity initiatives is needed to achieve meaningful and sustainable progress towards equity goals.

Maturity model overview – Health Department



Source: Auditor’s Office analysis

We recommend that the **Health Department** implement the following, no later than March 1, 2026:

1. Hire an equity manager.
2. Advocate to the Board for funding to build capacity for equity data collection and analysis to inform equity efforts.
3. Develop a comprehensive equity plan that outlines specific goals, strategies, and initiatives for advancing equity.
4. Establish a centralized system for monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of all equity initiatives. This system should include clear metrics, standardized reporting procedures, and a mechanism for collecting feedback from both employees and the community.
5. Investigate the concerns raised in the countywide employee survey regarding responding to discriminatory behavior and report to department staff on findings and steps for improvement.
6. Embed equity practices in all decision-making processes.

Homeless Services Department Employee Outcome Measures

	Rate of Being Hired 2019–2024	Rate of not Passing Trial Service Period 2019–2024	Rate of Being Fired 2019–2024	Rate of Quitting 2019–2024	Rate of Being Promoted 2019–2024	Change in Pay from 2019 to 2024	Rate of Having a Supervisory Position in 2024
Race or Ethnicity	African						
	American Indian or Alaska Native						
	Asian				More Often		
	Black or African American					Larger Pay Increase	More Often
	Latino or Hispanic	More Often					
	Middle Eastern						
	Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	More Often				Larger Pay Increase	
	Slavic						
	Two or More Races (Not Hispanic or Latino)						
	White						
	Decline to Answer/Blank						

Source: Auditor's Office analysis of Workday data. Note: We have noted only statistically significant differences in outcomes. Data in orange indicates a worse outcome for that demographic group, dark blue indicates a better outcome, and gray means that the difference in outcomes was not statistically significant. Statistically significant means that there is a low likelihood that the difference in outcomes was due to chance. Our analysis shows only outcomes, not their underlying causes.

Homeless Services Department Employee Outcome Measures

		Rate of Being Hired 2019–2024	Rate of not Passing Trial Service Period 2019–2024	Rate of Being Fired 2019–2024	Rate of Quitting 2019–2024	Rate of Being Promoted 2019–2024	Change in Pay from 2019 to 2024	Rate of Having a Supervisory Position in 2024
Gender	Men							
	Transgender and Gender Diverse					More Often		
	Women	More Often						
	Prefer Not to Answer							
Sexual Orientation	Heterosexual	No data						
	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Queer, and/or additional categories	No data						
	Decline to Answer/Blank	No data						
Disability Status	Does not have a disability	No data						
	Has a disability	No data				Less Often	Smaller Pay Increase	
	Prefer not to answer/Blank/I don't know	No data					Smaller Pay Increase	

Source: Auditor's Office analysis of Workday data. Note: We have noted only statistically significant differences in outcomes. Data in orange indicates a worse outcome for that demographic group, dark blue indicates a better outcome, and gray means that the difference in outcomes was not statistically significant. Statistically significant means that there is a low likelihood that the difference in outcomes was due to chance. Our analysis shows only outcomes, not their underlying causes.

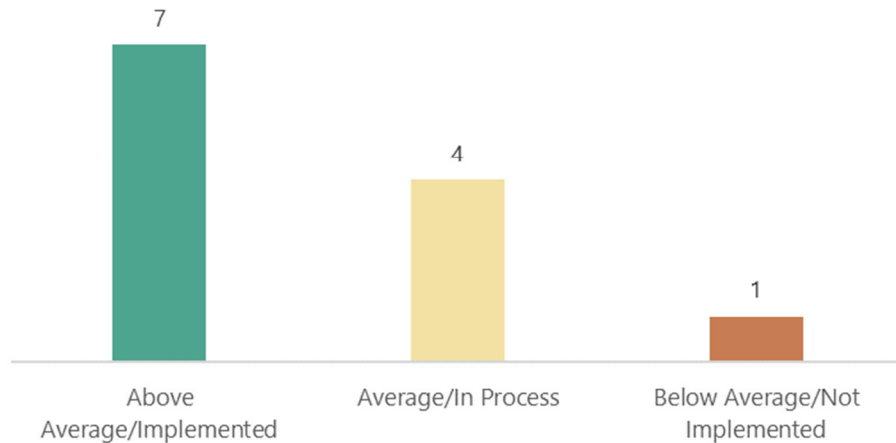
Homeless Services Department

Equity Maturity Model Performance

Phase I: Initiating Equity	Performance	Description
Equity vision	Implemented	HSD has an equity vision.
Equity data collection and analysis	In Process	Department conducts limited data collection and analysis of equity data.
Phase II: Readiness		
Equity plan	In Process	HSD is developing an equity plan.
Individuals have taken equity trainings	Average	70% of HSD employees completed training in Workday.
Equity staff	Implemented	HSD has a dedicated team of six equity employees, including an equity manager.
Phase III: Establishing an Equity Infrastructure		
Comprehensive equity training plan	Implemented	HSD has an equity training plan.
Regular tracking of equity initiatives	Implemented	The HSD regularly tracks equity initiatives
Percent who say they have opportunities to provide feedback to their supervisor	Above Average	The 2023 countywide employee survey found that 92% of HSD employees have opportunities to provide feedback to their supervisor.
Phase IV: Sustaining Equity		
Percent who say they feel like they belong in their department	Above Average	The 2023 countywide employee survey revealed that 90% of HSD employees feel a sense of belonging within their department.
Percent who say their work unit appropriately responds to discriminatory behavior	Above Average	The 2023 countywide employee survey found that 95% of HSD employees feel their work unit appropriately responds to discriminatory behavior.
Percent who say the workload in their unit is properly distributed	Below Average	According to the 2023 countywide employee survey, 52% of HSD employees indicated that the workload in their unit is properly distributed.
Equity practices are embedded in decision-making processes	Average	HSD has embedded equity practices in a few decision-making processes, such as policy reviews and budgeting.

The Homeless Services Department (HSD) demonstrates a strong commitment to equity through its established equity vision, a dedicated team of six equity employees, a comprehensive equity training plan, and regular tracking of equity initiatives. Positive employee feedback regarding opportunities to provide feedback to supervisors, a strong sense of belonging within the department, and high rates of employees feeling their work unit appropriately responds to discriminatory behavior further underscore this commitment. However, several areas require attention to strengthen their equity infrastructure and sustain progress. HSD currently conducts limited data collection and analysis of equity data, and is in the process of developing a comprehensive equity plan. Employees indicate concerns regarding workload distribution. Addressing these areas, particularly data collection, comprehensive planning, and workload imbalances, is crucial for HSD to achieve its equity goals effectively.

Maturity model overview – Homeless Services Department



Source: Auditor’s Office analysis

We recommend that the **Homeless Services Department** implement the following, no later than March 1, 2026:

1. Investigate the concerns raised in the countywide employee survey regarding workload distribution and report to department staff on findings and steps for improvement.
2. Embed equity practices in all decision-making processes.

Library

Employee Outcome Measures

	Rate of Being Hired 2019–2024	Rate of not Passing Trial Service Period 2019–2024	Rate of Being Fired 2019–2024	Rate of Quitting 2019–2024	Rate of Being Promoted 2019–2024	Change in Pay from 2019 to 2024	Rate of Having a Supervisory Position in 2024
Race or Ethnicity	African						
	American Indian or Alaska Native	More Often	More Often				
	Asian						Less Often
	Black or African American	More Often		More Often	More Often	Larger Pay Increase	
	Latino or Hispanic	More Often			More Often	Larger Pay Increase	
	Middle Eastern					Larger Pay Increase	
	Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander						
	Slavic						
	Two or More Races (Not Hispanic or Latino)				More Often	Larger Pay Increase	
	White						
	Decline to Answer/Blank						

Source: Auditor's Office analysis of Workday data. Note: We have noted only statistically significant differences in outcomes. Data in orange indicates a worse outcome for that demographic group, dark blue indicates a better outcome, and gray means that the difference in outcomes was not statistically significant. Statistically significant means that there is a low likelihood that the difference in outcomes was due to chance. Our analysis shows only outcomes, not their underlying causes.

Library

Employee Outcome Measures

		Rate of Being Hired 2019–2024	Rate of not Passing Trial Service Period 2019–2024	Rate of Being Fired 2019–2024	Rate of Quitting 2019–2024	Rate of Being Promoted 2019–2024	Change in Pay from 2019 to 2024	Rate of Having a Supervisory Position in 2024
Gender	Men							
	Transgender and Gender Diverse						Larger Pay Increase	
	Women			Less Often				
	Prefer Not to Answer	More Often						
Sexual Orientation	Heterosexual	No data						
	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Queer, and/or additional categories	No data					Larger Pay Increase	
	Decline to Answer/Blank	No data			More Often			
Disability Status	Does not have a disability	No data						
	Has a disability	No data	More Often					
	Prefer not to answer/Blank/I don't know	No data					Smaller Pay Increase	Less Often

Source: Auditor's Office analysis of Workday data. Note: We have noted only statistically significant differences in outcomes. Data in orange indicates a worse outcome for that demographic group, dark blue indicates a better outcome, and gray means that the difference in outcomes was not statistically significant. Statistically significant means that there is a low likelihood that the difference in outcomes was due to chance. Our analysis shows only outcomes, not their underlying causes.

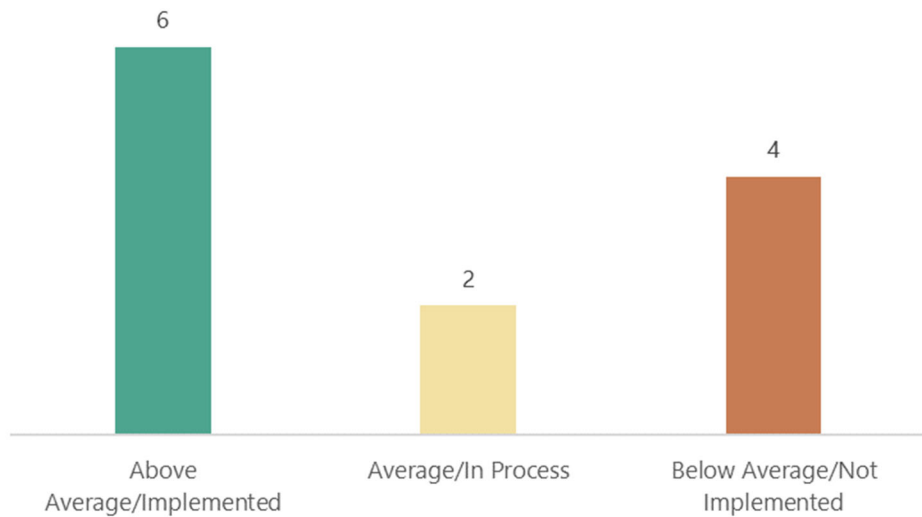
Library

Equity Maturity Model Performance

Phase I: Initiating Equity	Performance	Description
Equity vision	Implemented	MCL has an equity vision.
Equity data collection and analysis	Implemented	MCL conducts data collection and analysis of equity data.
Phase II: Readiness		
Equity plan	Implemented	MCL has an equity plan.
Individuals have taken equity trainings	Average	60% of MCL employees completed training in Workday.
Equity staff	Implemented	MCL has two dedicated equity employees, including an equity manager.
Phase III: Establishing an Equity Infrastructure		
Comprehensive equity training plan	Implemented	MCL has an equity training plan.
Regular tracking of equity initiatives	Implemented	MCL tracks equity initiatives.
Percent who say they have opportunities to provide feedback to their supervisor	Below Average	The 2023 countywide employee survey found that 84% of MCL employees have opportunities to provide feedback to their supervisor.
Phase IV: Sustaining Equity		
Percent who say they feel like they belong in their department	Below Average	The 2023 countywide employee survey revealed that 76% of MCL employees feel a sense of belonging within their department.
Percent who say their work unit appropriately responds to discriminatory behavior	Below Average	The 2023 countywide employee survey found that 78% of MCL employees feel their work unit appropriately responds to discriminatory behavior.
Percent who say the workload in their unit is properly distributed	Below Average	According to the 2023 countywide employee survey, 45% of MCL employees indicated that the workload in their unit is properly distributed.
Equity practices are embedded in decision-making processes	Average	MCL has embedded equity practices in a few decision-making processes, such as policy reviews and budgeting.

The Library (MCL) demonstrates a good foundation for equity work through a clear equity vision, implemented equity data collection and analysis, an established equity plan, and two dedicated equity employees. They also have a comprehensive equity training plan in place and regularly track equity initiatives. While a portion of MCL employees have completed equity training, and many report opportunities to provide feedback to their supervisor, these areas, along with employees' sense of belonging and perceptions of appropriate responses to discriminatory behavior, suggest room for enhancement. Employees indicate significant concerns regarding workload distribution. Additionally, the embedding of equity practices is present in some decision-making processes, such as policy reviews and budgeting. Addressing the workload imbalances and further integrating equity into all key decision-making processes are important for enhancing their equity infrastructure and sustaining progress.

Maturity model overview - Library



Source: Auditor's Office analysis

We recommend that the **Library** implement the following, no later than March 1, 2026:

1. To address the low scores related to opportunities for providing feedback, management should:
 - a. Implement a process for documenting, analyzing, and responding to employee feedback in a timely and transparent manner.
 - b. Implement multiple avenues for employees to provide feedback, such as regular one-on-one meetings, anonymous surveys, and employee focus groups.
 - c. Provide training to supervisors on active listening, constructive feedback, and addressing employee concerns.
2. Investigate the concerns raised in the countywide employee survey regarding belonging and report to department staff on findings and steps for improvement.
3. Investigate the concerns raised in the countywide employee survey regarding responding to discriminatory behavior and report to department staff on findings and steps for improvement.
4. Investigate the concerns raised in the countywide employee survey regarding workload distribution and report to department staff on findings and steps for improvement.
5. Embed equity practices in all decision-making processes.

Sheriff's Office

Employee Outcome Measures

		Rate of Being Hired 2019–2024	Rate of not Passing Trial Service Period 2019–2024	Rate of Being Fired 2019–2024	Rate of Quitting 2019–2024	Rate of Being Promoted 2019–2024	Change in Pay from 2019 to 2024	Rate of Having a Supervisory Position in 2024
Race or Ethnicity	African	Less Often						
	American Indian or Alaska Native						Larger Pay Increase	
	Asian							
	Black or African American	Less Often						
	Latino or Hispanic	Less Often	More Often	More Often				
	Middle Eastern							
	Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	Less Often						
	Slavic		More Often					
	Two or More Races (Not Hispanic or Latino)			More Often				
	White							
	Decline to Answer/Blank	Less Often						

Source: Auditor's Office analysis of Workday data. Note: We have noted only statistically significant differences in outcomes. Data in orange indicates a worse outcome for that demographic group, dark blue indicates a better outcome, and gray means that the difference in outcomes was not statistically significant. Statistically significant means that there is a low likelihood that the difference in outcomes was due to chance. Our analysis shows only outcomes, not their underlying causes.

Sheriff's Office

Employee Outcome Measures

		Rate of Being Hired 2019–2024	Rate of not Passing Trial Service Period 2019–2024	Rate of Being Fired 2019–2024	Rate of Quitting 2019–2024	Rate of Being Promoted 2019–2024	Change in Pay from 2019 to 2024	Rate of Having a Supervisory Position in 2024
Gender	Men							
	Transgender and Gender Diverse							
	Women	Less Often			More Often		Smaller Pay Increase	
	Prefer Not to Answer				Less Often			
Sexual Orientation	Heterosexual	No data						
	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Queer, and/or additional categories	No data	Less Often					
	Decline to Answer/Blank	No data	Less Often					
Disability Status	Does not have a disability	No data						
	Has a disability	No data				Less Often		
	Prefer not to answer/Blank/I don't know	No data				Less Often		

Source: Auditor's Office analysis of Workday data. Note: We have noted only statistically significant differences in outcomes. Data in orange indicates a worse outcome for that demographic group, dark blue indicates a better outcome, and gray means that the difference in outcomes was not statistically significant. Statistically significant means that there is a low likelihood that the difference in outcomes was due to chance. Our analysis shows only outcomes, not their underlying causes.

Sheriff's Office

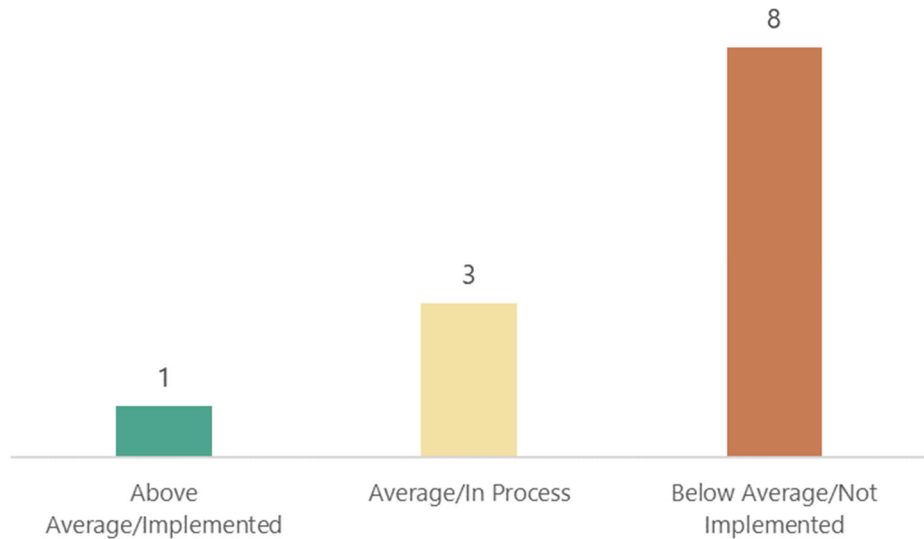
Equity Maturity Model Performance

Phase I: Initiating Equity	Performance	Description
Equity vision	In Process	MCSO is working on an equity vision.
Equity data collection and analysis	Not Implemented	MCSO does not perform equity data collection and analysis.
Phase II: Readiness		
Equity plan	Not Implemented	MCSO does not yet have an established equity plan. However, they have stated that they are working on developing one.
Individuals have taken equity trainings	Below Average	16% of MCSO employees completed training in Workday. See note below.
Equity staff	In Process	MCSO has one dedicated equity employee.
Phase III: Establishing an Equity Infrastructure		
Comprehensive equity training plan	Not Implemented	MCSO does not have an equity training plan.
Regular tracking of equity initiatives	Not Implemented	MCSO does not track equity initiatives.
Percent who say they have opportunities to provide feedback to their supervisor	Below Average	The 2023 countywide employee survey found that 83% of MCSO employees have opportunities to provide feedback to their supervisor.
Phase IV: Sustaining Equity		
Percent who say they feel like they belong in their department	Below Average	The 2023 countywide employee survey revealed that 78% of MCSO employees feel a sense of belonging within their department.
Percent who say their work unit appropriately responds to discriminatory behavior	Above Average	The 2023 countywide employee survey found that 89% of MCSO employees feel their work unit appropriately responds to discriminatory behavior.
Percent who say the workload in their unit is properly distributed	Below Average	According to the 2023 countywide employee survey, 49% of MCSO employees indicated that the workload in their unit is properly distributed.
Equity practices are embedded in decision-making processes	Average	MCSO has embedded equity practices in a few decision-making processes, such as budgeting.

Note: For the training performance measure of our equity maturity model, we used equity training data from Workday to score departments to maintain uniform audit criteria. The Sheriff informed us that equity training is offered to staff and reported to the State of Oregon, but participation isn't recorded in Workday. MCSO should consider getting this information entered into Workday.

The Multnomah County Sheriff’s Office (MCSO) has started an equity framework, with work underway on an equity vision and one dedicated equity employee. However, they currently lack equity data collection and analysis and do not yet have an established equity plan or a comprehensive equity training plan. This hinders their ability to implement and sustain equity initiatives. Additionally, there is a lack of regular tracking of equity initiatives. MCSO has embedded equity practices in a few decision-making processes, such as budgeting. Overall, MCSO needs a more robust infrastructure with a clear vision, comprehensive planning, and increased analytical capacity to achieve meaningful and sustainable progress towards equity goals.

Maturity model overview – Sheriff’s Office



Source: Auditor’s Office analysis

We recommend that the **Multnomah County Sheriff's Office** implement the following, no later than March 1, 2026:

1. Hire an equity manager.
2. Advocate to the Board for funding to build capacity for equity data collection and analysis to inform equity efforts.
3. Develop a comprehensive equity plan that outlines specific goals, strategies, and initiatives for advancing equity.
4. Develop clear criteria for mandatory equity training completion and implement a process to hold managers accountable for ensuring both their own participation and the participation of their team members.
5. Develop a comprehensive equity training plan.
6. Establish a centralized system for monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of all equity initiatives. This system should include clear metrics, standardized reporting procedures, and a mechanism for collecting feedback from both employees and the community.
7. To address the low scores related to opportunities for providing feedback, management should:
 - a. Implement a process for documenting, analyzing, and responding to employee feedback in a timely and transparent manner.
 - b. Implement multiple avenues for employees to provide feedback, such as regular one-on-one meetings, anonymous surveys, and employee focus groups.
 - c. Provide training to supervisors on active listening, constructive feedback, and addressing employee concerns.
8. Investigate the concerns raised in the countywide employee survey regarding belonging and report to department staff on findings and steps for improvement.
9. Investigate the concerns raised in the countywide employee survey regarding workload distribution and report to department staff on findings and steps for improvement.
10. Embed equity practices in all decision-making processes.

Countywide Equity Issues

This section of the report addresses a wide range of equity issues within Multnomah County. We learned about these problems from employee interviews and multiple listening sessions. These provided an opportunity for employees to share their experiences and perspectives on equity, revealing a variety of challenges related to accountability and overall workplace culture. While seemingly disparate, these concerns are interconnected. This section brings together what we heard, showing how seemingly isolated incidents contribute to a broader picture of systemic inequities and, importantly, how these incidents serve as indicators of the county's current position within the equity maturity model we referenced earlier in the report. By looking at these experiences through that model, we can figure out what specific roadblocks are stopping the county from making equity improvements.

Improve accountability by analyzing anonymous feedback

In our interviews, lack of accountability was a theme that appeared repeatedly and from a wide range of groups. Employees expressed concern about the lack of disciplinary action taken against county employees despite reports of problematic behavior. This is why we believe that analysis of anonymous feedback should be done regularly so that patterns can be detected and responded to earlier.

Two methods for collecting anonymous feedback are:

- *Annual 360 reviews of managers.* These are performance evaluations, but the difference is that the information is collected from a variety of people, including the people who they manage. The information is collected anonymously, so staff can feel more comfortable giving honest feedback. We recognize that 360 reviews are already in the WESP 1.0. However, in the WESP 2021-2022 Annual Report it states, "The measures that presented the most barriers to completion for departments include... 360° feedback." Because of the difficulty departments have had with implementing this, we believe that an audit recommendation will encourage departments to prioritize this initiative.
- *Anonymous exit surveys.* The county offers exit interviews, but they are not always anonymous. Because people have an incentive to maintain a reference, they may not feel comfortable sharing their honest reasons for leaving.

This data collection could also build upon the county's new microaggression response. In January 2025, the county rolled out an organization-wide microaggression reporting form and response protocol. By adding 360 reviews and exit survey data to the microaggression information, the county could have a more comprehensive system to track feedback and responses.

Recommendations:

To promote accountability and prevent patterns of abuse from going undetected:

- All department HR units should conduct 360 reviews for managers annually.
- All 360 reviews should be saved in Workday.
- All department HR units should give every employee leaving the county the opportunity to fill out an anonymous exit survey about their experience.
- The equity analyst for each department should aggregate information from both of these annually to identify patterns. The department director, department HR, and the equity manager should develop and implement plans to address issues.

Increase awareness and require staff expertise in disability accommodations

During listening sessions and interviews, employees voiced significant concerns about disability equity within the county. They reported feeling that disability issues are not given adequate priority within the WESP, citing a lack of representation and dedicated resources. This sentiment was underscored by frustrations with the accommodation process, which employees described as slow, complex, and potentially inequitable. Specifically, they cited lengthy wait times of up to eight months, even for individuals with visible disabilities. Employees expressed a desire for a centralized ADA accommodation process to address these inconsistencies, a recommendation echoed in the WESP 2.0. Employees also highlighted a lack of awareness regarding existing support mechanisms. This lack of prioritization and resource allocation directly impacts the county's ability to effectively move through the "Readiness" and "Establishing an Equity Infrastructure" phases of the Equity Maturity Model.

While there is a designated role to assist employees with the ADA accommodation process (Disability Equity Policy Analyst Senior), many remain unaware of this resource. This position is supposed to be a neutral liaison between employees and HR, helping both sides better understand the ADA accommodation process. Employees told us that this position may be moved to a soon-to-be-created centralized accommodations unit in HR. We are concerned that the Disability Equity Policy Analyst Senior will feel pressure to side with HR, rather than be a neutral party, if this position is moved.

Many employees expressed a desire for a centralized ADA accommodation unit, but some worried that the staff hired for this unit will have a generalist knowledge of HR and lack specific knowledge about the ADA accommodation process and disability justice. Staff told us they want those working in this unit to have a disability KSA (knowledge, skills, and abilities). It is important to note that possession of a disability KSA does not necessitate having a disability or disclosing a disability.

Recommendations:

- The Office of Diversity and Equity should ensure the Disability Equity Policy Analyst Senior position remains in their office, rather than moving it to the soon-to-be-created centralized accommodations unit in HR. This will allow the position to maintain independence from HR.
- The Office of Diversity and Equity should regularly publicize the Disability Equity Policy Analyst Senior position so that staff know this resource is available.
- Central and department HR should create disability KSAs that require staff to have expertise in all of the following: the Americans with Disabilities Act, reasonable accommodations, disability justice, and the impacts of ableism.
- Central HR should require all staff working in the soon-to-be-created centralized accommodations unit to have a disability KSA.

Remove barriers to wider participation in the College to County Program

Multnomah County's College to County (C2C) Mentorship Program, launched 14 years ago by the Office of Diversity and Equity, offers paid summer internships to college students, many of whom are from underrepresented communities (including students of

color, LGBTQ+ individuals, those with disabilities, and those from underserved or low-income backgrounds). This initiative strengthens career pathways through mentorship and professional development, while simultaneously creating a pathway for future employees to meet Multnomah County's anticipated workforce needs.

County departments demonstrate varying degrees of engagement with the C2C Mentorship Program. Funding remains a barrier to wider participation in the C2C Mentorship Program, with some offices expressing concerns about budgetary constraints or feeling overwhelmed by existing workloads and lacking the capacity to dedicate time to training interns.

Recommendation:

The County Chair should expand the central pool of money available for the College to County internship program.

Ensure inclusion of equity practices in revised contracting processes

County contracting staff communicated to us their commitment to including equity practices and have met with the County Contracting Equity Workgroup, which was formed in 2020 to promote equity in the contracting processes.

Ensuring equity in countywide contracting processes is important because culturally specific providers often have a deep understanding of the unique needs of their communities. By giving these providers an equal playing field to apply for grants and contracts, counties can ensure that services are tailored to meet the specific cultural and linguistic needs of their diverse populations. This can lead to better outcomes in areas such as healthcare and social services.

Recommendations:

DCM Contracting should ensure that countywide contracting processes include equity, including:

- a. plain language procurement documents
- b. technical assistance for vendors
- c. diverse evaluation panels

- d. interviewing culturally specific providers who have not been selected for county contracts to determine the barriers that they faced

Provide equity analysts with better access to data

We spoke with department equity analysts who said that they lacked the detailed demographic data they needed to perform their work. There is a report in the county's data system called "MCR Flex worker report for researchers" with additional demographic fields that would better allow them to do the analysis they were hired to do. This data gap directly impacts the county's progress within the equity maturity model, specifically in the "Establishing an Equity Infrastructure" phase. Effective equity work relies on data-driven decision-making, and without access to the necessary data, analysts are unable to fully assess disparities or track the impact of equity initiatives. This limitation suggests that the county's infrastructure for equity is not yet fully developed, hindering its ability to move towards the "Sustaining Equity" phase.

Recommendation:

The Central HR/Workday Team should give equity data analysts access to the Workday report "MCR Flex worker report for researchers" that has more detailed demographic data.

Support employees with family overseas by removing international telework bans

Multnomah County employees with families outside the United States face inequities due to the current ban on international telework, particularly when needing to care for sick family members. This is an inconsistent application of telework policies, given that the county permits out-of-state telework, as long as it doesn't cause an administrative burden or significant costs.

Employees with family outside of the United States described difficult situations where they had to travel overseas to care for ill or dying family members. They detailed long periods of down time between medical appointments, time that could have been productively spent working. This forced them to exhaust their leave, preventing them from using it for personal vacations or other essential family events. In some cases, employees have been forced to take unpaid leave, creating financial hardship.

The current disparity in telework policies reveals a potential stagnation in the “Initiating Equity” phase of the equity maturity model. By failing to engage with employees to understand the challenges they face, the county risks hindering its progression towards reaching the next phase of the equity maturity model. Implementing a well-defined process for temporary international telework, with clear guidelines and safeguards, would demonstrate a commitment to equitable practices and a willingness to evolve its infrastructure to support all employees.

Recommendation:

The County’s Chief Operating Officer (COO) should modify personnel rule 3-65 to allow employees to telework internationally for a limited duration while caring for a family member. If the request is denied, the employee should be provided the rationale in writing.

Improve retention by requiring HR consultation with Equity Managers

Both the first and second iterations of the Workforce Equity Strategic Plan included good strategies for improving retention, such as:

- Assign peer support or mentor to assist with onboarding and professional growth
- Employee training plan with inclusion of cultural responsiveness training
- Stay interviews and a report of recommendations based on those interviews
- Evaluate the barriers to employees to participating in Employee Resource Groups, community-building events, equity work and wellness benefits.

In addition to these, we would like to see equity managers be included in HR discussions related to employees who are facing potential termination. A department HR manager described a situation where someone was near the end of their trial service and was not meeting expectations. The HR manager consulted with an equity manager who used an equity lens to help them develop a plan to better support this employee, rather than terminate them. Equity managers were hired to help the county use an equity lens, but their skillset is often underutilized in termination decisions.

Recommendation:

Central and department HR should ensure that prior to terminating an employee, HR managers consult with an equity manager or a representative from the ODE.

Improve employee work environments through rule enforcement and transparency

Employees told us about the negative impacts of a lack of rule enforcement and transparency. Some talked to us about the poor treatment they have received from coworkers and supervisors regarding their gender identity. In particular, employees said that increased awareness of how to properly use and respect pronouns is important. The WESP 2.0 has a recommendation for training that may help.

While training may improve things, it also needs to be accompanied by rule enforcement. Employees told us that they saw instances where Personnel Rule 3-42 (Gender Identity and Gender Expression Harassment and Discrimination Free Workplace) was not being enforced. This is an important issue because the Trevor Project's 2020 report stated that, "Transgender and nonbinary youth who reported having pronouns respected by all or most people in their lives attempted suicide at half the rate of those who did not have their pronouns respected."

Other employees expressed frustration over the Board issuing proclamations and bridge lightings for some causes, but not others. The Board utilizes a Proclamation Instruction Form, but it lacks criteria to determine what events or causes merit a proclamation. This highlights a need for greater transparency and consistency in the process.

Recommendations:

- Central HR and department HR should enforce Personnel Rule 3-42 (Gender Identity and Gender Expression Harassment and Discrimination Free Workplace).
- The Board of County Commissioners should create specific criteria for determining what events or causes merit proclamations and/or bridge lightings.

Assign responsibility for WESP accountability

As mentioned earlier in the report, many people have communicated their frustration at the lack of progress with the WESP. To ensure that both versions of the WESP are implemented, someone must be ultimately responsible. The most recent WESP has an Executive Committee made up of the Chief Operating Officer (COO), Chief Human Resources Officer, and Chief Diversity and Equity Officer. This is a good step toward accountability, but if a department fails to meet WESP benchmarks, it is unclear who will hold them accountable. Since department directors report to the COO, it seems like a logical choice to assign final responsibility to the COO, as they have the proper authority to create a performance plan for department directors when equity goals aren't met. Elected officials do not report to the COO, so in those departments the elected official should put together the performance plan with guidance from the WESP Executive Committee. It is important to note that performance plans are not necessarily punitive. The plans can include things such as additional resources, training, and support.

Recommendation:

The WESP Renewal Process Executive Committee Members should assign responsibility, in writing, to the COO for the outcomes of both the 2018 Workforce Strategic Equity Plan (WESP 1.0) and the 2024-2028 Workforce Strategic Equity Plan (WESP 2.0). When performance measures are not met, the COO or the responsible elected official should put a performance plan in place.



Recommendations

Department-specific Recommendations

County management has announced its plan to centralize HR functions over the next two fiscal years. Regardless of this structural change, we expect management to implement the intent of the HR-related recommendations.

We recommend that the **Department of Community Justice**, no later than March 1, 2026:

1. Investigate the concerns raised in the countywide employee survey regarding belonging and report to department staff on findings and steps for improvement.
2. Investigate the concerns raised in the countywide employee survey regarding responding to discriminatory behavior and report to department staff on findings and steps for improvement.
3. Embed equity practices in all decision-making processes.

We recommend that the **Department of Community Services** implement the following, no later than March 1, 2026:

1. Advocate to the Board for funding to build capacity for equity data collection and analysis to inform equity efforts.
2. Embed equity practices in all decision-making processes.

We recommend that the **Department of County Assets** implement the following, no later than March 1, 2026:

1. Embed equity practices in all decision-making processes.

We recommend that the **Department of County Human Services** implement the following, no later than March 1, 2026:

1. Embed equity practices in all decision-making processes.

We recommend that the **Department of County Management** implement the following, no later than March 1, 2026:

1. Advocate to the Board for funding to build capacity for equity data collection and analysis to inform equity efforts.
2. Embed equity practices in all decision-making processes.

We recommend that the **District Attorney's Office** implement the following, no later than March 1, 2026:

1. Hire an equity analyst.
2. Establish a centralized system for monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of all equity initiatives. This system should include clear metrics, standardized reporting procedures, and a mechanism for collecting feedback from both employees and the community.
3. Embed equity practices in all decision-making processes.

We recommend that the **Health Department** implement the following, no later than March 1, 2026:

1. Hire an equity manager.
2. Advocate to the Board for funding to build capacity for equity data collection and analysis to inform equity efforts.
3. Develop a comprehensive equity plan that outlines specific goals, strategies, and initiatives for advancing equity.
4. Establish a centralized system for monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of all equity initiatives. This system should include clear metrics, standardized reporting procedures, and a mechanism for collecting feedback from both employees and the community.
5. Investigate the concerns raised in the countywide employee survey regarding responding to discriminatory behavior and report to department staff on findings and steps for improvement.
6. Embed equity practices in all decision-making processes.

We recommend that the **Homeless Services Department** implement the following, no later than March 1, 2026:

1. Investigate the concerns raised in the countywide employee survey regarding workload distribution and report to department staff on findings and steps for improvement.
2. Embed equity practices in all decision-making processes.

We recommend that the **Library** implement the following, no later than March 1, 2026:

1. To address the low scores related to opportunities for providing feedback, management should:

- a. Implement a process for documenting, analyzing, and responding to employee feedback in a timely and transparent manner.
 - b. Implement multiple avenues for employees to provide feedback, such as regular one-on-one meetings, anonymous surveys, and employee focus groups.
 - c. Provide training to supervisors on active listening, constructive feedback, and addressing employee concerns.
2. Investigate the concerns raised in the countywide employee survey regarding belonging and report to department staff on findings and steps for improvement.
 3. Investigate the concerns raised in the countywide employee survey regarding responding to discriminatory behavior and report to department staff on findings and steps for improvement.
 4. Investigate the concerns raised in the countywide employee survey regarding workload distribution and report to department staff on findings and steps for improvement.
 5. Embed equity practices in all decision-making processes.

We recommend that the **Multnomah County Sheriff's Office** implement the following, no later than March 1, 2026:

1. Hire an equity manager.
2. Advocate to the Board for funding to build capacity for equity data collection and analysis to inform equity efforts.
3. Develop a comprehensive equity plan that outlines specific goals, strategies, and initiatives for advancing equity.
4. Develop clear criteria for mandatory equity training completion and implement a process to hold managers accountable for ensuring both their own participation and the participation of their team members.
5. Develop a comprehensive equity training plan.
6. Establish a centralized system for monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of all equity initiatives. This system should include clear metrics, standardized reporting procedures, and a mechanism for collecting feedback from both employees and the community.
7. To address the low scores related to opportunities for providing feedback, management should:
 - a. Implement a process for documenting, analyzing, and responding to employee feedback in a timely and transparent manner.

- b. Implement multiple avenues for employees to provide feedback, such as regular one-on-one meetings, anonymous surveys, and employee focus groups.
 - c. Provide training to supervisors on active listening, constructive feedback, and addressing employee concerns.
8. Investigate the concerns raised in the countywide employee survey regarding belonging and report to department staff on findings and steps for improvement.
9. Investigate the concerns raised in the countywide employee survey regarding workload distribution and report to department staff on findings and steps for improvement.
10. Embed equity practices in all decision-making processes.

Countywide Recommendations

County management has announced its plan to centralize HR functions over the next two fiscal years. Regardless of this structural change, we expect management to implement the intent of the HR-related recommendations.

We recommend that the Chair, Sheriff, and District Attorney ensure that the following be completed no later than March 1, 2026:

1. All department HR units should conduct 360 reviews for managers annually.
2. All 360 reviews should be saved in Workday.
3. All department HR units should give every employee leaving the county the opportunity to fill out an anonymous exit survey about their experience.
4. The equity analyst for each department should aggregate information from the 360 reviews and exit surveys annually to identify patterns. The department director, department HR, and the equity manager should develop and implement plans to address issues.
5. Central and department HR should ensure that prior to terminating an employee, HR managers consult with an equity manager or a representative from the ODE.
6. Central HR and department HR should enforce Personnel Rule 3-42 (Gender Identity and Gender Expression Harassment and Discrimination Free Workplace).

We recommend that the Office of Diversity and Equity should ensure the following be completed no later than March 1, 2026:

7. Ensure the Disability Equity Policy Analyst Senior position remains in their office, rather than moving it to the soon-to-be-created centralized accommodations unit in HR. This will allow the position to maintain independence from HR.
8. Regularly publicize the Disability Equity Policy Analyst Senior position so that staff know this resource is available.

We recommend that the County Chair should ensure that the following be completed no later than March 1, 2026:

9. Central and department HR should create disability KSAs that require staff to have expertise in all of the following: the Americans with Disabilities Act, reasonable accommodations, disability justice, and the impacts of ableism.
10. Central HR should ensure that all staff working in the soon-to-be-created centralized accommodations unit should be required to have a disability KSA.
11. Expand the central pool of money available for the College to County internship program.
12. DCM Contracting should ensure that countywide contracting processes include equity, including:
 - a. plain language procurement documents
 - b. technical assistance for vendors
 - c. diverse evaluation panels
 - d. interviewing culturally specific providers who have not been selected for county contracts to determine the barriers that they faced
13. Central HR/Workday Team should give equity data analysts access to the Workday report “MCR Flex worker report for researchers” that has more detailed demographic data.
14. The COO should modify personnel rule 3-65 to allow employees to telework internationally for a limited duration while caring for a family member. If the request is denied, the employee should be provided the rationale in writing.

We also recommend that the following be completed no later than March 1, 2026:

15. The Board of County Commissioners should create specific criteria for determining what events or causes merit proclamations and/or bridge lightings.
16. The WESP Renewal Process Executive Committee Members should assign responsibility, in writing, to the COO for the outcomes of both the 2018 Workforce Strategic Equity Plan (WESP 1.0) and the 2024-2028 Workforce Strategic Equity Plan (WESP 2.0).
When performance measures are not met, the COO or the responsible elected official should put a performance plan in place.

Objectives, Scope, & Methodology

The objectives of this audit were to:

- Evaluate each department's progress and current standing within an equity maturity model framework.
- Identify and analyze any disparities in turnover rates, wages, and representation in management positions across different demographic groups.
- Assess the Workforce Equity Strategic Plan's goal-setting and accountability framework.
- Evaluate the adequacy of resources and support for equity initiatives and accountability.

During our audit, we heard concerns about the Complaints Investigation Unit (CIU). The Department of County Management's Evaluation and Research Unit was simultaneously conducting a CIU study. To avoid potential duplication, we did not include the CIU in our audit scope.

To accomplish these objectives, we:

- Conducted 45 interviews with county employees
- Conducted 13 listening sessions with groups of county employees
- Extended an invitation to meet with every Employee Resource Group
- Researched literature
- Read audits and reports from other jurisdictions
- Reviewed program documents
- Analyzed human resources data
- Studied countywide employee survey data

For this audit, we analyzed human resources data from July 1, 2019 through July 1, 2024 from Workday. This time period allowed us to see trends that occurred over time, instead of looking at shorter periods that were potentially impacted by a one-time event. To

ensure consistency, we utilized demographic descriptors from Workday, the county's HR and enterprise resource planning system. We acknowledge that these terms may not always be preferred. We spoke with the Multnomah County Evaluation and Research Unit to ensure we understood the data definitions in Workday. Additionally, we chose to show data from small groups of people because, as explained by groups such as the Native Data Transparency Project (a group which promotes accurate and authentic collecting and reporting of Indigenous data), omitting small groups from reporting is a form of erasure.

To ensure the reliability of this data, we employed several methods: electronic testing for accuracy and completeness, interviews with knowledgeable county officials, review of related documentation, and close collaboration with county officials to identify any data problems. Based on these efforts, we determined the data were sufficiently reliable for this report's purposes.

We used multiple regressions to see if there were differences in outcomes. Those with a p-value less than 0.05 were considered statistically significant. In other words, there is a low likelihood that this was due to chance. The statistically significant differences are the only ones noted in the employee outcome measures. Data in orange indicates a worse outcome for that demographic group, dark blue indicates a better outcome, and gray means that the difference in outcomes was not statistically significant.

We evaluated the following outcome measures based on suggestions from people we interviewed:

- **Rate of Being Hired 2019–2024:** This measure looks at how often each demographic group was hired. We reviewed all applicants who applied for a job opening at the county from July 1, 2019 to July 1, 2024. We only included those who were considered for the job. We did not include those that were disqualified due to things such as not meeting the minimum qualifications, failing a background check or entrance exam, or having an incomplete application. Some columns will say "no data" for this outcome measure, because fewer demographics are collected during the hiring phase.
- **Rate of not Passing Trial Service Period 2019–2024:** This measure looks at how often employees from each demographic group did not pass their trial service period. We reviewed employees who worked at the county from July 1, 2019 to July 1, 2024. We counted anyone with a termination reason of "Probationary Dismissal" in Workday.

- **Rate of Being Fired 2019–2024:** This measure looks at how often each demographic group was fired. We reviewed employees who worked at the county from July 1, 2019 to July 1, 2024. We counted anyone with an involuntary termination in Workday, except those with a probationary dismissal.
- **Rate of Quitting 2019–2024:** This measure looks at how often each demographic group quit. We reviewed employees who worked at the county from July 1, 2019 to July 1, 2024. We counted anyone with a voluntary termination in Workday, except those who were retiring.
- **Rate of Being Promoted 2019–2024:** This measure looks at how often each demographic group was promoted. We reviewed employees who worked at the county from July 1, 2019 to July 1, 2024. We counted anyone with a promotion in Workday.
- **Change in Pay from 2019 to 2024:** This measure looks at the numeric change in pay from 2019 to 2024. We reviewed the same employees who worked at the county on July 1, 2019 and July 1, 2024. We converted pay to an hourly rate so that those who changed the number of hours worked per week during that time would not skew the results. For each individual, we examined how much their pay changed from July 1, 2019 to July 1, 2024.
- **Rate of Having a Supervisory Position in 2024:** This measure looks at the percentage of employees who are supervisors. We reviewed employees who worked at the county on July 1, 2019 and July 1, 2024. We included anyone who has an employee who reports to them.

We conducted this performance audit in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain sufficient, appropriate evidence to provide a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objective. We believe that the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives.

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Response Letters



MULTNOMAH COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

Sheriff Nicole Morrissey O'Donnell

July 17, 2025

Jennifer McGuirk, MPA, CIA
Multnomah County Auditor
501 SE Hawthorne Blvd., Room 601
Portland, OR 97214

Auditor McGuirk,

As the Multnomah County Sheriff, I appreciate the time and attention you and your team dedicated to engaging in an audit of the countywide equity work. With so many varied bodies of operations, elected authority, and official oversight, conducting an audit such as this is challenging. For example, at MCSO, through required accreditation processes for both Corrections and Law Enforcement, we are accountable for meeting compliance standards that relate to wellness and equity, to include training and performance reviews. Given these dynamics, I am disappointed that consideration was not given to less prescriptive recommendations that allow for individualized approaches that are more adaptive for this office.

Based upon this template response letter that you provided, for brevity I have combined your recommendations into the two sections below and provided a brief summary response to those sections.

*We recommend that the **Chair, Sheriff, and District Attorney** ensure that the following be completed no later than March 1, 2026:*

- 1. All department HR units should conduct 360 reviews for managers annually.*
- 2. All 360 reviews should be saved in Workday.*
- 3. All department HR units should give every employee leaving the county the opportunity to fill out an anonymous exit survey about their experience.*

4. *The equity analyst for each department should aggregate information from the 360 reviews and exit surveys annually to identify patterns. The department director, department HR, and the equity manager should develop and implement plans to address issues.*
5. *Central and department HR should ensure that prior to terminating an employee, HR managers consult with an equity manager or a representative from the ODE.*
6. *Central HR and department HR should enforce Personnel Rule 3-42 (Gender Identity and Gender Expression Harassment and Discrimination Free Workplace).*

Beginning in early 2024, the Multnomah County Sheriff's Office implemented reviews for all members within the Law Enforcement Division and all supervisors, managers, and executive leaders agencywide. These reviews are conducted annually and are subject to compliance review by the accrediting body. As the Sheriff's Office further develops its human resources capacity beyond hiring and recruiting, we look forward to continuing to work with Central Human Resources to expand opportunities for our wellness and equity team.

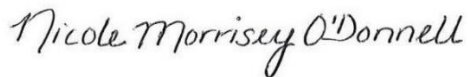
*We recommend that the **Multnomah County Sheriff's Office** implement the following, no later than March 1, 2026:*

1. *Hire an equity manager.*
2. *Advocate to the Board for funding to build capacity for equity data collection and analysis to inform equity efforts.*
3. *Develop a comprehensive equity plan that outlines specific goals, strategies, and initiatives for advancing equity.*
4. *Develop clear criteria for mandatory equity training completion and implement a process to hold managers accountable for ensuring both their own participation and the participation of their team members.*
5. *Develop a comprehensive equity training plan.*
6. *Establish a centralized system for monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of all equity initiatives. This system should include clear metrics, standardized reporting procedures, and a mechanism for collecting feedback from both employees and the community.*
7. *To address the low scores related to opportunities for providing feedback, management should:*
 - a. *Implement a process for documenting, analyzing, and responding to employee feedback in a timely and transparent manner.*
 - b. *Implement multiple avenues for employees to provide feedback, such as regular one-on-one meetings, anonymous surveys, and employee focus groups.*

- c. Provide training to supervisors on active listening, constructive feedback, and addressing employee concerns.*
- 8. Investigate the concerns raised in the countywide employee survey regarding belonging and report to department staff on findings and steps for improvement.*
- 9. Investigate the concerns raised in the countywide employee survey regarding workload distribution and report to department staff on findings and steps for improvement.*
- 10. Embed equity practices in all decision-making processes.*

Each year during the annual budget process, I have prioritized public safety and maintained funded positions dedicated to human resources, equity, planning and research, and training. We have been working through several recruitments for these important positions and are in the process of onboarding for a few. For those positions that are still vacant, we are excited to continue our efforts and welcome these skilled professionals to MCSO. Developing and engaging in training related to wellness, equity, and culture remains a requirement through sworn certification and within our accreditation standards. As our teams become fully staffed, we intend to take the next steps necessary to begin tracking and evaluating the opportunities for improvement and our progress as it relates to wellness and equity.

Sincerely,



Nicole Morrisey O'Donnell

Sheriff



Nathan Vasquez, Multnomah County District Attorney

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July 18, 2025

Jennifer McGuirk, MPA, CIA
Multnomah County Auditor
501 SE Hawthorne Blvd., Room 601
Portland, OR 97214

Dear Auditor McGuirk,

Thank you for the time, thought, and care you and your team dedicated to the Countywide Equity Audit. The District Attorney's Office shares your commitment to equity, accountability, and continuous improvement. We recognize that progress in these areas requires sustained effort, thoughtful collaboration, and a willingness to engage with difficult issues. We appreciate your recommendations and look forward to continued dialogue as we work to strengthen equity practices across the County.

With respect to the Countywide recommendations, the District Attorney's Office supports the use of 360 reviews as a tool for feedback and professional development and looks forward to working with Central Human Resources to develop and implement a standardized, Countywide approach to completing and maintaining 360 reviews that ensures consistency, equity, and meaningful use of results.

The District Attorney's Office acknowledges the recommendation to implement anonymous exit surveys as a standardized Countywide practice. We look forward to continued conversations with Central Human Resources about how this practice might be structured and implemented in a way that adds value and aligns with the needs of both the County and our office.

The District Attorney's Office also supports thoughtful, equitable decision-making in all employment matters and will consult with Central Human Resources regarding engaging in equity consultation prior to any termination. Additionally, we remain invested in enforcing Personnel Rule 3-42 (Gender Identity and Gender Expression Harassment and Discrimination Free Workplace) and will coordinate with Central Human Resources to ensure continued compliance and education in this area.

In response to the recommendations directed specifically to our office, we are currently reviewing the appropriate structure to support and strengthen our equity initiatives. In partnership with our new Human Resources Manager, the District Attorney's Equity Manager will assess the best configuration for equity-focused staffing, including consideration of an equity analyst position. Finally, we also appreciate the

recommendation to establish a centralized system for monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of our equity initiatives and are exploring how best to align these efforts with Countywide systems while tailoring them to the context of our office.

Thank you again for your thoughtful work on the Countywide Equity Audit.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Nathan Vasquez". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Nathan" written in a larger, more prominent script than the last name "Vasquez".

Nathan Vasquez, District Attorney

July 18, 2025

Jennifer McGuirk, MPA, CIA
Multnomah County Auditor
501 SE Hawthorne Blvd., Room 601
Portland, OR 97214

Dear Auditor McGuirk,

On behalf of myself and Chief Operating Officer Christopher Neal, I want to thank you and your staff for your audit of the County's efforts to advance equity across our organization. In a time when equity is under attack at the national level, it is critical that our organization remains focused on prioritizing and fostering this work. We are also grateful for the opportunity to respond to the specific recommendations identified in the audit. While there are some areas where we may be addressing the identified need in a different manner, we overall are in agreement with the spirit of the recommendations you made.

On March 14, 2024 the Board of County Commissioners unanimously approved the 2024 - 2028 Workforce Equity Strategic Plan (WESP). That plan builds upon the original WESP that was adopted in 2018 and amended in 2019, and consists of 33 action benchmarks across eight initiatives. To date, the following WESP benchmarks have been actualized: the Implementation Committee was stood up and is now concluded; the staff Disability Experience survey has been completed; the Data Consortium has been activated; the recruitment for the Gender Committee will begin this summer; Feedback Pilot in Workday was completed and findings will be shared in the near future; and the centralized Accommodation Unit is currently being designed.

In May 2025, COO Neal announced that the County will embark on a two year effort to centralize human resources functions under Central HR and the Chief Human Resources Officer. We strongly believe that this centralization will strengthen the County's workforce equity efforts by providing more standardization and consistency of processes, outcomes and systems. As that work advances, it will be informed by the recommendations identified in this audit, as well as the benchmarks found in the 2024 - 2028 WESP.

We believe that equity is a core value of our organization, and that efforts to embed equity practices across our organization must begin with a firm

commitment and real action by County leadership. By embracing the priority of implementing equity practices, our leaders can work alongside employees and the broader community to ensure that those practices flow down through our organization and are implemented consistently and with accountability, through a framework that ensures psychological safety and trust for every employee of the County. Much of that work to center equity in our organizational culture is being led by the organizational culture work group that was convened in response to the Evaluation and Research Unit's 2025 review of the Complaints Investigation Unit, and will be conducted in alignment with the WESP and with consistent communication to our employees.

The County welcomes the following recommendations and provides our responses and additional information below.

Auditor's note: County management has announced its plan to centralize HR functions over the next two fiscal years. Regardless of this structural change, we expect management to implement the intent of the HR-related recommendations.

We recommend that the **Chair, Sheriff, and District Attorney** ensure that the following be completed no later than March 1, 2026:

1. All department HR units should conduct 360 reviews for managers annually.

The County accepts this recommendation. *Per Focus Area 2 of the 2018 - 2022 WESP, the County is working toward adopting a standard approach for conducting annual 360 reviews across the organization; currently those take place in some but not all departments. That work is ongoing.*

2. All 360 reviews should be saved in Workday.

The County partially accepts this recommendation. *When 360 reviews have been implemented organization-wide, those reviews will be saved and accessible to employees and managers, however that system may or may not utilize Workday.*

3. All department HR units should give every employee leaving the county the opportunity to fill out an anonymous exit survey about their experience.

The County accepts this recommendation and it matches pre-existing County practices. Currently, every employee does have the ability to participate in an exit survey upon their departure from the organization, and Central HR and ODE believe that the information collected in those surveys is most actionable when the respondent's identity, work unit, division and/or department are known. The County will develop a process to allow departing employees to request and submit an anonymous exit survey through their department HR unit.

4. The equity analyst for each department should aggregate information from the 360 reviews and exit surveys annually to identify patterns. The department director, department HR, and the equity manager should develop and implement plans to address issues.

The County partially accepts this recommendation. Not every department has an equity analyst position, nor do all equity analysts have data analysis skills. Currently, department HR has the ability to analyze exit survey data in order to review the data, respond accordingly and identify trends to share with department leaders. As 360 reviews are implemented organization-wide and the centralization of HR functions advances, the County will incorporate the use of 360 review data and standardize processes for conducting these analyses.

5. Central and department HR should ensure that prior to terminating an employee, HR managers consult with an equity manager or a representative from the ODE.

The County partially accepts this recommendation. Central HR and ODE will have discussions with Equity Managers, HR and department directors about the feasibility of implementing this recommendation.

6. Central HR and department HR should enforce Personnel Rule 3-42 (Gender Identity and Gender Expression Harassment and Discrimination Free Workplace).

The County accepts this recommendation and currently enforces this and other related Personnel Rules regularly. Under our rules, the County is required to thoroughly and promptly address any complaint. We affirm our commitment to this important work rule.

We recommend that the Office of Diversity and Equity should ensure the following be completed no later than March 1, 2026:

7. Ensure the Disability Equity Policy Analyst Senior position remains in their office, rather than moving it to the soon-to-be-created centralized accommodations unit in HR. This will allow the position to maintain independence from HR.

The County accepts this recommendation and it matches pre-existing County practices. *The existing plan is to keep the Disability Equity Policy Analyst Senior position in ODE.*

8. Regularly publicize the Disability Equity Policy Analyst Senior position so that staff know this resource is available.

The County accepts this recommendation and it matches pre-existing County practices. *The role has been promoted through their attendance in HR meetings and by collaborating with workgroups that address disabilities and ADA accommodations. In addition, this work has been promoted in the ODE newsletter as well as the Wednesday Wire. ODE Leadership also makes sure to have this position included in conversations taking place at the Executive level to bring in their ADA expertise.*

We recommend that the **County Chair** should ensure that the following be completed no later than March 1, 2026:

9. Central and department HR should create disability KSAs that require staff to have expertise in all of the following: the Americans with Disabilities Act, reasonable accommodations, disability justice, and the impacts of ableism.

The County accepts this recommendation and it matches pre-existing County practices. *We agree that anyone working on issues relating to disabilities and human resources should have knowledge, skills and abilities covering the Americans with Disabilities Act, reasonable accommodations, disability justice and the impacts of ableism.*

10. Central HR should ensure that all staff working in the soon-to-be-created centralized accommodations unit should be required to have a disability KSA.

The County accepts this recommendation and it matches pre-existing County practices. *We agree that anyone working on issues relating to disabilities and human resources should have knowledge, skills and*

abilities covering the Americans with Disabilities Act, reasonable accommodations, disability justice and the impacts of ableism.

11. Expand the central pool of money available for the College to County internship program.

The County partially accepts this recommendation. We strongly support the College to County internship program and believe it is an important tool for advancing workforce equity. Choices to expand the amount of money available for the program will be made by the Board of County Commissioners through the annual budgeting process and will depend on available resources and operational needs.

12. DCM Contracting should ensure that countywide contracting processes include equity, including:

- a. plain language procurement documents
- b. technical assistance for vendors
- c. diverse evaluation panels
- d. interviewing culturally specific providers who have not been selected for county contracts to determine the barriers that they faced

The County accepts this recommendation and it matches pre-existing County practices.

- a. *Plain language procurement documents: The County maintains 14 sourcing event boilerplate documents in our Multco Marketplace. These are used by Departments as the basis to create the different types of sourcing events conducted by the County. These will be reviewed for plain language standards as they come up for review or revision.*
- b. *Technical assistance for vendors: Through the contracts improvement project we are exploring a way to solicit technical assistance services for various contract administration elements (e.g. federal requirements, building a costs allocation plan, how to contract with government agencies, etc.) with the aim at making these services available to potential and existing community based organizations. We plan to work with Countywide stakeholders as this is carried forward.*
- c. *Diverse evaluation panels: Our primary policy addressing evaluation panels is [P-107 Evaluating Best Value Competitive Sourcing Events](#). Deviations from the general panel makeup are approved by the Purchasing Manager via email and documented in the sourcing event file. That noted, our evaluation panels are identified by the requesting*

department and are selected for their knowledge of the services being evaluated. These evaluators are subject matter experts in the field and prior to the start of the evaluation, evaluators are provided with the evaluation process, procedure, and handbook going over the County's expectations for evaluators. Evaluators are expected to evaluate without prejudice and ensure fairness and equal opportunity throughout the evaluation process.

- d. *Interviewing culturally specific providers who have not been selected for county contracts to determine the barriers that they faced: At the conclusion of all formal sourcing events (over \$250,000), the Senior Procurement Analysts in Central Purchasing who conducted the event will provide a debriefing to any supplier who requests it. We encourage them to request these debriefings as it is to their business' benefit to understand where their proposal fell short. Our hope is that they are more competitive in future sourcing events with us. We will explore offering debriefs for informal sourcing events in the future.*

13. Central HR/Workday Team should give equity data analysts access to the Workday report "MCR Flex worker report for researchers" that has more detailed demographic data.

The County partially accepts this recommendation. *Central HR has minimized the access to HR data due to its sensitivity. Central HR will continue to partner with our equity managers, analysts, and department leaders to ensure that they have access to any data needed to conduct their work.*

14. The COO should modify personnel rule 3-65 to allow employees to telework internationally for a limited duration while caring for a family member. If the request is denied, the employee should be provided the rationale in writing.

The County does not accept this recommendation. *This question was recently reviewed by County leadership, and it was determined that there are too many constraints related to allowing employees to work internationally to feasibly implement this change.*

We also recommend that the following be completed no later than March 1, 2026:

15. The Board of County Commissioners should create specific criteria for determining what events or causes merit proclamations and/or bridge lightings.

This recommendation focuses on countywide or interdepartmental work under the purview of the Board of County Commissioners. Acceptance of a recommendation does not mean endorsement by the Board of Commissioners nor does it represent the perspective of the Board. Responses are representative of the County's executive leadership tasked with responding to the Auditor's report and were drafted in consultation with relevant departments.

The County partially accepts this recommendation. *Lighting requests are generally managed by the Willamette Light Brigade (WLB), which schedules events and then coordinates with DCS staff on implementation. WLB and DCS have an established process for receiving and organizing bridge lighting requests. Many organizations pre-register events many months in advance. On occasion, the Chair or Commissioners may request a certain lighting event. The Chair's Office, in partnership with the Department of Community Services, will establish criteria for consideration of special lighting requests from the Chair or commissioners that fall outside of the standard process.*

The decision to honor a proclamation is made by the Board of County Commissioners. Ongoing conversations around improving the recognition process for proclamations and designations will continue.

Acceptance of this recommendation does not mean endorsement by the Board of Commissioners nor does it represent the perspective of the Board.

16. The WESP Renewal Process Executive Committee Members should assign responsibility, in writing, to the COO for the outcomes of both the 2018 Workforce Strategic Equity Plan (WESP 1.0) and the 2024-2028 Workforce Strategic Equity Plan (WESP 2.0). When performance measures are not met, the COO or the responsible elected official should put a performance plan in place.

The County accepts this recommendation and it matches pre-existing County practices. *The responsibility for implementing the WESP falls to the Chief Operating Officer. When necessary, COO Neal will establish performance plans to ensure that the work of the WESP is advanced.*

Joint Departmental Response to Recommendation: Embed equity practices in all decision-making processes.

Our departments acknowledge and accept the recommendation to embed equity practices in all decision-making processes. We recognize the crucial importance of this ongoing effort and are committed to integrating equity more deeply into our operations.

We are pleased that the audit acknowledged the equity practices many of our departments already have in place. For example, every department utilizes equity tools and provides equity training to staff during the budget development process. DCJ also benefits from two dedicated advisory groups: the Diversity Equity Steering Committee and the Policy Equity Advisory Committee, which regularly review practices and policies through an equity lens. Similarly, the Homeless Services Department (HSD) has already embedded equity into its policy reviews and budget decisions, including through consultation with their Equity Advisory Committee and Lived Experience Advisory Committee. DCHS has the Diversity Equity and Social Justice Committee (DESJC) composed of employees from across the Department. This committee participates in the budget review with support and guidance from the Equity Manager. These are just a few examples of how our departments currently embed equity into our decision-making processes.

While we are committed to this recommendation, we also recognize that implementing equity practices across all decision-making processes, particularly in highly operational areas, will require careful consideration to ensure practicality and effectiveness. We are dedicated to identifying the most impactful ways to embed equity broadly.

All departments will continue to engage relevant staff and advisory groups in identifying areas for ongoing improvement and potential changes to current practices, in line with this recommendation. We are committed to an adaptive approach that allows us to strengthen our equity practices continually.

We recommend that the **Department of Community Justice**, no later than March 1, 2026:

1. Investigate the concerns raised in the countywide employee survey regarding belonging and report to department staff on findings and steps for improvement.

DCJ accepts this recommendation and it matches pre-existing County practices. DCJ regularly follows up on the results of the countywide employee survey to address identified trends.

Several steps have already been taken in this regard, following the publication of the 2024 countywide employee survey, which was presented at the DCJ employee town hall. These steps include holding an annual State of DCJ meeting, budget town hall meetings, and division town hall meetings, a monthly department-wide newsletter and standalone leadership message, in addition to conducting “stay interviews” to gather staff feedback at regular intervals during an employee's tenure. At 6 weeks, 4 months and 9 month intervals, our Equity Manager engages new staff in a new employee survey. This feedback from employees will guide DCJ leadership, the equity team and human resources in our continued efforts to adapt and address based on our employee's feedback. In 2024, DCJ also completed a wellness initiative to support employee wellbeing.

2. Investigate the concerns raised in the countywide employee survey regarding responding to discriminatory behavior and report to department staff on findings and steps for improvement.

DCJ accepts this recommendation and it matches pre-existing County practices; while acknowledging the role of, and required coordination with, Central Human Resources regarding response to discriminatory behavior.

DCJ is reviewing and updating its Grievance and Complaint Policy for Justice Involved individuals, including a process for tracking trends. DCJ also currently has an anonymous feedback form available to staff, monitored by the Director.

As possible, DCJ will share trends and steps for improvement, with consideration for general limitations regarding sharing resolution regarding personnel related matters.

3. Embed equity practices in all decision-making processes.

Please see our response above.

We recommend that the **Department of Community Services** implement the following, no later than March 1, 2026:

1. Advocate to the Board for funding to build capacity for equity data collection and analysis to inform equity efforts.

DCS partially accepts this recommendation. While DCS currently gathers data on employee demographics for analysis in terms of diversity and trends, in the future DCS will examine other aspects of their work to collect equity data. In the development of the FY 2026 Budget, DCS applied an equity lens, used by department leaders, and will continue to do this in the annual budget process going forward.

2. Embed equity practices in all decision-making processes.

Please see our response above.

We recommend that the **Department of County Assets** implement the following, no later than March 1, 2026:

1. Embed equity practices in all decision-making processes.

Please see our response above.

We recommend that the **Department of County Human Services** implement the following, no later than March 1, 2026:

1. Embed equity practices in all decision-making processes.

Please see our response above.

We recommend that the **Department of County Management** implement the following, no later than March 1, 2026:

1. Advocate to the Board for funding to build capacity for equity data collection and analysis to inform equity efforts.

DCM partially accepts this recommendation. While supporting efforts to increase capacity for equity efforts in the department, resource and funding requests will be evaluated by department leaders through the annual budget process and are dependent on existing operational needs.

2. Embed equity practices in all decision-making processes.

Please see our response above.

We recommend that the **Health Department** implement the following, no later than March 1, 2026:

1. Hire an equity manager.

The Health Department accepts this recommendation. *The Health Department is in an active interview phase of recruitment for the Manager of the Office of Health Equity. The Department anticipates welcoming someone into that role by fall 2025. This new leadership will be instrumental in leading and guiding the Department's holistic vision of health and workforce equity forward via a multi-pronged internal and external equity strategy, with system-wide accountability across the HD to our health equity and Workforce Equity Strategic Plan (WESP) goals.*

2. Advocate to the Board for funding to build capacity for equity data collection and analysis to inform equity efforts.

The Health Department partially accepts this recommendation. *Resource and funding requests will be evaluated by department leaders through the annual budget process. Epidemiology and assessment is a core and unique responsibility for a governmental Health Department. Data collection and analysis are fundamental for completing the work required of local public health and local mental health authorities, and increased capacity is necessary to decrease preventable deaths and eliminate avoidable health inequities.*

3. Develop a comprehensive equity plan that outlines specific goals, strategies, and initiatives for advancing equity.

The Health Department partially accepts this recommendation. *The Department partially accepts this recommendation and submits that we have substantively met the intended goals and intentions of an equity plan through the Department's disparities-focused Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP), which was adopted by the Board of County Commissioners and implemented in 2017. The Department is actively engaged in the process of developing the 2026 CHIP as well as an expanded behavioral health Comprehensive Local Plan (CLP+) that also centers equity. Both action plans outline community health priority areas, goals, and equity-centered, action-oriented, health improvement strategies that the Health Department (HD) will implement directly and in collaboration with community and regional partners - i.e., intentionally working across multiple systems and levels to advance equity with community at the core and in partnership with the Department. Strategies included in both plans focus on prevention and health*

promotion - like decreasing preventable deaths and improving health outcomes across multiple demographics - and include actions that build systems and structures needed for a collective impact model that works toward improving social and economic factors that influence health outcomes and health equity across the continua of public and behavioral health.

The Health Department collects and analyzes an extensive and wide range of data across its programs and services to assess health trends, inform, and advance equity-focused strategies - internally and externally. These efforts aim to promote belonging, advance our workforce equity goals, prevent harm, address health needs, and drive measurable outcomes. For example, the HD performs systematic disaggregated data analyses and uses the analytics to: 1) assess how employees experience the organization across the employee lifecycle; and 2) evaluate program impacts/outcomes and identify inequities. The Department also has a dedicated team of epidemiologists who track health intelligence across multiple domains, including the leading causes of [preventable] disease and death in the County. These data are further disaggregated - for example, by race and ethnicity - which informs the design and implementation of culturally specific strategies and health policy that serve the entire community and address the root causal drivers of the leading causes of death. The HD focuses on the leading causes of death because this is where the Department can have the most impact and this is where the most egregious inequities are found.

Equity serves as the foundational framework for the development of the CHIP and CLP+. Individually and collectively, these plans fulfill the overarching purpose and intent of an equity plan by advancing actionable, population/community-centered strategies; fostering strong partnerships; embedding accountability through measurable outcomes; and driving systemic transformation via approaches aimed at advancing the Health Department, workforce, and service delivery toward realizing the Department's equity vision and objectives.

The CHIP and CLP+ are comprehensive, equity-focused plans that encompass the above-described goals, strategies, and initiatives for advancing equity. To that end, the Department partially accepts this recommendation on the basis that it has substantively met the intent and purpose of an equity plan via the CHIP and CLP+, but continuously seeks to create new pathways for a sustained, responsive, and resourced internal and external equity strategies with system-wide accountability

across the HD to our health equity and WESP goals. Development of an overarching Equity Plan - with the CHIP, CLP+, and WESP nested under and achieving the goals of the overarching Equity Plan - provides the HD an expanded opportunity to look across the Department to examine and optimize further Public Health Modernization, expanded Comprehensive Local Plan (CLP+) for behavioral health, and Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP), and workforce equity efforts as one department focused on health equity outcomes.

4. Establish a centralized system for monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of all equity initiatives. This system should include clear metrics, standardized reporting procedures, and a mechanism for collecting feedback from both employees and the community.

The Health Department accepts this recommendation.

Key components of normalizing and operationalizing equity is having the ability to assess the efficacy and impact - i.e., outcomes - of the equity-focused strategies that are supported by performance measures and performance management systems of accountability. The Health Department has an equity analyst within the HD's Office of Health Equity, and this position is poised to strengthen the Department's infrastructure and internal capacity to advance toward health equity and enhanced culturally-responsive programming and workforce equity efforts in the following ways:

- *Identifying and mapping data needs and gaps for internal and external equity.*
- *Reviewing current or establishing new equity-focused metrics across the Department in recruitment, retention, promotion, discipline, and program equity outcomes. If none exist, collaborating with internal/external partners to identify gaps and remediation strategies to bridge and remedy them.*
- *Performing gap analyses to identify missing data in the workforce lifecycle by represented status, race/ethnicity, gender identity, etc.*
- *Conducting performance data reviews of outcomes from Corrections Health, Public Health, Behavioral Health, Integrated Clinical Services - disaggregated by a variety of demographics. Gathering baseline data to improve tracking and measure progress (outcomes) over time.*

- *Enhancing transparency around Department equity-focused objectives, initiatives, progress, & outcomes, with strategic focus on what we are advancing toward.*

5. Investigate the concerns raised in the countywide employee survey regarding responding to discriminatory behavior and report to department staff on findings and steps for improvement.

The Health Department accepts this recommendation and it matches pre-existing County practices. *The Department will continue to regularly follow up on the results of the countywide employee survey and other inputs to address identified trends.*

6. Embed equity practices in all decision-making processes.

Please see our response above.

We recommend that the **Homeless Services Department** implement the following, no later than March 1, 2026:

1. Investigate the concerns raised in the countywide employee survey regarding workload distribution and report to department staff on findings and steps for improvement.

The HSD accepts this recommendation and it matches pre-existing County practices. *The department regularly follows up on the results of the countywide employee survey to address identified trends.*

2. Embed equity practices in all decision-making processes.

Please see our response above.

We recommend that the **Library** implement the following, no later than March 1, 2026:

1. To address the low scores related to opportunities for providing feedback, management should:
 - a. Implement a process for documenting, analyzing, and responding to employee feedback in a timely and transparent manner.
 - b. Implement multiple avenues for employees to provide feedback, such as regular one-on-one meetings, anonymous surveys, and employee focus groups.

- c. Provide training to supervisors on active listening, constructive feedback, and addressing employee concerns.

The Library accepts this recommendation and it matches pre-existing County practices. *The Library will investigate specific concerns raised regarding employee feedback.*

The Library offers several ways for staff to provide feedback. We will review this recommendation and ensure our practices are well-documented. We will also continue to review and improve upon the current practices.

The Library will follow up with managers to ensure they have clear guidance for hearing employee feedback and hosting regular one on one meetings with staff. This fall the Library is implementing a 360 degree review process for managers, beginning with our Executive Management Team.

Over the past two years, the Library has worked on several strategic projects that engaged employees to gather their input, including:

- *Future Staffing Plan*
- *Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities (KSA) Assessment*
- *Blueprint Project*

The Library's Employee Satisfaction Improvement Team (ESIT) is a department-wide effort that includes front-line staff and managers who have engaged staff to gather input to inform recommendations for improving employee satisfaction. The ESIT project is in progress with a report to the Executive Team scheduled for fall 2025.

The Library's Learning and Organizational Development team provides a wide range of manager tools and trainings to support timely, transparent feedback practices:

- *One on one meeting template*
- *Giving feedback best practices*
- *Managerial coaching*
- *Giving feedback*

The equity team also led a staff engagement process to define a positive culture of racial equity in the library. Activities were identified based on staff feedback. Pulse checks will begin in Fall 2025 and occur every six months to track progress or lack of progress towards this goal

2. Investigate the concerns raised in the countywide employee survey regarding belonging and report to department staff on findings and steps for improvement.

The Library accepts this recommendation and it matches pre-existing County practices. *The Library will investigate specific concerns raised regarding belonging.*

It is our understanding that staff may feel connected to their specific workgroups, but less connected to the larger organization. The Library is taking some actions to increase employees' sense of belonging, including:

- *Employee Satisfaction Improvement Team (ESIT)*
- *Staff engagement work and plan for pulse checks*
- *Staff retreats for teams with new leaders, significant team changes and as buildings reopen*

3. Investigate the concerns raised in the countywide employee survey regarding responding to discriminatory behavior and report to department staff on findings and steps for improvement.

The Library accepts this recommendation and it matches pre-existing County practices. *The Library will investigate specific concerns raised regarding the Library's response to discriminatory behavior.*

The library takes discriminatory behavior seriously and reported behavior is investigated by HR, and (former) CIU in consultation with the Equity Manager.

Behavior (including microaggressions) are addressed although reporting staff may not be aware that behaviors have been addressed due to confidentiality requirements. Library HR explains to reporting staff that the specific corrective action taken will not be shared with them; but that they should see an immediate change in the behavior of the respondent. HR also reminds staff if they feel like they are being retaliated against to immediately report it to any manager, HR and/or the union. HR also encourages managers of the reporting staff to regularly check-in with them to ensure there are no additional issues. Managers of the respondent are also encouraged to have on-going discussions with them to ensure the discriminatory behavior stops.

4. Investigate the concerns raised in the countywide employee survey regarding workload distribution and report to department staff on findings and steps for improvement.

The Library accepts this recommendation and it matches pre-existing County practices. *The Library will investigate specific concerns raised regarding workload distribution.*

The 2025 Library staffing plan and the associated work to clarify and streamline workflows and employee roles are efforts to reduce duplication of work, streamline processes and improve intergroup communication pathways. Successful implementation should lead to more optimal workloads, due to efficiencies and improved clarity about workload distribution, providing the opportunity to reallocate work if needed.

5. Embed equity practices in all decision-making processes.

Please see our response above.

Sincerely,

Jessica Vega Pederson, Chair



Christopher Neal, Chief Operating Officer



Auditor's Response to Chair's Response Letter

Jennifer McGuirk, Multnomah County Auditor



**Multnomah County
Auditor's Office**

Siniva Bennett
Dani Bernstein
Raymond De Silva
Nicole Dewees
Mandi Hood
Jeremy Johnson
Annamarie McNeil
Kate Milne
Moss Roberts
Marc Rose
Sura Sumareh
Cheryl Taylor
Mical Yohannes
Caroline Zavitkovski

Date: July 21, 2025

To: Jessica Vega Pederson, Multnomah County Chair

From: Jennifer McGuirk, Multnomah County Auditor

RE: Countywide equity audit response letter

As I shared with you via voice mail on July 18, when my office finds that management's response conflicts with my office's findings, conclusions, or recommendations, generally accepted government auditing standards direct me to explain my reasons for disagreement in writing and include them in the audit report (standard 9.52).

Many of your responses to my office's recommendations were that the recommended actions reflect pre-existing county practices. For example, one recommendation was that all department HR units should give every employee leaving the county the opportunity to fill out an anonymous exit survey about their experience.

This does not match existing county practices. But your response letter stated that it did, while describing existing practices that do not allow for anonymity. Claiming that those existing practices match what my office proposed was incorrect.

The response to that recommendation was only one of the claims that my office's recommendations match pre-existing county practices. I will not go through all of them. The

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point is that those response statements conflict with my office's findings, which were based on thousands of hours of data analysis, one-on-one interviews, focus group meetings, review of management-created documents, and other research. We would not need to recommend a course of action if it were already occurring.

One of the messages communicated in the audit results is that county employees have repeatedly pointed out areas that require change, only to be told that what they experienced did not occur or that improvement has taken place, even when employees see no evidence of that change. Employees described those interactions as the county invalidating their experiences and minimizing their concerns.

Similarly, stating that my office's recommendations match pre-existing county practices falsely equates what is with what could be. We make recommendations to you with the goal of improving county operations. I hope you will re-read the audit report and its recommendations to understand the ways in which existing practices do not match what my office has recommended.

Multnomah County Auditor

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