

WESP

renewal steering committee

Topic 1: Accountability
Capture
July 2023



Project Background

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

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

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

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

This capture shares the summary of our work session on the topic 1: Accountability. In the session, we explored the design challenge: **how might we increase organizational accountability through inclusively leading with race?**

Accountability Session Participants

Steering Committee members met at the June Key Delta Center on July 25 and July 27 to discuss the first focus area topic: Accountability.

Subject Matter Experts were invited to join the Steering Committee in designing recommendations to shift Multnomah County's accountability practices away from white supremacy culture.

SC Attendees

Ari Alberg
Joseph Almond
James Anderson
Ebonee Bell
Walle Brown
Eve Buchanan
Jonathan Cruz
Andrea Damewood
Rosa Garcia
Shannon Goultier
Timothy Ho
Chris Lenn
Ronald
Montgomery
Estelle Norris
Jenny O'Meara

Kalisha Stout
Arnita Tucker-McFarland
Larry Turner

Subject Matter Experts

Anna Allen
Monalisa Diamond
JR Lilly
Carlos Richard
Sophie Wilson

ODE/ MIL Facilitation Team

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

Two Days At-a-glance

Day 1

Review of Main Themes

The Steering Committee's first day highlighted main themes related to accountability that were identified at the June Retreat. We discussed [key challenges](#) related to current practices and barriers to address.

Box of Humanity

We anonymously shared stories of a mistake we made at work, the consequences, what we learned, what would have been supportive, and what we wish we'd had to remedy the impact.

White Supremacy Culture Characteristics

We then discussed how white supremacy culture characteristics show up in the County's current accountability practices.

Future Story

We envisioned a future state by considering the practices, data, and impact/outcomes needed to move toward alternative accountability models.

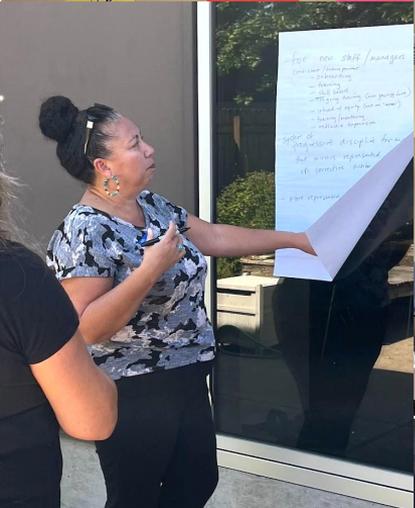
Day 2

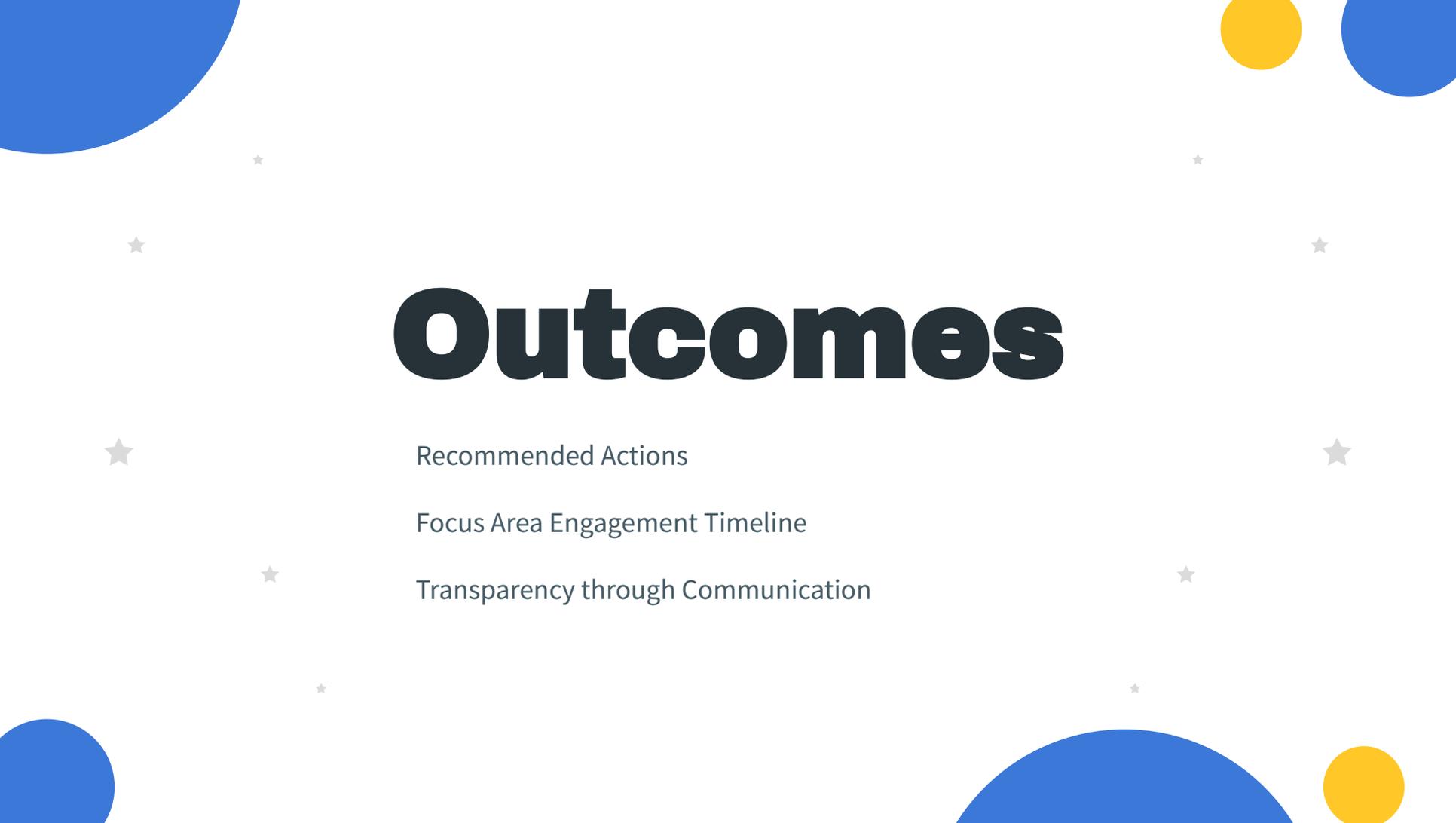
Madlib

We designed action statements with measurable outcomes to lead us toward the future vision.

Recommended Actions

Afterward, we identified overarching themes and created recommended actions to take, who is responsible for each action, and how we would measure success.





Outcomes

Recommended Actions

Focus Area Engagement Timeline

Transparency through Communication



Recommended Actions

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

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

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

Manager Accountability and Support

Current State

- CHR resources for conducting manager 360 reviews
- DCM 360 review pilot
- Organizational Learning Coaching Circles
- Departmental services
- County policies on discipline and Merit Council
- Leadership Expectations and Accountability Process

SC Recommended Actions

Developing comprehensive manager onboarding that includes technical, cultural, and supervisory aspects. Identifying and addressing managers' training and support needs.

Expanding new manager orientation and cohort learnings. Implementing mandated equity trainings to improve outcomes and client satisfaction.

Designing targeted training plans for managers and staff with performance issues.

Introduce 360-degree review requirements for managers and leaders to foster comprehensive performance evaluation.

Conflict Resolution Processes

Current State

- Article 24.II.A.1 Prejudicial Acts Prohibited (Microaggressions Policy)
- Gender Identity and Gender Expression Harassment and Discrimination Free Workplace
- OL Conflict Resolution Specialists
- Complaints Investigations Unit
- County Auditor and Ombudsman
- Departmental HR Resources
- Labor Unions

SC Recommended Actions

Countywide strategic focus on effective conflict resolution and restorative practices

Standardizing conflict resolution procedures across departments to ensure consistency and fairness.

Explore inclusive and restorative approaches to conflict resolution, prioritizing healing and mutual understanding.

Invest in a dedicated restorative practice coordinator within departments, emphasizing the importance of a holistic and collaborative approach to resolving conflicts.

Engagement and Representation

Current State

- Opportunities for staff to provide feedback and work on projects.
- Employee Resource Groups
- Countywide Engagement Survey
- ADA Workgroup
- Departmental Equity Committees
- WESP Committee

SC Recommended Actions

Empowering Employee Resource Groups (ERGs) to voice grievances and improve working conditions.

Ensuring direct representation from staff at all levels to shape policies.

Enhancing clarity in accountability mechanisms between Employee Resource Groups (ERGs) and leadership.

Communication and Awareness

Current State

- Countywide frameworks and resources that promote equity and include accountability.
- Equity and Empowerment lens
- Shared Language Guide
- Inclusively Leading with Race
- Core Competencies
- Organizational Learning
- Departmental Training Teams

SC Recommended Actions

Emphasize Transparency by creating mechanisms that provide visibility into equity accountability, progress, and disciplinary actions.

Analyze employment trends data, particularly for employees of color at the executive level, to ensure fairness and equity in career progression.

Equity Mandates and Measurements

Current State

- WESP Annual Reports
- Health Department Equity Leadership Program Recommendations
- Departmental Equity Strategic Plans
- Budget Board Briefings

SC Recommended Actions

Comprehensively integrate equity considerations into all organizational facets, encompassing job descriptions and educational classes.

Prioritize the visibility and accessibility of equity principles across the organization to foster an inclusive and fair environment.

Create standardized practices and responsibilities for equity teams to ensure consistent and effective implementation of equity initiatives.

Focus Area Engagement Timeline

DECEMBER 21ST BOARD BRIEFING

JULY 25 & 27

Accountability

Data
Practice

AUGUST 22 & 24

Restructuring

Data
Practice

SEPTEMBER 19 & 21

Retention

Data
Practice

OCTOBER 24, 26 + TBD NOVEMBER 14 & 16

Training / Data

Data
Practice

Compensation

Data
Practice

DECEMBER 12 13 & 14

Board Briefing Prep

Transparency through Communication

What We Did

To ensure transparency and accountability for the WESP renewal process, we discussed what information should be shared from our work sessions and with whom.

What We Learned

Share who the members of the Steering Committee are:

- What are their responsibilities for being a member?
- What are their affiliations?
- Do they want to add photos and biographies to the WESP renewal website?

Share the seven focus areas, give high level themes. Be sure information is reaching:

- ERGs, Equity managers, HR forum, HR executives, HR managers, Department directors, corporate leaders (COO, CHRO, Chair, BOC)

Have materials prepared to share at least two weeks in advance. Include a quote from membership.

Offer talking points. Do we have a mechanism for people to communicate back to us and share feedback?

Appendices

Details on Work Session Activities:

- Future Story
- Madlibs
- A Box of Humanity
- White Supremacy Cultural Characteristics

Future Stories 1/2

What We Did

We broke into groups to discuss what the future of accountability should look like for the County. We asked ourselves:

- How can we recognize the organizational level of failure, not individual level of failure?
- What can we do differently to leave the systemic practices of WSC?

Tuesday activity 4

The Future we want to see
How can we recognize the organizational level of failure, not individual level of failure? What can we do differently to leave the systemic practices of WSC?

Defensiveness

change the assumption that workers have to report by skipping level to a manager's supervisor, and then the supervisor assigns consequences. empower workers to directly enforce consequences

Hire an equity ombudsmen that sits outside of Ode.

Love this one. Outside perspective of EI/OE SME.

across the County to set everyone up for success

have multiple complaints

Create Goals that are SMART with real accountability.

Invite EI managers into the CU complaint process. Specific to mgrs.

ensure staff are not burnt out so they can still be empathetic to diverse experiences

fund equity work by paying participants stipends for the emotional labor

create a trauma leave PTO

Resist str plac

Future Stories 2/2

What We Learned

Flatten the hierarchy

Accountability required for managers and leadership as well as staff

Commitment for equity in everything we do Equity is ongoing throughout your career at the County, embedded in everything you d

Improve conflict resolution process

Develop a standardized process to ensure that equity teams are applying equity work similarly across departments. Offer protection for staff in the process, empower staff with tools and resources, and ensure manager accountability

Offer support and training

- Provide onboarding, ongoing training and coaching
- Identify those that need to take accountability and provide support
- Prevent burnout
- Offer compensation to individuals doing the work
- Build equity into budgets

Practice

- Gather and use best practices countywide
- Build on what we already have done
- Create a feedback loop
- Support cross team collaboration between CIU, equity team and HR

Data

- Support cross team information share such as employment trends
- Measurable consequences
- Accepting qualitative data as proof

Madlib! 1/5

What We Did

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

What We Learned

Accountability requires investments in staff support mechanisms, particularly for employees of color and managers, as well as transparency and consistency with disciplinary actions. We need robust data to measure employee experiences and demonstrate improvement over time.

Multnomah county will _____
Come up with a practice

as measured by _____
Come up with a data measure

so that _____.
Add impact/ outcome

See an Example here

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

MadLib! 2/5

Flatten the Hierarchy

Multnomah County shall **empower ERGs**:

- to make grievances on behalf of employees as measured by the number of employees voicing complaints so that they have another mechanism for protection.
- clarify existing mechanisms of accountability between ERGs and leadership; identify process gaps as measured by improved relationships feelings of safety and outcomes / activities of ERG so that ERGs are empowered to act and improve working conditions.

Multnomah County shall have **direct representation from staff at all levels** as measured by their equal participation across the hierarchy so that policies are reflective of all staff and their lived experiences.

Multnomah County shall **administer 360 reviews**:

- for all managers and leaders as measured by retention and feedback of BIPOC staff on manager/leadership teams so that everyone feels valued visible and heard.
- create a centralized team as measured by new positions created and filled so that feedback is added to PPRs and performance is tracked, recognized, and supported or disciplined.

Multnomah County shall provide **transparency**:

- learn about equity [Employee Experience] accountability and progress discipline for all [Employee Experiences] at all levels and operationalize consistency in practice as measured by developing deliverables and tracking discipline outcomes in Workday so that we can view data and measure consistency.
- review employment trends data for executive level management so that we see hiring promotion retention of employees of color.

MadLib! 3/5

Commitment to Equity in Everything We Do

Multnomah County shall **commit to equity** and everything as measured by:

- every position in the county stating a definition of what leading with race looks like so that everybody gets it and all are held accountable to do the work to dismantle white supremacy in our institution.
- add and identify equity components in every class specification and job description as measured by percentage completion and Workday and job profiles so that every employee can be held accountable to equity practices.

Multnomah County shall **make equity “front page”** as it is measured by its presence and visibility on the Commons page at the top so that every Multnomah County employee can easily access it.

Multnomah County shall create **standard rules and responsibilities:**

- for every Equity team across the county as measured by documents and training to ensure shared understanding so that there are clear expectations, shared understanding, and commitment to equity team's roles and responsibilities.
- endorse a unified definition of our Equity practice as measured by a standardized definition so that all staff have the same understanding.
- require the application of the equity lens for every program application as measured by scheduled reviews quarterly so that the application of equity throughout the county is uniform.

Multnomah County shall review and **improve PPR** process as measured by improved reporting of PPR metrics so that employees understand how these are used throughout their career at the county.

MadLib! 4/5

Improve Conflict Resolution Processes

Multnomah County shall develop **standardized process** to:

- better ensure that conflict resolution processes work similarly across departments as measured by a reduction in formal complaints and an increase in employee satisfaction.
- explore inclusive conflict resolution processes as measured by having different options to mediate conflict so that conflict resolution is restorative and reparative through authentic relationships.
- invest in every department having a restorative practice process as measured by having a restorative practice co-ord so that employees are afforded a different avenue to conflict resolution.

Multnomah County shall have **culturally competent department mediators** as measured by new positions created and filled so that staff have alternative trauma-informed resolution resources and fewer staff enter progressive discipline / CIU process.

Multnomah County shall have **disciplinary actions** against problematic management as a collective representative team as measured by every participant on a team in agreement and decides to leverage an act of discipline so that it has the same value or weight as disciplinary action taken by management.

Multnomah County shall provide a mechanism that **improves transparency of the process** as measured by exit interviews, post-process survey, and stay interviews so that there is increased trust and credibility.

MadLib! 5/5

Offer Support and Training

Multnomah County shall develop a **county-wide manager onboarding** that:

- includes technical, cultural, process, supervision, and union content as measured by all managers completing onboarding within 6 months so that retention, consistency, and staff satisfaction improve.
- create[s] an inventory of managers training and support needs as measured by a report so that useful and relevant training can be developed and managers get the support they need to be confident and successful.
- expand[s] new manager orientation with cohort learnings for first year managers as measured by tracked hours in Workday so that new managers have support and resources and learn from other strong managers and gain affinity spaces.

Multnomah County shall implement **mandated training** to:

- be delivered live in real time as measured by decrease in negative metrics so that [we have] satisfied customers, happier community, better organizational outcomes.
- designate a team to investigate and propose targeted training plans catered to managers, staff, etc. with repeated poor performance and manage investigations as measured by decrease in complaints and increase in job satisfaction and retention so that managers are functioning at a high level to support their teams in an equitable way.

Multnomah County shall require a **management review tool** as measured by embedded in the yearly PPR so that staff are able to provide feedback.

A Box of Humanity

What We Did

We anonymously shared stories of a mistake we made at work, the consequences, what we learned, what would have been supportive, and what we wish we'd had to remedy the impact. This helped us acknowledge that we are all human and we all make mistakes - you are not alone!

What We Learned

People have...

- Offended someone, used a wrong pronoun, used an inappropriate analogy, corrected a staff's behavior in public
- Didn't follow a process, missed a deadline, didn't sent that email,

And as a result, they...

Lost a position, attacked/targeted, threatened with CIU, got written up, received a complaint, discussed the correct action/policy with a supervisor

Support people wished for...

- Empathy, compassion, shared understanding that we are human and make mistake, not being seen as disposable
- Discussion/support before dismissal, empathy instead of getting written up
- Manager's support
- Training on a process to follow, clarity on role, understanding why behind a process, practice of owning a mistake and correction it

How WSC characteristics show up 2/2

What We Did

We discussed how elements of white supremacy culture present under each of the major themes identified by the Steering Committee. We asked ourselves:

How does it show up overall in our county accountability practice? How are we addressing interpersonal vs. organizational, punishment vs. restorative?

[Elements of White Supremacy Culture - David Kennedy-Wong](#)



How WSC characteristics show up 2/2

What We Learned

Common patterns are... Perfectionism, defensiveness, power hoarding, objectivity, defensiveness, false sense of urgency. There are some themes that we identified.

Manager Accountability and Support

- Staff feel managers aren't held to the same standards, lack of transparency of manager discipline

Conflict Resolution Processes

- The current conflict resolution processes is paternalistic, lacking consent based practice, fear ridden, liability focused, and lacks transparency
- A toxic workplace cannot be mediated or resolved through the same systems that allow it to happen.

Engagement and Representation

- Our current systems allow people to be promoted or appointed based on their support and adherence to the status quo.

Communication and Awareness

- All Departments should have an equity team and manager that is accessible and accountable.

Equity Mandates and Measurements

- Equity should be central to all Departments, not only the ones that have the capacity to.

Thanks

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