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Racial Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Workplace Competencies at a Washington State Agency

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This is to certify that the doctoral study by

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Walden University
2022

Abstract

Racial Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Workplace Competencies at a Washington State

Agency

by

Yolanda D. Geolingo

MS, Troy University, 2012

MS, Troy State University, 2002

BS, Alcorn State University, 1995

Professional Administrative Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Public Administration

Walden University

May 2022

Abstract

This qualitative project provided a content analysis of secondary data to develop and implement racial equity, diversity, and inclusion workplace competencies for a White-led Washington State government organization. This organization sought to work towards racial equity at its center, based on Governor Jay Inslee's mandate. Consequently, leaders have redesigned systems and cultures using a racial equity lens to understand the concept better. Understanding racism helps to bridge a gap in the literature on how personal and professional beliefs play a significant role in institutional racism and its operation within their organization. The critical race theory informed leaders on how policy, laws, and racism intersect and engaged within their organization and concepts regarding workplace competencies, antiracism, diversity, employee engagement, inclusion, racial equity, and racism. The research question contributed to developing and implementing racial equity, diversity, and inclusion workplace competencies by using data from several separate employee engagement surveys. Survey results were analyzed using the content analysis approach to identify seven themes and patterns which are bias and privilege, uncomfortable, favoritism, de-valued, transparency, and autonomy. Investigating employee engagement within a state government organization expanded the knowledge across the state and assisted in meeting the governor's mandate of building a more inclusive work environment for everyone. The results of this project can assist in creating positive social change through developing and implementing nine workplace competencies for a state government organization by enabling social change within the public service system.

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Dedication

First and foremost, I dedicate this doctoral project to my heavenly father, the Lord thy God, his son, and my savior, Jesus Christ. Thank you for giving me the ambition, individuality, and perseverance to pursue a degree at the highest level that will allow me to continue to provide service in my communities during peacetime or even during a crisis. Second, I dedicate this project to my mother, Alfredia Wess Camper (1951–2000), for her unconditional love and inspiration in me to achieve the highest educational goal I can achieve. Thank you for continuing to watch over me daily. I send an exceptional dedication to my father, WC Camper, and my second mom, Ms. Julia Molden. They supported me during this doctoral process and stayed by my side until graduation day. I love you two dearly. Finally, I would like to dedicate this project to my daughter, Nyah TeLoni' Geolingo, who inspires me to grow as a person and mother. Thank you for keeping me in shape for the journey and staying patient while taking time away to achieve and accomplish this magnificent goal.

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To my sorority sisters of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Incorporated and work colleagues and close friends who are near and dear, thank you for the late-night phone calls, texts, and shoulders when the process became stressful (you know who you are). Finally, I want to extend a special thank you to Ronald Somerville, who took the time, patience, and willingness to agree to support and encourage me throughout this process.

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Section 1: Introduction to the Problem

Introduction

This qualitative study addressed racial equity within a state government agency by developing and implementing workplace competencies. The agency is a White-led organization with a history of not recognizing racial equity as its center. The agency has a nine-member council supported by a cabinet-level state agency supporting local constituents throughout Washington State. The agency provides strategic planning, oversight, advocacy, and program administration that support student success in higher levels of education throughout Washington State.

In 2018, Governor Jay Inslee asked all Washington State agency directors to reengage in building work environments that are respectful, supportive, and inclusive to everyone. The workplace must be an environment that employees deserve by ensuring that all employees do their best work for the citizens of Washington State. Furthermore, the governor asked all agency directors to identify and address problems in their perspective agencies that stand in the way of building respectful work environments that promote equity, diversity, and inclusivity in the services provided.

Problem Statement

The George Floyd killing ignited communities and forced state government agencies to act. Creating a racial equity culture gives leaders a way to help employees in meaningful ways, even with difficult conversations. Furthermore, these conversations can lead to respectful, racial equity, diverse, and inclusive work environments. The problem was to bridge the gap in practice on racial equity in a Washington State agency by

developing and implementing workplace competencies. The agency works with over 500

schools and universities throughout the state. Still, it does not have any workplace

competencies that focus on racial equity, diversity, and inclusion that can help bridge the

gap in honoring and respecting cultural backgrounds, diverse traditions, and heritages

among leadership, staff, and constituents. While the state, city, and county governmental

agencies, communities, and private organizations have attempted to fill the equity,

diversity, and inclusion gap by escalating and addressing the concerns through surveys,

training, and recruitment efforts, they are still not fully reaching racial equity. Racial

inequity has three categories: "three types of racism: structural, which deals with policies,

programs, and practices that lead to adverse outcomes or conditions; institutional, which

is a benefit to White people; and individual, which pre-judgment, bias, stereotypes, or

generalizations" (Jones, 2000, p.1212). This public administrative issue impacts Black,

indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC).

> Consequently, the Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Committee (EDIC)
>
> continues to be more symbolic than central to the agency's mission and vision.
>
> Given that the committee continues to have little access to adequate budgetary
>
> resources and decision-making at the Executive Leadership level, the kind of
>
> agency-wide change they could influence is minimal at best. (LaCour, 2020, p.12)

Many possible factors contribute to this problem, including organizational leadership

demographics and failed engagement on the topic. Moreover, the agency staff

understands the hard work and discomfort associated with racial equity. Therefore, the

EDIC must be supported throughout the agency and be embodied within its business operations, services, and organizational structure.

Violence, such as the killing of George Floyd, makes it difficult to dismiss this incident as having nothing to do with race. Miller et al. (2021) argued that some White people in the United States believe that racism is a thing of the past, while acts of violence are apparent in the people of color communities. Racism lives in communities and workplaces. Governor Inslee has forced agency directors to prioritize this topic and create mechanisms to ensure their work environments are inclusive and represented in every service they offer. The staff's mindset transforms an organization; if people believe that systematic racism does not exist, it is challenging to support a group, committee, or change.

Purpose

An organization's core competencies, often called workplace competencies, are defined as the framework that aligns all jobs to meet its mission and outward appearance (Seram et al., 2019). In this qualitative study, I aimed to examine and analyze secondary data from two employee surveys to tailor workplace competencies to meet the organization's equity, diversity, and inclusion needs. Internally, the organization under study is divided based on racial inequities and discrimination, each with a historical difference. Examining survey data regarding employee engagement based on the organization-specific and historical differences provided insight into the need for workplace competencies to help close the gap in the agency. Additionally, the data collected for leadership can create and be applied toward resources to improve

communication, racial equity, diversity, and inclusion, encouraging a striving, inclusive, and respectful work environment.

This study helped cultivate the understanding of racial disparity concerns within the organization by examining equity, diversity, and inclusion through surveys. The critical race theory is a theoretical and interpretive framework that examines race and racism across cultural contexts and links to social justice practices, teachings, and communities (Poole et al., 2021). This framework built the foundation and aligned the relationship between contributing factors, racial equity, diversity, and inclusion. The organization under study is a White-led cabinet that allows structural, systemic, systematic, institutional, and individual racism without accountability and accepts White-privileged behavior as the norm. The executive leadership and cabinet needed to understand racial equity, diversity better, and inclusion within the organization and across ethnicities to align with a qualitative approach based on secondary data analysis.

In this qualitative study, I aimed to provide a deeper understanding of the racial inequities and disparities among the workforce of this organization under study. This administrative study assisted in developing and implementing workplace competencies that could move the organization toward racial equity as its center of business. This study addressed the gap in knowledge on developing and implementing workplace competencies within state organizations based on the lack of profundity in peer-reviewed research. This study increased executive leadership and cabinet's understanding of racial inequities based on employee engagement in the state workplace regarding racial equity,

diversity, and inclusion while creating a work environment free of discrimination, bias, and racism.

Guiding Question for This Study

Research Question (RQ).: What factors should be considered in the workplace competencies to promote racial equity, diversity, and inclusion?

Gap in Organizational Plans

In 2020, the United States and other countries experienced nationwide protests that changed how organizations were perceived by publicly condemning racism and police brutality. Consequently, people of color wanted to see more action than words, so leaders have started to take steps towards racial equity, diversity, and inclusivity as their business center. LaCour (2020) suggested that racial equity requires leadership to use a lens that transforms how racism is understood and shapes their lives personally, professionally, and institutionally; expanding this knowledge allows leadership to recognize how racism manifests in behaviors and mindsets to eliminate it. Racial equity is needed when a system is out of balance and people of color are most impacted. The gap in the organizational plans is that the organization under study has taken steps toward racial equity in the past several years by establishing an EDIC. However, some EDIC members, leadership, and staff, primarily BIPOC, have grown increasingly angry and frustrated with the organization's commitment to racial equity.

Additionally, the organization under study applied for the Lumina Foundation Grant, which focuses on the development of a racial equity statement to guide the implementation of the strategic framework, the creation of a racial equity workgroup to

develop and define the racial equity statement and definitions, and development of a

sustainability plan with recommendations (LaCour, 2020). The recent employee

engagement surveys have successfully identified external and internal concerns. A

qualitative research design provided a better understanding of racial inequities to develop

and implement workplace competencies toward racial equity, diversity, and inclusion.

Additionally, the organization wanted to promote racial equity, diversity, and inclusion

through its recruitment efforts, position descriptions, full-range training, and performance

evaluations.

Nature of the Administrative Study

The State Employee Engagement Survey (SEES) is a thorough employee

engagement measurement within the state system. The organization under study

participated in the 2020 statewide employee engagement survey conducted by the Office

of Financial Management's State Human Resources Division (OFMSHRD). In 2020, the

OFMSHRD added a racial equity, diversity, and inclusion question to the survey.

However, based on the questions asked for this survey, there were not enough questions

about racial equity, diversity, and inclusion to thoroughly analyze for significance.

Therefore, the agency generated an additional Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI)

survey to gather more data and feedback from leadership, staff, and constituents related

to the said topic. In addition, organizational members were asked questions surrounding

racial equity. These questions gauged their perception and understanding within their

work environments regarding racial equity. This qualitative project addressed the RQ

through the content analysis of secondary data. In the first part of this study, I identified

factors contributing to racial equity, diversity, and inclusion. A comprehensive review of previous qualitative research studies on racial equity and workplace competencies identified the contributing factors. In the second part of the study, I analyzed secondary data gathered from the agency's racial equity, diversity, and inclusion surveys.

Ruggiano and Perry (2019) described secondary data analysis as an investigation of already collected data from previous studies to explore new questions and use different strategies that were not a part of the primary analysis. In this project, I used secondary data from two separate surveys to connect the lack of knowledge on racial equity, diversity, and inclusion to develop and implement workplace competencies. In addition, the secondary data analysis provided clarity to help understand why workplace competencies are critical in eliminating racial inequities organizational-wide.

Content Analysis of Secondary Data

SEES and EDI surveys were conducted to gather data on experiences related to racial equity, diversity, and inclusion. Surveys were a web-based cross-sectional sample that collected data based on participants' understanding of racial equity, diversity, and inclusion. These surveys collected information on tenure, ethnicity, supervisor, age, gender, veteran status, disability, county of their jobs, and LGBTQ+. In addition, the sampled participants responded to a mixture of open-ended and multiple-choice questions to identify experiences of racial inequities and provide an understanding of racial equity, diversity, and inclusion within the workplace.

This project involved content analysis of secondary data collected from literature in journals, previous studies, and books to identify contributing factors to racial

inequities. These contributing factors assisted in determining the understanding of the concepts, experiences, and perceptions among staff and identifying practical workplace competencies that could be used as the organization's core. In addition, literature from the organization's website and consultation results were reviewed. All data were analyzed through the content analysis approach to develop and implement workplace competencies to answer the RQ.

Significance

This project was significant in that racial equity, diversity, and inclusion work has escalated in prominence within the past year because of the nation's outrage over the murder of George Floyd. Due to the outrage over this incident, this White-led state government agency has changed its urgency to tackle a long-ignored racial issue. The project results allow the organization under study to change the culture by bridging racial equity, diversity, and inclusion. Promoting social change involves sharing the project results, engaging staff through competencies implementation, and reevaluating over time. The organizational mission, vision, and workplace competencies can be influenced by allowing racial equity, diversity, and inclusion to take center stage in all that they do for their leadership, staff, constituents, and customers.

This project describes executive leadership, staff, and constituents' employee engagement and an inclusive work environment. As a result, there is a better understanding of the perceptions of racial equity, diversity, and inclusion while providing an equity lens for all members to be accountable for their actions and standards.

Furthermore, this project allows everyone to work towards the governor's proclamation of a respectful, supportive, and inclusive work environment.

Key Stakeholders

The organization under study is a small agency comprised of 115 leaders, staff, and constituents who are part of the governor's executive cabinet and have a governor-appointed council that guides the work related to the postsecondary attainment goal. In 2020, the organization hired a consulting firm to review and analyze its current organizational structure related to racial equity. LaCour (2020) stated,

> Staff and leadership took new steps toward defining their path to racial equity. Sparked by developing the Council's Strategic Framework, which names "racial equity" at its center, organizational staff and leadership turned a critical eye towards their policies and practices to learn how to align the organization to the exact center. (p. 1)

This organization is committed to helping the governor meet his goal of reducing racial disparities by increasing postsecondary attainment rates to 70%. The organization plans to reach this goal through policy and research, long-term strategic planning, and administrative functions and programs related to financial aid, college savings plans, consumer protection, college, career readiness, and advocating for students. LaCour emphasized, "The Strategic Framework and Strategic Action Plan guides and informs the organization's work. Given the inextricable link between the council's work and the organization's work, staff and leadership are beginning to align their work towards racial equity" (p. 1).

Wider Potential Contributions

Within the United States, this public policy issue is current, relevant, and significant to the public administration discipline. Racial equity impacts the fairness, justice, and equality of public policy and organizations that provide services to the public. For example, Marshburn et al. (2021) argued that George Floyd's killing ignited communities on the topic of systematic racism during the COVID-19 pandemic response while shocking, White-led organizations. As a result of this incident, the organization under study changed its priorities to responding and tackling long ignored racial issues.

This reaction has increased the EDIC's work to be much more prominent. Based on the recent organization evaluation, I will work with the agency under study to create workplace competencies that are racial equity-centered and used throughout their initiatives and efforts. The gap in practice is that the agency does not have racial equity, diversity, and inclusion at its center. The development and implementation of workplace competencies can assist the agency in changing the organizational culture to align with the governor's proclamation.

Positive Social Change Implications

Mondal (2020) argued that elevating equity, diversity, and inclusion initiatives is best done through strategies, business practices, and mission. Organizations must transform their cultures to fit their employees to eliminate structural, systemic, systematic, institutional, and individual racism. This project can increase awareness of racial inequities, improve employee engagement across ethnicities, and provide a lens for other state organizations within Washington State. Lastly, this organization under study

can represent the antiracism organization movement that promotes and prohibit anyone from any form of discrimination.

Summary

The organization under study was established in 2012 as a White-led organization providing educational assistance to students across the state. George Floyd's murder ignited a positive social change on how BIPOC are perceived and how change was needed. However, the standard practice of ignoring racial inequities issues has been challenging and frustrating for BIPOC. This project allows for experiences and perceptions to be recognized and for workplace competencies to be developed and implemented as the organization's center.

I investigated contributing factors to promote racial equity, diversity, and inclusion through the qualitative research method. The content analysis approach identified that workplace competencies could improve perceptions and behaviors and hold everyone accountable to the same standards. Furthermore, I focused on secondary survey data that lack racial equity, diversity, and inclusion in this project.

In Section 1, I documented and introduced a Washington State organization that the governor has mandated to change to make the work environment more respectful, supportive, and inclusive of employee engagement. Next, Section 2 provides a literature review that addresses racial equity, diversity, inclusion, workplace competencies, and employee engagement based on these terms.

Section 2: Conceptual Approach and Background

Introduction

The organization under study was a White-led Washington State government agency that sought to become an antiracism organization. The problem is that this organization did not have any workplace competencies to guide its business vision, goals, and mission. OFMSHRD's (2020) survey results showed that this organization had 115 staff, including a 17.4% representation of BIPOC. With the racial equity topic at the center of all Washington State agencies, staff representation must be balanced through internal and external recruiting and hiring efforts. This qualitative project addressed the organizational racial inequity issues by analyzing the survey's secondary data by answering the following RQ: What factors should be considered in the workplace competencies to promote racial equity, diversity, and inclusion?

In this qualitative study, I aimed to examine and analyze secondary data from two employee surveys to tailor workplace competencies to meet the organization's equity, diversity, and inclusion needs.

Concepts, Models, and Theories

Structural, systemic, systematic, institutional, and individual racism has continued to concern BIPOC for centuries. Progress has been made on this topic with the passing of the Civil Rights laws, and some organizational leaders are now committing to racial equity, diversity, and inclusion. Furthermore, this qualitative project can inform the public administration community and concepts that involve race issues and challenges that still exist today. The theory identified to inform this qualitative project was the

critical race theory. The following section outlines the identified theory, explaining how it aligns with the project.

Critical Race Theory

The focus of this project was on a White-led Washington State government agency that overlooks the impact of racial inequities on its staff and customers. The critical race theory (CRT) aligned this project by identifying the importance of workplace competencies that could potentially bridge racial equity issues within the organization. CRT was pioneered by several civil rights scholars and activists but primarily by Derrick Albert Bell, Kimberlé Crenshaw, and Richard Delgado. He strived to examine the United States laws that intersected with race while reaching racial justice for all (Bernstein, 2011). With the organization seeking to place racial equity at its center, it is imperative to have workplace competencies, expectations, and guidelines to ensure accountability.

Within the last decade, CRT has become a crucial public topic amongst legislators regarding classroom teachings and the understanding of American racism related to public policy and divisive discourse toward White people (Sawchuk, 2021). This theoretical framework was built on the legal analysis that racism is not a product of individual bias or prejudice but a social construct. This theory does not suggest that all White people are racist, but that racism exists. CRT has been observed in different forms, like housing, employment, education, and policing. To better understand the influences within this organization, CRT was selected to inform the study.

Theoretical Alignment to the Study

With 82.6% of the staff being white within the organization, there is a potential that BIPOC has experienced some form of racism. Although the organization participated in the last SEES, it is unclear on the authentic experiences of BIPOC when considering racial inequities. The organization has a nine-member council that the administrative staff supports by performing assigned functions and managing student financial aid programs based on four major educational sectors. CRT shows how a White-led organization needs workplace competencies to reach racial equity as its center is based on outcomes rather than individual beliefs (Sawchuk, 2021). Understanding employees' experiences within their work environments allow for historical and structural dynamics. The overall structure of the organization and how it came to be can shed light on the lack of racial equity within the organization.

Concepts

Within this qualitative project, in the following section, I connect and explain critical concepts aligned to this study and why workplace competencies are relevant for the organization's success. These concepts are antiracism, employee engagement, diversity, inclusion, racial equity, racism (individual, institutional, structure, systemic, and systematic), White fragility, White privilege, and White supremacy.

Anti-Racism

With the governor's mandate, state government agencies are moving toward an antiracism lens that requires establishing and implementing racial equity, diversity, inclusion policies, training, and practices. Natchipolsky (2020) described an organization

that promotes antiracism to be a diverse workplace. An antiracism organization allows all

employees to strive and have a justice-oriented platform that empowers people of color

by taking leadership roles, transforming cultures and norms, and sharing ideas to meet the

organization's strategic goals.

Employee Engagement

Osborne and Hammoud (2017) noted that employee engagement is critical to

organizations. Employees are the key to success for any organization, precisely when

understanding their satisfaction with their work and the work environment they perform it

in. When considering an organization's performance and successful outcome, employees

must be considered. To determine satisfaction, the organization must ask and adjust its

workplace culture or environment to recruit and retain employees. Organizations use

surveys for various reasons: feedback, seeking strengths, identifying weaknesses,

allowing opportunities to make changes, and employee engagement (Explorance, 2020).

In this research, I incorporated secondary data analysis from two separate employee

engagement surveys, which assisted in identifying workplace competencies that can be

used throughout the organization.

Diversity

Burns and Darity (2019) asserted that the concept of diversity is a variation of

distinguishing characteristics of race, gender, or another socially salient. Employee

engagement and diversity influence one another when thinking about social change

impact. Consequently, the organization under study can increase its overall performance

and reputation through an organizational alignment to workplace competencies that represent racial equity, diversity, and inclusion.

Inclusion

OFMSHRD (2021) stated that inclusion is the

intentional designed, active, and ongoing engagement with people ensures

opportunities and pathways for participation in all aspects of a group,

organization, or community, including decision-making processes. Inclusion is

not a natural consequence of diversity. There must be intentional and consistent

efforts to create and sustain a participative environment. Inclusion refers to how

groups show valued people as respected members, teams, organizations, or

communities. Inclusion is often created through progressive, consistent

expansion, inclusion, and sharing actions. (para. 3)

In this project, I clarified the inclusion component of the workplace competencies and how valuing staff is critical in meeting strategic plans, goals, and performance.

Racial Equity

Some Americans have downplayed the concept of racial equity to remove the sense of racism that exists today. They either claim that racism does not exist or are not racist (Kim, 2019). Racial equity is when systems do not provide equity for everyone regardless of their skin color. The Center for Social Inclusion (2017) claimed, "When race no longer determines one's socioeconomic outcomes; when everyone has what they need to thrive, no matter where they live" (para. 1), then there is racial equity. The organization under study sought racial equity for all staff, leadership, and constituents.

With the recent injustice with policing and other discrimination cases, organizational leaders have focused on balancing their workforce by aligning with racial equity, diversity, and inclusion environments. An organizational benefit for racial equity allows for innovation and a more diverse customer base, cultivating a strong workforce.

Racism

Governor Inslee has sought to dismantle racism in Washington State by creating antiracism executive branches (state government agencies) representing racial equity at their center of business. In the United States, racism comes in different forms. It is a White-dominant privilege culture for White people through racial prejudice to include power while marginalizing people of color (OFMSHRD, 2021). Again, some Americans believe that racism does not exist or is not racist. However, the concept does exist, and people of color are victims of this type of behavior. In this project, I clarified four different forms of racism: individual, institutional, structural, and systematic. These components are critical to developing workplace competencies that remove racial inequities.

Individual. When a person avoids people of color because they do not know them and does not avoid White people even if they do not know them, this is known as individual racism. Racial Equity Tools (2021) defined "individual racism as beliefs, attitudes, and actions of individuals that support or perpetuate racism" (para. 6). Some Americans may act to perpetuate or support this behavior without knowing that they are doing it. With a White-led organization, individuals may believe that one race is more dominant than another and do not believe there is racism or that changes are required.

When considering SEES, individuals may not want to share experiences because of their beliefs and attitudes. Consequently, workplace competencies can assist in eliminating individual racism based on the expectation and accountability component that requires everyone to engage fully.

   Institutional. Today, organizations work hard within the antiracism lens to ensure that racial equity is at its center. Beckless (2020) described institutional racism as failing to provide services to people of color while creating advantages for White people. For example, some institutions have rules about the dress code that includes hair. These rules may restrict people of color from wearing their natural hair like dreadlocks, braids, or afro since it does not reach the professionalism standard in the workplace or school. Institutional racism is a way to control people of color based on their hair texture.

   Structural. Bailey et al. (2017) argued that "structural racism refers to the totality of ways in which societies foster racial discrimination through mutually reinforcing systems of housing, education, employment, earnings, benefits, credit, media, health care, and criminal justice" (p. 1454). With the organization under study labeled a White-led organization, structural racism could be disclosed through the survey data results. Those results may align with employment, earnings, and education opportunities. Employees may feel discriminated against based on their race, so organizational opportunities are available, but BIPOC is never offered, granted, or approved for employment, earnings, and education opportunities.

   Systematic. People tend to confuse systematic for systemic racism and vice versa, but they are two different things. Tucker (2019) suggested that systematic racism is a

plan or procedure towards a race or ethnicity that is discriminatory or prejudiced. An example of systematic racism would be the most recent incidents with three African Americans, George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and Jacob Blake, where their race played a role in their deaths. In contrast, Dylann Roof, who was White, murdered nine African Americans attending Bible study at a church. While in custody, he was given a Burger King meal when he complained of being hungry (Silverstein, 2015).

Systemic. OFMSHRD (2021) defined systemic racism as a "collection system that contributes to racial inequities, including health, environmental, education, justice, government, economic, financial, transportation, and political systems" (p. 12). When people think of racism, they often think of individual racism, but systems reach far beyond individuals. For example, According to National Student Clearinghouse Research Center (2017), "Only 46% of black college students finish a four-year degree within six years, compared to 72% of White college students" (p. 4).

White Fragility

This concept refers to White people living in often considered racially protected environments. These environments are not fabricated with any level of racial nodes (DiAngelo, 2019). White people living in these environments often have a defensive mechanism for racially charged topics. They tend to be unable to tolerate stressors that lead to any emotions or behaviors that resemble racial inequality and injustice (DiAngelo, 2011). Some great examples of white fragility is when White people say racism ended with slavery or when they can tell you how many black friends they have, so they are not racist.

White Privilege

Applebaum (2016) argued that the concept of White privilege contends with existing notions of overt racism by "exposing the unearthed benefits and advantages that accrue to dominant group members solely by occupying a dominant social position and often regardless of one's attitude, volition, or belief" (p. 6). As children, White people are taught to acknowledge White privilege and the benefits that come with it. Some examples of White privilege is people do not avoid White people in public spaces and White people do not have to have a conversation with their children about driving and the police.

White Supremacy

The concept of White supremacy is the

beliefs and ideas were purporting the natural superiority of the lighter-skinned, or "White," human races over other racial groups. In contemporary usage, the term White supremacist has been used to describe some groups espousing ultranationalist, racist, or fascist doctrines. White supremacist groups often have relied on violence to achieve their goals" (Jenkins, 2021, para.1). The Tulsa Race Riot of May 31-June 1, 1921 and the 16th Street Baptist Church Bombing of September 15, 1963 are examples of white supremacy incidents.

Relevance to Public Organizations

This project is relevant to public organizations for several reasons. Workplace competencies must incorporate all aspects of an organization's visions, goals, and missions. With the governor's mandate of creating an inclusive work environment for all

state agencies, expectations must be set to meet the mandate's parameters. Research is lacking on workplace competencies related to state government and racial equity. No studies have been conducted to develop and implement racial equity workplace competencies for a state government organization. Consequently, with limited data on this topic, there is a missing benefit of having studies implementing workplace competencies related to racial equity.

State government organizations are shifting to inclusive, making racial equity, diversity, and inclusion critical. Employees should be able to advance equity and equality through opportunities to provide ideas and integrate perspectives from everyone. With limited existing literature surrounding state government organizations on creating inclusive work environments based on racial inequities, issues of discrimination, prejudice, and biases will continue to go unresolved or even reported. This project has uncovered little literature on competencies and what is needed to perform specific jobs but no precise organizational level of workplace competencies. The lack of research on this topic suggests that a qualitative research design may be discouraged due to the fear of discussing racial equity and its outliers, including the lack of funding within the workplace environment.

The project findings directly affect how racial equity workplace competencies are developed and implemented within Washington State government organizations. All Washington State organizations are mandated to create an inclusive work environment while eliminating racism. This mandate requires developing and implementing rules, policies, training, employee services, investigations, business alignment and integration,

and reporting. All state government organizations could benefit from this project by ensuring that all workplace competencies are racially equitable, including accountability.

Organization Background and Context

The organization is a White-led state government organization created on July 1, 2012. The organization comprises nine council members supported by a cabinet-level state agency. The agency has approximately 115 staff members, including an executive director and a leadership team that supports the council throughout the state. By statute, the council provides strategic planning, oversight, advocacy, and program administration to support increased student success and higher levels of educational attainment in Washington State.

After the murder of George Floyd and a worldwide protest to stop police brutality and racism, organizational leadership looked to revamp their culture to represent a more racial equity lens. The governor of Washington State requested that all agency directors examine their organizational footprint. All directors were asked to recommit building a more respectful, supportive, and inclusive work environment for everyone. This recommitment requirement was not limited to policy development, establishing training, compliance reporting, assessment, identifying EDI council members, identifying opportunities to eliminate barriers, and establishing strategies and best practices for improvement.

As a result, this organization went a step further by applying for Lumina Grant to hire a consultant in 2020 to come in and complete an organizational-wide assessment related to racial equity. As a result of that assessment, 12 recommendations were provided to the

executive director and leadership for review and decision. One of the 12

recommendations was racial equity competencies. LaCour (2020) recommended that

> infrastructure is needed to hold leadership and staff accountable to the mission
>
> and vision of the agency as well as to provide support for job-embedded growth
>
> and behavioral expectations over time. One way to create such an infrastructure is
>
> to develop a set of racial equity competencies which define the behaviors and
>
> skills each staff is expected to possess a basic, emerging, intermediate and
>
> advanced levels (p.10).

With racism and injustice on the rise and in question, all state government

organizations must be diverse, equitable, and inclusive for everyone. The United States

Constitution speaks about equality for all under the 14th Amendment, but still, people of

color living in this country experience discrimination, racism, and inequities every day.

The overall objective of this project was to close the gap on racial inequities within a

state government organization.

Role of the DPA Researcher

This professional administrative study focuses on one Washington State

government organization. My role within this project is merely to provide consultation

and assistance to the organizational leadership, EDI committee members, and human

resource staff in developing and implementing racial equity workplace competencies.

These competencies will be placed at the organization's center to describe, set

expectations, and establish accountabilities for all constituents, leadership, and staff. I

have no connection or relationship to this organization other than having 10 years of

experience working for a few Washington State government organizations as a human resource professional. Within Washington State, there are more than 190 state agencies.

With no connection or relationship to the members of this organization, I eliminate any potential biases for this project. I utilized the secondary content data analysis approach within this project, which eliminated any interaction with participants. There were two separate survey data used for this project. All surveys used a web-based platform to collect the data.

As a person of color, my motivation is to ensure that discrimination, prejudice, and biases are eliminated from the workplace. It is critical and crucial to continuously seek input from all organization members while recognizing and respecting their different perspectives and motivations. I have over 25 years of human resource experience working with diverse people and treating people fairly and equally is my job. Organizations must establish competencies to eliminate discriminatory behavior, prejudiced attitudes, and potential biases.

Role of the Project Team

This professional administrative project used a project team to support this process. The researcher, human resource director, and EDI committee members collaborated to develop and implement racial equity workplace competencies based on two separate surveys. The human resource director and EDI committee members played a pivotal role in providing information related to the data collection since this project utilized a secondary data analysis approach. Additionally, they provided historical documents, access to the data, and any evaluation results. This documentation and

evidence were critical to the content analysis process. The human resource director

initiated the communication between the research, human resource director, and EDI

committee members, but the researcher predominately completed future communications.

These communications included meetings scheduling, topic discussions, and

documentation collection. All communications were sent via electronic mail, and all

meetings were held via Zoom or Microsoft Teams platform. After each meeting, the

researcher provided a detailed summary that included the next steps. All team members

were responsive and worked collectively toward developing and implementing racial

equity workplace competencies at the organization's business center.

Summary

CRT is argued daily on its significance in society and its impact on BIPOC.

Consequently, White supremacy does exist in the form of racism and power, which

impact our governmental organizations. CRT was used to demonstrate how a White-led

organization turns a blind eye to racism within this project. The data showed themes and

patterns that allowed workplace competencies to be developed based on racial equity,

diversity, and inclusion. CRT was started by lawyers, activists, and scholars who wanted

to eliminate societal structures and cultural assumptions based on social problems. Lastly,

CRT provided a framework to create a racial equity environment that will bridge a gap in

understanding how race and law intersect and engage.

Section 2 documented the literature utilizing the CRT. With limited literature on

racial equity workplace competencies, the material can be espoused, fully developed, and

implemented by any state government organization to create a path toward racial equity

as its business center. Section 3 presented the project research method and procedures to analyze the secondary data collected from two separate surveys.

Section 3: Data Collection Process and Analysis

Introduction

Racial equity is a robust and challenging topic for all organizations. The United States was built on racial inequities based on governmental rules, laws, and policies that have dictated citizenship, voting rights, property ownership, and residency. The recent pandemic has created a platform for advancing racial equity based on policy and practice. There is an expectation that having racial equity at the organization's center will eliminate false narratives of race differences, bias, bigotry, and discrimination against people of color. Consequently, racial equity requires a foundation to build on within any organization. The foundation for this project was workplace competencies to help a White-led state government organization move toward racial equity at its center.

CRT provided the framework for solving the racial inequities problem by developing and implementing workplace competencies. This qualitative project provided insight into this state government organization working towards a racial equity center in all its services. Based on a content analysis of secondary data, the project results guided the most effective racial equity workplace competencies used throughout the business.

Practice-Focused Question

The White-led state government organization is working toward racial equity at its center. However, there are no workplace competencies, expectations, or a way to hold staff accountable for their actions. The following RQ assisted in developing and implementing the racial equity workplace competencies: What factors should be

considered in the workplace competencies to promote racial equity, diversity, and inclusion?

This qualitative project analyzed secondary data from two separate employee engagement surveys. The themes revealed can assist in developing racial equity workplace competencies that can be used for holding everyone accountable and setting expectations to meet the organization's vision, goals, and mission. Additionally, the literature review supports the themes identified.

Sources of Evidence

In this qualitative project, I developed workplace competencies that can place racial equity at the business center of the organization. The secondary data analysis identified critical themes to align with practical workplace competencies. Executive leadership, staff, and constituents' survey responses helped elaborate on contributing factors aligned with racial inequities. These factors have led to developing and implementing competencies that can eliminate racism, biases, and discrimination. The secondary data analysis revealed gaps and themes related to racial equity within this organization. The organization agreement revealed deliverables that will be provided.

Archival and Operational Data

Over the past 12 months, sustainable research has been developed on racial equity, diversity, inclusion, and workplace competencies for classes at Walden University. These classes were structured to assist and navigate this professional administrative study. The Walden University Library was used to access databases to locate previous research on workplace competencies. The following keyword search

terms were used: *racial equity workplace competencies; equity, diversity, and inclusion workplace competencies; workplace or work environment or workforce; participative decision making; diversity in the workplace;* or *diversity or equity or inclusion.* The results of the database searches allowed me to build a solid foundation based on previous research. Previous research has provided insight into methods used and that have worked for other organizations—gathering publicly available information from the organization under study assisted me in developing a clear understanding of its mission, values, goals, and objective.

In this project, I relied primarily on content analysis of secondary data to analyze the survey data. The content data were taken from two web-based surveys that examined employee engagement and its link to racial equity, diversity, and inclusion. OFMSHRD's (2020) research revealed that employee engagement improves organizational performance. The performance of state government organizations can increase public trust while boosting morale amongst public servants. Furthermore, employees' perception of their work environment has been gathered through the SEES annually since 2006.

Additionally, state government organizations can conduct their survey and SEES to gather additional information. With the recent surge of racial inequities, injustice, policing, and discrimination, the organization under study decided to conduct an EDI survey to gather additional information to bridge the gap in racial equity. The EDI survey is aligned to the SEES in format and target population, employees working for a state government organization. The goal of the survey was to look at employee engagement within their perspective organizations.

This project included two separate web-based employee engagement surveys. Both surveys were geared toward employee engagement in their current work environment and their perception of topics like racial equity, diversity, inclusion, discrimination, and racism. All members of the organization under study were informed of the purpose of surveys, confidentiality protection, and critical terms before the onset of each survey.

In the following sections, I describe the variables in this project, consisting of identifying contributing factors that assisted in developing workplace competencies that can promote racial equity, diversity, and inclusion. The nature of the data was to analyze and interpret them to formulate racial equity workplace competencies that can be placed at the business center. Additionally, data collection details included relevancy, procedural, access, and reputability of sources.

Qualitative Data

Qualitative content analysis of secondary data takes data that have already been analyzed and reanalyzed to look for new and alternative perspectives based on a new RQ. Sherif (2018) researched qualitative secondary data analysis (SDA) and found that it was generated in the 1960s. SDA's meaning has changed over time, but ultimately, a researcher uncovers new meaning, knowledge, and hypotheses while supporting an existing theory. With this organization having existing data for this project, it was appropriate to use the SDA approach to reveal contributing factors that could aid in developing and implementing workplace competencies. Coltart et al. (2013) further confirmed Sherif's findings by suggesting that SDA has a few meanings, including "data

that has originally been collected and analyzed by another researcher for other purposes"

(p. 274).

Relevance

Sutton and Austin (2015) noted that qualitative research is not used to generalize

findings but to gain insight into participants' feelings and thoughts about a specific topic

or event. Governmental organizations must move beyond disparities to ensure that

communities perpetuate different outcomes that are equitable. Consequently, the BIPOC

community members are treated less than on a routine basis personally and

professionally, which impacts public policy. The impacts come in the form of racism,

injustice, discrimination, and biases. The emotional impacts change how people see the

world based on their experiences. The practice problem for this project was racial

inequities in a state government agency. In order to bring racial equity to the business

center of the organization, there must be workplace competencies that set expectations

and create accountability. The secondary data analysis was relevant to this project solely

based on employees providing a more profound understanding of their workplace

experiences related to racial inequities.

Collection

Employee engagement surveys are standard with local, state, and federal

government organizations. These engagement surveys are conducted and completed

annually, employees participate voluntarily, and the response to each question is optional.

The survey has 26 to 36 questions and takes about 5 to 10 minutes to complete; all

employees are allowed to complete the survey during their work schedule. OFMSHRD

(2020) "administers annual engagement surveys, and organizations have the option to conduct their surveys and provide the data" (para.1). All surveys are administered electronically via SurveyMonkey, a web-based survey company, and paper copies are available for employees who do not have access to a computer. The organization under study conducted and completed the second survey using the same format. The survey was administered electronically via SurveyMonkey, and paper copies were made readily available. Survey questions were based on racial equity, diversity, inclusion, biases, and discrimination.

OFMSHRD (2020) noted, "Survey data is combined with other workforce measures and used by Legislators and agency leaders to help inform decision making. The statewide HR Management Report includes survey data as a measure of performance for several areas of workforce management" (para. 3). All data were analyzed using Microsoft Power BI. This interactive platform pulls web-based survey responses and cleanses and transforms the organizational data into visual charts and graphs. Washington State government organizations ensure validity and reliability by not collecting individual participants' addresses or personally identifiable information because the employees' participation is anonymous. Views of the workforce are essential in advancing racial equity, diversity, and inclusion, so data are analyzed collectively and not individually. Lastly, organizations that participate in the survey do not receive results if less than ten responses and results are presented in a summary format.

Access

      The organization under study completed a signed agreement with me. As a requirement of the agreement, the organization agreed to grant access to all secondary data from both surveys. The SEES is available to the public, and the EDI survey the organization provided access to me through their organizational intranet site. The process to access the data started with the human resource director, who completed the confidentiality and anonymity form. Upon approval of access, all data were sent electronically.

Reputability

      This project was conducted using a qualitative research methodology that included a secondary data content analysis approach. The qualitative method includes secondary data and document analyses. The document analysis included reviewing and analyzing historical documents, such as EDI committee meeting notes, the organization intranet and website, surveys, grant applications, prior organization evaluations, governor mandate notices, discrimination reports, and public documents. These sources of evidence represented the best source to assist in analyzing the need for workplace competencies that can help bridge a gap on racial inequity issues—exploring perception and experiences allowed me to incorporate those findings into setting workplace competencies that can benefit everyone. Evidence from secondary data analysis and historical documents supported the purpose of this project and provided an empirical understanding of CRT as it relates to workplace competencies.

Analysis and Synthesis

The RQ was answered by analyzing and synthesizing secondary data collected from two employee engagement surveys. The data were stored in NVivo software and Microsoft Office 360. The original researcher who collected the primary data analyzed the data using Microsoft Office Excel and Power Bi software. All surveys were completed through SurveyMonkey. The following sections provide procedural steps on the data analyzed to answer the RQ.

Data Analysis

The organization under study provided the data in a Microsoft Excel and Power Bi format (raw datasets). The datasets included responses from organizational participants based on their perceptions, feelings, thoughts, and experiences. Additionally, the data was familiarized by placing them in PDF format. Familiarization includes but is not limited to the questionnaire, coding materials, any publications related to the data, and the raw dataset (Johnston, 2017). I looked for themes, patterns, frequencies, and reoccurring responses to racial equity, diversity, and inclusion within the workplace. Trends, misaligned data, and outliers were noted within the document's margin during the observation and review of the secondary data. NVivo software was used to organize and analyze the data. The data were transcribed into quantitative data to stay objective. Cross-tabulation was done to review relationships between the data and racial equity, diversity, and inclusion. Furthermore, the data were compared to the present survey data to review patterns and trends.

Evidence Integrity

The procedures used for this data analysis and integrity were to organize the secondary data by utilizing any notes, documents, and other materials used in the primary analysis. The data were reviewed and explored, and I created a coding guide for the review. The codes were revised and combined into themes or patterns. Consequently, themes and patterns related to racial equity, diversity, and inclusion were categorized. Missing data or outliers that did not fit the themes or patterns were separated and noted. Cross-tabulation and triangulation confirmed the data and synthesized the results to answer the RQ.

Washington State organizations participating in the annual SEES can conduct their survey or deploy it directly to employees via SurveyMonkey. If OFMSHRD deploys the survey, then data integrity is ensured. The employees can only take the survey once, popular organization questions can be added, the data are protected, paper versions are available, and the PowerBI dashboard is used for tracking. Additionally, this approach allows organizations to obtain assistance with interpreting the data, and the organization under study is not in control or has to access the data. The organization under study received survey data upon completion of the surveys. Both surveys used in this project employed this approach, which is why these raw datasets have integrity.

Data Coding

Qualitative content analysis of secondary data is used to analyze and interpret data through a systematic approach (Elo et al., 2014). This systematic approach allows for data interpretation that provides meaning. Racial equity is a complex topic due to racism,

biases, and discrimination issues within the workplace. Content analysis allows for a detailed theoretical approach required to develop workplace competencies—I used this method to analyze the secondary data. The secondary data were coded based on responses from two separate surveys.

Additionally, the responses were grouped into categories and themes from both surveys using the NVivo software. Each category had a description and a quantitative number based on participants' responses. The results of the data were compared to past surveys. An action plan was generated to develop the workplace competencies working in collaboration with the EDIC members.

Summary

In Section 3, I focused on the data collection and analysis for a Washington State government organization seeking to develop and implement racial equity, diversity, and inclusion workplace competencies. These competencies engage organization members throughout their business book and hold everyone accountable for their actions. The RQ was addressed through secondary qualitative data from SEES and EDI surveys. Both surveys used the SurveyMonkey online platform to collect participants' responses. The target population was the organization under study staff, leadership, and constituents. I used content analysis and NVivo software to code, interpret, and explain the findings. Lastly, the themes and patterns provided an answer to the RQ.

Section 4 provides the content data analysis of secondary data. The intent was to provide the organization under study with a deliverable of workplace competencies that can be used at its center for recruitments, performance evaluations, vision, mission, goals,

objectives, and training. The data revealed themes and patterns based on codes to assist

me in developing and implementing workplace competencies.

Section 4: Evaluation and Recommendations

Introduction

Once IRB approval was obtained (IRB Approval # 09-21-21-1050056), I began

the project's data collection and analysis stage. In this qualitative study, I aimed to

examine and analyze secondary data from two employee surveys to tailor workplace

competencies to meet the organization's racial equity, diversity, and inclusion needs. As a

White-led state government organization, the organization under study needed to bridge

the gap on honoring and respecting cultural backgrounds, diverse traditions, and heritages

among leadership, staff, and constituents through a racial equity lens as a Washington

State agency developing and implementing workplace competencies. Placing racial

equity at its business center can create a path for organizational leaders to have a

meaningful and challenging conversation with staff, leading to respectful racial equity

and a diverse and inclusive work environment. The practice focused RQ was as follows:

What factors should be considered in the workplace competencies to promote racial

equity, diversity, and inclusion?

Sources of Evidence

The content analysis of secondary data was based on two employee engagement

surveys (SEES and EDI) using SurveyMonkey. With the SEES, the dataset was

accessible to the public on the OFMSHRD website, while the organization representative

provided the EDI raw dataset. The raw dataset was populated into the NVivo software to

identify themes, and patterns, add categories, and code. With the current pandemic

ongoing, OFMSHRD added COVID-19-related questions to gauge agency staff's feelings

and experiences towards the topic, including a few inclusion and demographic questions,

for 36 questions. Table 1 presents the responses to the SEES minus all responses except

for demographic-related responses. Consequently, the organization under study

conducted a secondary employee engagement survey due to the limited number of

questions related to the EDI topic with the SEES. The secondary survey used open-ended

questions.

Table 1

2020 SEES Questions Results

2020 Survey questions ($N = 97$)	Almost always or always	No response or NA	Percentage positive	Percentage negative	Average score
1. I have the opportunity to give input on decisions affecting my work.	35	41	78%	2%	4.2
2. My supervisor treats me with dignity and respect.	NA	74	89%	3%	4.6
3. A spirit of cooperation and teamwork exists in my workgroup.	NA	42	74%	6%	4.1
4. My agency supports a diverse workforce.	NA	42	74%	9%	4.1
5. At my workplace, I feel valued for who I am as a person.	34	36	73%	8%	4

As shown in Table 1, 97 participants completed the SEES. On average, 78% of

participants responded positively to the EDI-related questions. The survey results did not

reveal themes or patterns that could assist in developing or implementing workplace

competencies because the survey used closed-ended questions. Conversations,

perceptions, and experiences, whether positive or negative, could allow the researcher to

identify themes and patterns that could aid in the development of workplace

competencies that could benefit everyone working at the organization under study

regardless of age, gender, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, or race. Based on the limited data in the SEES, the organization under study developed a secondary survey to gather additional information to produce workplace competencies. After the second survey was delivered to the staff and received responses, the organization representative provided me with two datasets from 2015 and 2021 to provide a sense of the workplace environment before and after the governor's mandate. Table 2 presents the responses to the 2015 EDI survey, while Table 3 presents the responses to the 2021 EDI survey. The 2015 and 2021 consisted of 11 closed-ended and 12 open-ended survey questions minus demographic questions.

Table 2

2015 EDI Survey Questions Alignment and Responses

Variable ($N = 58$)	Survey question
Equity	Have you ever been told or overheard a comment at this agency that offended you based on age, gender, race, religion, ethnicity, color, national origin, class, sexual orientation, difference of ability, or any other perceived or innate characteristics? ▪ Yes = 53% ▪ No = 45% ▪ Not sure = 2% How welcome do you feel at your agency in terms of your age, gender, race, religion, ethnicity, color, national origin, class, sexual orientation, difference of ability, or any other perceived or innate characteristics? ▪ Welcome = 69% ▪ Neutral = 29% ▪ Unwelcome = 2%
Diversity/Inclusion	Do you believe there is a need for a diversity committee at your agency? ▪ Yes = 80% ▪ No = 20% How often are issues about diversity discussed within your unit or department? ▪ Often = 29% ▪ Occasionally = 47% ▪ Never = 24% In your opinion, what level of value does the agency culture at your agency place on diversity? ▪ Very High = 10% ▪ High = 43% ▪ Neutral = 34% ▪ Low = 12% ▪ Very low = 0%

Table 2 shows that 58 participants completed the 2015 EDI survey. Of those completing the survey, 96% of the respondents were White, with 80% being female and most respondents being between 31 and 40 years old. Historically, the organization under study has maintained 40% of employees aged 50 years old and up, with 15% of employees being members of BIPOC. With 12% of the respondents being members of the BIPOC and closed-ended questions, there is minimal information on actual

experiences and perceptions related to racial equity, diversity, and inclusion issues

throughout the organization under study.

Table 3

2021 EDI Survey Question Categories

Categories (*N* = 36)	Survey question
Racial Equity	1. Sometimes I feel uncomfortable at work because of my personal characteristics (e.g., gender, race, religion, ethnicity, age, sexual orientation). 2. If I am concerned about harassment or discrimination, I know where and how to report that concern. 3. I feel comfortable reporting harassment or discrimination issues. 4. In my team, I feel comfortable asking questions, sharing my point of view, and giving and receiving feedback.
Diversity	5. My supervisor emphasizes the value of diversity in creating a stronger team. (Valuing diversity means embracing the differences of each individual's unique attributes, backgrounds, and characteristics and infusing those perspectives to influence team decisions). 6. I feel that my team values my unique attributes, skills, traits, and abilities. 7. My supervisor values people with different skills and backgrounds. 8. My supervisor values my talents and the contributions I make.
Inclusion	9. I feel that I have the same access to resources and training that others on my team have. 10. I feel included in team discussions and decision-making.

Table 3 shows the categories aligned to each survey question, with 36 participants

completing the 2021 EDI survey. The categories were racial equity, diversity, and

inclusion.

Findings and Implications

This section presents findings and implications from several different employee

engagement surveys. Based on the identified RQ, a discussion of coding, themes, and

patterns emerged. Due to confidentiality, OFMSHRD does not release demographic data

with its datasets. There were only five questions within the 2020 survey related to equity,

diversity, and inclusion, which is why the EDI surveys were critical for this professional

administrative project. There were some additional limitations to 2020 SEES for me. The

survey was limited to 36 closed-ended questions that did not provide any themes or

patterns to be analyzed qualitatively. However, the SEES results revealed that the

organization under study has an overall 85% participation rate of assigned staff who

participated in the 2020 survey, equivalent to 97 responses (see Table 1).

Data Collection, Coding, and Instrument

With limited information from SEES, the organization under study provided two

EDI surveys for analysis (2015 and 2021). The 2015 survey was reviewed for historical

information purposes only. The 2021 survey secondary data were collected in one phase:

a raw dataset provided by the organization representative from the primary survey data

using SurveyMonkey. The survey comprised 13 open-ended questions that revealed

seven variables identified from literature to assist with workplace competencies

development.

For this professional administrative project, the 10 open-ended survey question

(minus demographic) results were used to identify factors that could be considered in

developing workplace competencies to promote racial equity, diversity, and inclusion

(RQ). At the time of the survey, there was only 99 staff assigned to the organization due

to resignations, data clean-up, and retirements. A sample of 99 staff from across the

organization under study was invited to participate in the survey. Thirty-six percent or 36

of the 99 invited participants completed the 2021 EDI survey. The primary and original

researcher sought feedback on how the organization under study made the work

environment more diverse, equitable, and inclusive. The email survey invitations were

sent with a SurveyMonkey weblink with a brief description. The secondary dataset was provided to me in a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet format.

As shown in Table 4, Table 5, and Table 6, the codes were aligned with the corresponding survey question, broken down by the employment years of the participants. The employment years question for this survey was not a required field. There were 36 participants, and out of those completing the survey, 18 participants did not complete the employment survey question. Additionally, five participants had less than four years, nine had 5 to 9 years, two had 10 to 14 years, and two had 15 to 20 years with a state government agency.

The first step in evaluating and analyzing survey responses was to review responses provided by 36 of the 99 invited participants for each identified survey question. Each participant was labeled Participant 1 through 36, and all survey questions were numbered 1 through 10. Participant consent forms were not required because this was a secondary data analysis research method, and no one was interviewed for this project. The data were downloaded from SurveyMonkey and placed into an Excel spreadsheet, and all responses were reviewed for spelling errors, unanswered questions, generic responses, and misalignments. These items were removed or corrected before further analysis was completed. The spreadsheet was imported into NVivo to code based on themes and patterns using the query, word frequency, case classification, and cloud options to understand the participants' experiences better.

All survey questions were aligned to racial equity, diversity, and inclusion categories, so it was imperative to categorize all participants' experiences into those

categories. I identified 342 responses from participants with employment statuses ranging from less than one year to 20 years. NVivo was used to classify responses further down by apparent themes, patterns, and employment years.

The second step in the data analysis was identifying emergent themes and patterns and placing them into groups based on the original three survey question categories. The emergent themes and patterns were identified based on repetitive sentiments, words, and phrases. All participants identified seven variables as significant under racial equity, diversity, and inclusion categories. I created NVivo nodes for racial equity: bias and privilege, reporting, uncomfortable; diversity; favoritism and devalued; and inclusion; transparency and autonomy. All data were reviewed within their perspective nodes, generating 75 codes to evaluate experiences based on responses.

Emergent Themes and Patterns

As shown in Table 4, Table 5, and Table 6, responses were all grouped based on commonalities and categories based on how the survey questions were aligned. Each table summarizes the participants' responses to racial equity, diversity, and inclusion. Commonalities and categories grouping resulted in emergent themes and patterns of the project's variables. The variables revealed across a dataset are essential in qualitative research because they describe a phenomenon and assist in answering the project's RQ. In the following section, I will break down the significance of each variable and how it should be considered a factor when developing and implementing racial equity, diversity, and inclusion workplace competencies for this organization. Table 7 shows the alignment between the survey questions and variables.

Table 4

Racial Equity – Responses and Codes Aligned to Employment Years

Codes (survey question)	Did not indicate	Less than 5 years	5 to 10 years	10 to 15 years	15 to 20 years
Comfortable (1,3)			1		
Did not want to cause trouble (2)			1		
Female voices are ignored or pushed aside/pigeon-holed (1)			1		
Human resources rarely respond/Getting passed up for promotions (1,2,3)	1				
Privilege (1)		1			
Projecting my own biases on others (3)			1		
Uncomfortable (1,2,4)		2		2	
Zero tolerance for harassment or discrimination (1,2,3,4)		5	9	4	1

Note. The corresponding survey question is indicated in the parentheses.

Racial Equity

When an organization has racial equity at its center, physical traits and skin color are eliminated, and equal opportunities exist. As shown in Table 4, racial equity is significant for this organization to close gaps and create a more inclusive work environment. Table 4 summarizes codes aligned with bias and privilege, reporting, and uncomfortable, totaling 21 respondents. Emerging variables consisting of bias and privilege, reporting, and uncomfortable were based on the 36 participants' responses, with 21 generic responses removed. The 21 participants provided only generic responses: yes, no, true, false, agree, and not really. These responses did not provide details on their individual experiences that would generate any themes or patterns.

Bias and Privilege

The survey results indicated that experiences were connected to bias and privileged behavior. Seven respondents with 9 to 14 years of employment with the organization referenced biases and privileges related to themselves. These respondents recognized their White privilege as a systemic condition in society. Participant 18 said, "I never feel uncomfortable sharing my point of view or asking questions, but again I am in privileged circumstances." Participant 2 said, "As an older, White man, I recognize my privilege and only occasionally feel the distance from the younger employees." Lastly, Participant 18 said, "No, But I should caveat this because I am a younger white cis male, which systems and structures benefit." The norms and superiority are identified in sentiments that are used in the responses.

Reporting

In reviewing the survey results, 13 respondents with 5 to 10 years of employment with the organization under study referenced or indicated that they were unclear on reporting discrimination or harassment claims or had never had to report any claims. Legally and logically, it is in the best interest of claimants to report to protect themselves and the organization. However, if an employee is unclear about reporting claims, issues will never be resolved. Participant 10 said, "I do not know the formal process." Participant 9 said, "This has never been discussed, and I do not know what the process would be or where I would find the information." Participant 25 said, "I do not know, nor was I able to find anything regarding this on the intranet." Lastly, Participant 25 said,

I feel comfortable reporting harassment or discrimination issues; however, I do not feel confident in HR to handle any complaints or issues, so I probably would not report any such issues. If I were to witness someone else experiencing harassment or discrimination, I would report it to my supervisor and follow their recommendation of what action to take.

Uncomfortable

The survey results indicated that nine respondents with less than five years of employment with the organization under study felt uncomfortable about the work environment, reporting issues, and sharing ideas and opinions. Participant 35 said, "My neurodiversity has sometimes been challenging in the workplace and has made me uncomfortable." Participant 13 said, "At times, I feel uncomfortable as though there is a microscope on me." Participant 12 said, "I do not feel comfortable reporting any issues within the agency." Lastly, Participant 9 said,

> Yes, in relation to the work. I have felt uncomfortable with our team dynamics at times, however, and have felt that my multiple suggestions over the years that we have a team discussion about mutual expectations, trust-building, and team agreements have not been addressed.

Table 5

Diversity - Responses and Codes Aligned to Employment Years

Codes (Survey Question)	Did not indicate	Less than 5 years	5 to 10 years	10 to 15 years	15 to 20 years
Discussed the value of diversity and our struggles to achieve a higher level of diversity/Diminishes value (5,7)		1			
Division Director has allowed for contention amongst team members by not enforcing the exact expectations amongst all staff and clarifying policies/ Division Director could do more to show appreciation for contributions and talents (5,8)	1				
I do not feel valued/I feel replaceable/Favor certain individuals (5,7,8)			1		
My supervisor is very intentional within our team to value diversity/My supervisor does not use people with different skills and backgrounds to their full potential (5,7)			1		
Not necessarily a priority/Maybe in theory but not necessarily in practice (5,6,7,8)		4	2	1	1
The emphasis on intentionally attracting more diverse candidates for vacant positions, and the effort to engage more employees in discussions about a return to the office post COVID, are both examples of commitment to diversity and inclusion (5)			1		
Unclear on how individuals are chosen for promotions (5)	1				
Value them but does not work well with infusing value in the team/Valued by the team but not by the agency/Very much/Visible figures/We all strive for a diverse team/Lack of Transparency/I feel that autonomy is given to leadership to do their jobs well (5,6,7,8)		1	2	1	1

Note. The corresponding survey question is indicated in the parentheses.

Diversity

It is vital to have diversity represented throughout the organization under study because it allows all human differences and beliefs to be valued based on fairness, ethics, and morals. Thirty-six participants completed the survey, and all generic responses were removed. As shown in Table 5, 19 respondents had experienced some favoritism or felt devalued as a member of this organization. Table 5 summarizes codes aligned to favoritism and devalued.

Favoritism

The survey results indicated that five respondents with 5 to 10 years of employment with the organization under study referenced favoritism is apparent in the workplace environment regarding opportunities. Participant 10 said, "Our division director favors certain individuals." Participant 12 said, "The division director caters to team members who have been in the division the longest." Finally, Participant 11 said, "Agency leadership team focuses on team members who have a more visible/public-facing role within the agency."

Devalued

The survey results indicated that 14 respondents with less than 5 to 14 years of employment with the organization under study referenced feeling devalued in the workplace during their tenure. Participant 26 said, "I think they value them but do not work well with infusing the value in the team." Participant 6 said,

> Current practices within the agency negate any ability to feel valued or grow
> within the agency and diversify skill sets. A lack of transparency regarding

internal appointments, divisional moves, etc. When the agency director addresses turnover questions by stating that more skilled employees are simply getting better opportunities diminishes the value of those remaining.

Finally, Participant 8 said,

Valued by the team, but not by the agency. If the agency valued abilities, they would open up promotional opportunities and support all staff in their career growth. I see a few individuals given opportunities to grow themselves, but not the majority. Comments made by the Executive Director have even made comments that the best employees get recruited and find other opportunities outside of the agency. What does that say to those committed to working at this agency?

Table 6

Inclusion - Responses and Codes Aligned to Employment Years

Codes (Survey Question)	Did not indicate	Less than 5 years	5 to 10 years	10 to 15 years	15 to 20 years
Great autonomy is given to Executive Leadership Team members to access training and resources needed as well as resources for our team/The division director caters to team members who have been in the division the longest (9)	1	2	2	1	
I would feel more supported if they shared training opportunities with me/The resources and training may be available, but the workload does not permit the time (9)	1	2	3	2	
In small teams but not at all in the agency/I do not feel a part of a team most of the time (9,10)		1	1		
Lack of transparency (10)		2	2	1	
My manager is a great listener and values my perspective/Our input is quite often included or requested before decisions are made (10)	1	1			
Team discussions and decision making are inclusive; however, inclusion is lacking once outside of our team (10)	1	2	2	1	

Note. The corresponding survey question is indicated in the parentheses.

Inclusion

Inclusivity has been a stakeholder in the workplace for centuries to retain, recruit, and engage employees. Organizations that value inclusivity in the workplace allow their employees' voices to be heard, opinions to be considered, and everyone accountable for their actions. As shown in Table 6, they have 23 respondents who referenced the organization's need for transparency and autonomy. Again, 36 participants completed the

survey, and all generic responses were removed. Table 6 summarizes codes aligned to transparency and autonomy.

Transparency

The survey results indicated that 13 respondents with less than 5 to 14 years of employment referenced the organization under study lacking transparency. Participant 5 said, "there is a complete lack of transparency within our team and the agency. The continued topic of discussion without follows through." Participant 34 said, "HR has been consulted on several sensitive topics within our division by multiple staff members without any follow-up and or resolution."

Lastly, Participant 12 said,

Not sure who is making what decisions as I often hear things through the grapevine. In my small team, more so now in my division, but not in the agency. The agency as a whole lacks transparency and lacks established policies.

Autonomy

The survey results indicated that ten respondents with nine years or less of employment with the organization under study referenced autonomy had been observed for specific groups within the organization. Participant 2 said, "I am given much room to make decisions about how to do my work." Participant 18 said, "I feel that autonomy is given to executive leadership team members to do their jobs well."

Table 7

Research Question and Emergent Themes

Variable (*N* = 36)	Research question
Bias and Privilege Reporting Uncomfortable Favoritism Devalued Transparency Autonomy	What factors should be considered in the workplace competencies to promote racial equity, diversity, and inclusion?

The next step in the content data analysis was to review the themes for alignment to workplace competencies that would represent and promote racial equity, diversity, and inclusion within this Washington State organization. The secondary data were placed into original categories based on the survey questions and identified variables. Identifying the variables was based on prior research literature associated with workplace competencies, workplace assessment, and employee engagement. Patterns were identified after coding was completed. Themes emerged after a review of all categories, coding, and patterns. This process revealed seven themes generated through secondary data of an employee engagement survey with similar themes combined.

The emerging themes were relevant and significant for this professional administrative project. As shown in Table 7, the themes were reviewed for intent, purpose, understanding, and alignment to the RQ. The final step in this data analysis was to connect the themes to workplace competencies that place racial equity, diversity, and inclusion at the organization's center.

Evaluation and Recommendations

Seven themes emerged through the analysis and synthesis of the evidence

generated from the secondary dataset for this qualitative research study. In the following

sections, I evaluate and recommend developing and implementing racial equity, diversity,

and inclusion workplace competencies based on factors needed to answer the practice

focused RQ.

The RQ was as follows, what factors should be considered in the workplace

competencies to promote racial equity, diversity, and inclusion? Seven themes emerged

during the analysis and synthesis of evidence generated based on content analysis of

secondary data from the 2021 EDI survey. Themes are (1) bias, and privilege, (2)

reporting, (3) uncomfortable, (4) favoritism, (5) devalued, (6) transparency, and (7)

autonomy. To ensure that these themes provide practical workplace competencies that

will benefit all employees, I first determined what is considered adequate and how

success will be measured.

Bias and Privilege.

People's experiences outside of the workplace tend to spill over into their

everyday lives. That spillage includes the workplace environment and how people

perceive themselves within those environments. Consequently, the survey data revealed

that 2.52% of the respondents recognize that their own beliefs fall into the White

privilege category within the workplace. Participant 2 stated, "As an older, White man, I

recognize my privilege and only occasionally feel the distance from the younger

employees." Participant 18 stated, "I never feel uncomfortable sharing my point of view

or asking questions, but again I am in privileged circumstances." These respondents had

14 and 9 years of employment with the organization under study. Employment years are

relevant in this project to show the disadvantages of equitable representation.

Applebaum (2016) and Vinkenburg (2017) asserted that bias and privilege in the

workplace represent inequality, White fragility, and White supremacy that should be

examined and developed for vigilance to eliminate White privilege. Inequality shows up

in the workplace in salary gaps, age discrimination, and gender inequality. White fragility

and White supremacy are shown in the workplace as gaslighting, bullying, dismissal,

defensiveness, paternalism, and perfectionism. The organization under study must be

willing to have honest, open, and helpful conversations regarding their individual

experiences and the impact those experiences have had on their lives to combat the sense

of bias and privilege in the workplace. Self-reflection and self-awareness are vital

examples of how everyone should identify, acknowledge, and appreciate individual

differences.

Reporting

When staff knows that the employer values racial equity, diversity, and inclusion,

honesty and open reporting about certain behaviors in the workplace will increase. Any

form of unfair treatment should be reported; it allows the organization under study to put

in parameters to prevent the behavior from happening again or place accountability on

the aggressor. The survey results revealed that 4.68% of the respondents did not know

how to report or felt uncomfortable reporting discrimination or harassment in the

workplace. Participant 9 said, "This has never been discussed, and I do not know what

the process would be or where I would find the information." Participant 10 said, "I do not know the formal process." participant 25 said, "I do not know, nor was I able to find anything regarding this on the intranet." Caminiti (2021) noted that valuing diversity and inclusion resonates with workers. When workers know that their concerns are valid or valued, reporting concerns within the workplace would be eliminated based on the publicized processes and policies.

Zheng (2020) reported that studies "show low reporting rates for organizations due to fear of retaliation" (para. 2). Other potential factors for low reporting include lack of anonymity offered, toxic organizational cultures, opaque, legality, and inaccessible reporting practices, and no benefits for victims. Some respondents from the 2020 EDI survey provided their experiences but failed to provide their employment years. Participant 4 stated, "I know I can talk with my supervisor about it, but I am not sure if that counts as "reporting" it" but did not provide their employment years. Participant 25 did not provide their employment years and stated,

> I feel comfortable reporting harassment or discrimination issues. However, I do not feel confident in HR to handle any complaints or issues, so I probably would not report any such issues. If I were to witness someone else experiencing harassment or discrimination, I would report it to my supervisor and follow their recommendation of what action to take.

Eliminating the fear of reporting will start with the design of the process. Employees must feel safe when reporting workplace behavior that does not resemble racial equity, diversity, and inclusion.

Uncomfortable

The survey results suggest that 3.96% of the respondents felt uncomfortable in the workplace due to personal characteristics (e.g., gender, race, religion, ethnicity, age, sexual orientation). Brownlee (2020) argued that being uncomfortable in the workplace surrounds "blacks and Whites in corporate America often maintaining their subcultures" (para. 1). The subcultures look like hesitancy and anxiety in the workplace, especially regarding racial sensitivities. Participant 9 stated, "I have felt uncomfortable within our team dynamics. However, I have felt that my multiple suggestions over the years that we should have a team discussion about mutual expectations, trust-building, and team agreements have not been addressed." Participant 21 stated,

> I am a member of EDIC, part of the LGBTQ community. I am out to most of everyone in my life but not at work. Part of that is because I do not feel like EDIC cares about LGBTQ representation, and if this committee does not prioritize inclusion, I have my doubts about the agency being a safe place for me to be out. It is always uncomfortable to feel like I need to be closeted for safety (not physical safety - more like career safety, like getting passed up for promotions or treated differently on teams).

Hecht (2020) stated that employees are not looking for vague platitude about change but action. It is not surprising that employees feel uncomfortable in the workplace, explicitly surrounding racial equity, diversity, and inclusion. Historically, the United States has shown that feeling comfortable requires White people to be comfortable first. However, recent events like the murder of George Floyd, Insurrection

at the Capitol, the murder of Ahmaud Arbery and Breonna Taylor, and COVID-19 disproportionately impact people of color are a few examples of why conversations of racial equity continue to be uncomfortable for White people.

Favoritism

Less than two percent (1.8) of the respondents revealed that favoritism exists within the organization under study based on their interactions with leadership or superiors. Favoritism shown by leadership can create a lack of motivation among employees and fuel resentment and disrespectful behavior. Participant 10 stated, "Our division director favors certain individuals." Participant 12 said, "The division director has allowed for contention amongst team members by not enforcing the same expectations amongst all staff and clarifying policies." Abun (2014) argued that favoritism in the workplace "is considered discrimination and discrimination is illegal and immoral" (para. 4). Discrimination is based on protected characteristics and traits.

Root (2014) argued that favoritism in the workplace is counterproductive and has several different types: nepotism (hiring of family members), cronyism (hiring of friends), sexual favors (using sex for career development), and patronage (executives or managers use others to engage in nepotism or cronyism). Favoritism can affect recruitment and hiring efforts for the organization under study. Adopting a workplace competency can offset the appearance and engagement in this behavior within the workplace. Eliminating favoritism could potentially improve the overall morale of the workplace while ensuring that everyone gets treated fairly and consistently.

Devalued

Spatz (2018) stated that employees who feel valued and appreciated would increase overall productivity and job satisfaction. Five percent of the respondents reported feeling devalued in the workplace. Participant 7 stated, "Somewhat, I think my supervisor values skills similar to theirs more than others." Participant 12 stated,

> Yes, however current practices within the agency negate any ability to feel valued or have the potential to grow within the agency and diversify skill sets. A lack of transparency regarding internal appointments, divisional moves, etc. When the agency director addresses turnover questions by stating that more skilled employees are simply getting better opportunities diminishes the value of those remaining.

Participant 10 stated, "Our division director could do more to show appreciation for contributions and talents." Gibson et al. (2020) mentioned that managers and supervisors should avoid making their employees feel devalued. Building a strong culture should be a priority for all organizations. Furthermore, when the employer builds a culture of valuing employees, they are essentially building an atmosphere of loyalty among employees, and there will be a decrease in turnover.

Transparency

Salem (2018) argued that transparency within an organization builds employee trust, expands relationships, increases productivity, and strengthens innovation. The survey results revealed that 4.68% of the respondents mentioned that transparency does not exist. Participant 5 stated, "There is a complete lack of transparency within our team

and the agency. The continued topic of discussion without follows through." Participant 12 stated, "HR has been consulted on several sensitive topics within our division by multiple staff members without any follow-up and or resolution." Participant 12 stated, "The agency lacks transparency and lacks established policies. Not sure who is making what decisions as I often hear things through the grapevine."

Transparency within an organization will assist with perception. Lavoie (2015) stated that there are four reasons that transparency is needed in the workplace: better relationships which mean employees do not quit their jobs; better alignment shows that employees understand their role and the organization's vision; better solutions allow the employees to assist; better engagement with employees by being open and honest about organizational matters. Ideally, transparency in the workplace benefits organizational recruitment and hiring efforts, career development, performance, and projects.

Autonomy

Wooll (2021) noted, "Increased workplace autonomy embraces the concept that not everyone is the same. Each team member may have a different approach, but that approach is not necessarily invalid. Trust is given to each employee based on the notion that they will get the job done" (para. 10). Less than four percent (3.6) of the respondents mentioned autonomy as both positive and negative based on their experiences within the organization. Participant 18 stated, "I feel that autonomy is given to ELT members to do their jobs well." Participant 2 stated, "I am given a lot of room to decide how to do my work." Participant 18 stated,

I often do not get specific feedback, but I have been reassured that I would know if there were concerns about my approach or contributions. Furthermore, it is empowering that my supervisor provides much autonomy and does not micromanage me or my team's work.

Osborne (2020) reported that autonomy in the workplace is not micromanaging employees. Micromanaging means no trust for employees to do the job they were hired to do. Transparency and autonomy should work in tandem to eliminate employee frustrations. If an employee understands the organization's vision, they should have the freedom to work toward that vision independently.

Unanticipated Limitations

The findings from the secondary data analysis examined above revealed a few unanticipated limitations. With only 36% of participants providing their insight on workplace experiences, there was a negative impact on generalization. For example, the organization participated in seven surveys between 2015 and 2021, and employees were reluctant to participate in another survey with no action. Employees understand that, but taking surveys is not getting the actions done; those employees are looking to observe change. There is a need to get racial equity at the organization's center.

Organizing the data, eliminating errors, populating the data into the software, and coding was problematic. Furthermore, operating NVivo software was another unanticipated limitation, whereas I had to learn how to utilize the software properly. Lastly, the secondary data research method, I have limited to using the already

established survey questions, so facilitating the survey questions provided some
limitations when analyzing the data.

Positive Social Change Implications

Coffman and Gordian (2021) investigated that since the death of George Floyd,
organizations are still struggling with the topic of racial equity, diversity, and inclusion.
The path forward requires organizations to examine their workplace cultures and start
uncomfortable conversations. The secondary data examined for this project showed that
leadership believes there is a need for racial equity, diversity, and inclusion workplace
competencies to eliminate employee frustrations and any areas that present racial inequity
throughout the organization under study. Organizations must transform their cultures to
fit their employees to eliminate structural, systemic, systematic, institutional, and
individual racism. This project has increased awareness of racial inequities, improved
employee engagement across ethnicities, and provided a lens for other state organizations
within Washington State. Lastly, the organization under study will represent the
antiracism organization movement that promotes and prohibit anyone from any form of
discrimination moving forward. The findings from this project indicated that positive
social change is possible and relevant within this state government organization.

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Recommendations

</div>

The results of the qualitative case study identified seven emergent themes relevant
to developing and implementing racial equity, diversity, and inclusion workplace
competencies for the organization under study. The following recommendations are
presented as a framework for the organization under study to place racial equity at its

center. Those recommendations are racial equity, diversity, and inclusion, nine pillars of

excellence: critical thinking and problem solving, communication, customer service,

inclusivity, innovation, mutual respect, leadership, stewardship, teamwork, and

collaboration (Figure 1). The following sections will inform the theoretical framework

and bridge the gap in racial equity in a Washington State agency by providing a

framework for implementing workplace competencies.

CRT

CRT is "a framework or set of basic perspectives, methods, and pedagogy that

seeks to identify, analyze, and transform those structural and cultural aspects of society

that maintain the subordination and marginalization of people of color" (Solorzano, 1997,

p. 6). CRT's six tenets provided a framework for this project: endemic racism, socially

constructed, differential racialization, interest convergence, racial narratives, and

intersectionality (Abrams &Moio, 2009). The first tenet is endemic racism, which

examines the generality of race and its impact on one's ethnicity. Race was developed as

a social construct based on minority groups experiencing oppression, inequality, and

exploitation. At the same time, White privilege continues, and other minority groups

experience internalized and institutional racism. The second tenet is socially constructed

and allows for political, social, economic, and historical processes to consistently change

the meaning and associations of race.

The third tenet is that racialization examines processes through social group

constructs and assigns specific expectations, behaviors, language, norms, and meanings.

For example, during slavery, White people used songs, narratives, and stories about

blacks to depict happiness and enjoyed serving them. The fourth tenet is the interest convergence which is that White power encourages racial advances for BIPOC only when promoting White interest. For example, in the case of Brown versus the Board of Education, when White and blacks' interests are both promoted (Davidson, 2019). The fifth tenet is racial narratives that listen to people of color's voices while creating a space of racial inclusivity. Racial narratives "challenge liberalist claims of neutrality, color blindness, and universal truths" (Abrams & Moio, 2009, p. 251). The sixth tenet is intersectionality, when social categories such as race, sex, class, national origin, and sexual orientation overlap. For example, women in the workplace make less than men, and if they are minorities, they make even less. In this case, having gender and ethnicities overlapping creates further disadvantages.

CRT is essential when addressing racial inequalities and inequities within the workplace. Understanding the CRT's tenet gives organizations a tool to guide them to placing racial equity at its center. Guyton (2021) discussed four essential components that organizations should consider when understanding CRT within the workplace: (1) CRT and training should not be confused; CRT does not dictate workplace DEI processes and training; (2) race is a social system, so know that racism exists; (3) competing and thriving should be equal for all members of the organization, so manage privilege and teams; and (4) listen to diverse backgrounds and understand cultural communication styles.

Government organizations recognize that after the George Floyd murder, racial equity, diversity, and inclusion were critical for creating more inclusive work

environments. Declaring opposition to racism after the incident was swift and a priority

for leaders. Decoding meanings of terms like racial equity, diversity, and inclusion while

updating policies and training to reflect their position on racism is how an organization

labels itself as "anti-racist." CRT shows that the organization has identified critical

components needed, like workplace competencies, to place racial equity at its center.

Racial Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Workplace Competencies

Recommended racial equity, diversity, and inclusion workplace competencies

framework are (1) critical thinking and problem-solving, (2) communication, (3)

customer service, (4) inclusivity, (5) innovation, (6) leadership, (7) mutual respect, (8)

stewardship, and (9) teamwork and collaboration (Figure 1). The workplace

competencies will be clarified and aligned with the secondary data analysis results.

Figure 1

Racial Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Workplace Competencies: 9 Pillars of Excellence
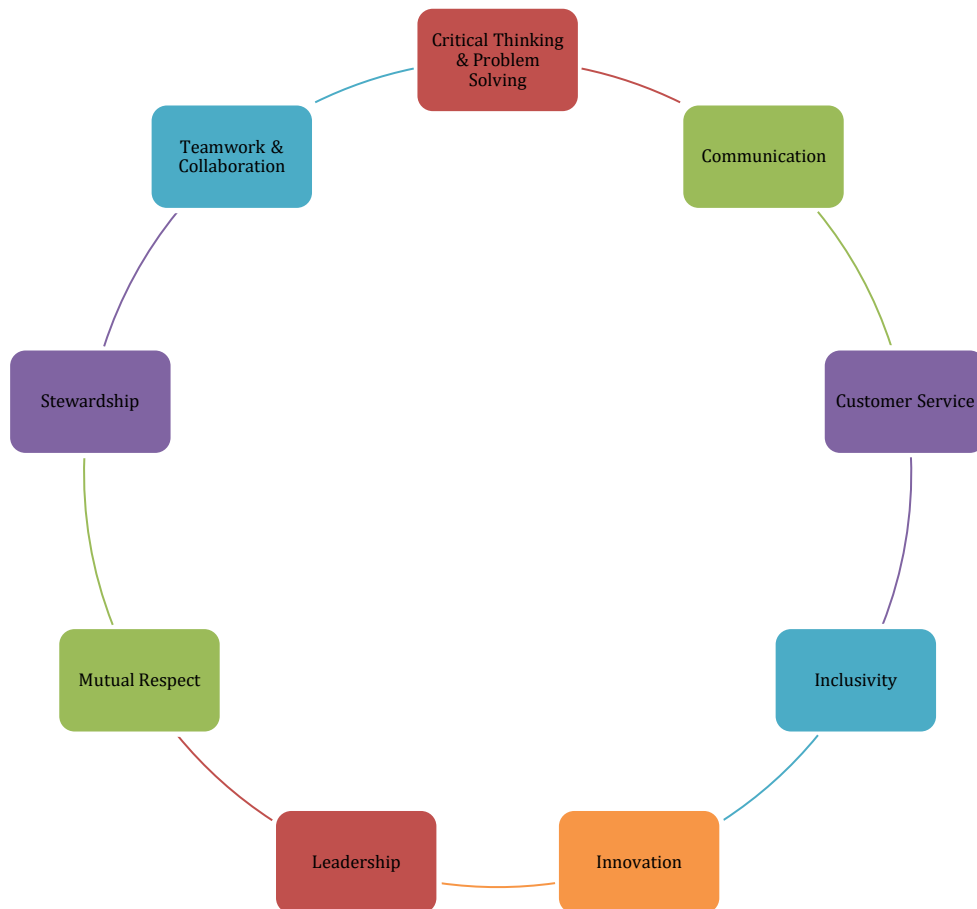
Critical Thinking and Problem-Solving

The organization seeks to place racial equity at its center. Placing racial equity at the center of an organization requires members to think critically and have the ability to solve problems. Carnevale and Smith (2013) investigated that critical thinking and problem-solving are among the top skills employers seek employees when entering the workforce. Participant 35 stated, "My supervisor tries to help me improve my work. However, her skills and high standards can sometimes make our team less decisive when

she is not at work because usually, she can see the solution before we do." As a workplace competency, critical thinking and problem-solving provide a path to equitable power and policy structure solutions for anti-racist organizations. The competency will allow all employees to gain the ability to think critically and solve problems when their supervisor is not around.

Hodge and Lear (2011) mentioned that employees must do more to assist organizations to succeed by having the needed skills like critical thinking, problem-solving, innovation, cultural competency, communication, teamwork, ethical and social responsibility, and foundational skills. The organization should be willing to capitalize on these skills if employees lack them, not just for lower-level staff. The employee engagement survey results have presented data suggesting that the organization should engage in opportunities to propel them toward racial equity. Participant 7 stated, "I think my supervisor values skills similar to theirs more than others." Then one would need to ask themselves, what are those skills, and how do I acquire them? Inequities in the workplace do not stop with racial equity, and leadership has to provide opportunities for all employees. Setting the expectation for all will eliminate the perceptions of unfairness and any form of discrimination. Livington (2020) suggested that promoting racial equity in the workplace should be done in five stages called PRESS: "The stages, which organizations must move through sequentially, are (1) Problem awareness, (2) Root-cause analysis, (3) Empathy, or level of concern about the problem and the people it afflicts, (4) Strategies for addressing the problem, and (5) Sacrifice, or willingness to invest the time, energy, and resources necessary for strategy implementation (para. 4)."

CRT, critical thinking, and problem-solving collectively will allow the organization to identify the problem, discuss the history of the problem, and respectfully dialogue on how to resolve the problem. Expanding everyone's understanding of how we arrived at a problem, making people feel uncomfortable about the problem, hearing viewpoints, and finding common ground to move the organization forward. This workplace competency aligns with autonomy, employees feeling uncomfortable, reporting, and transparency.

Communication

Words matter when considering racial equity, diversity, and inclusion within the workplace or community. Now, people use racial designations in written and oral communication more frequently in workplaces to eliminate others from making assumptions about their preferences. Effective communication as a workplace competency will allow all organization members to have a voice and others to respect their voices and will eliminate employees from feeling devalued. Advancing racial equity benefits everyone, communities, organizations, and nations. It can be challenging to discuss issues surrounding racial equity, diversity, and inclusion within the workplace. The goal is to respect others' experiences and perspectives on the topic. Some myths and facts should be discussed to overcome some perceptions of a specific topic. For example, race is a social construct and not just biological. Another example is that racism is not a problem because it happened in the past, but there are some lingering effects that exist today, like structural and institutional racism.

Communication should be effective and efficient in the workplace. Martins (2021) noted that "effectively communicating at work can help reduce

miscommunication, increase team happiness, bolster collaboration, and foster trust"

(para. 2). CRT within this competency is when listening to diverse backgrounds and

understanding cultural communication styles adheres. When communicating,

acknowledging cultural differences will eliminate confusion, barriers, and potential

friction among employees, increase job satisfaction and productivity and decrease

turnover rates. Participant 15 stated, "I prefer to remain quiet. Our group is difficult." It

would be interesting to know more details on why the respondent commented. Does this

respondent believe he or she has no voice that will be heard on a topic? This workplace

competency aligns with autonomy, bias and privilege, devalued, reporting, employees

feeling uncomfortable, and transparency.

Customer Service

The first question the reader would ask is why customer service is needed as a

workplace competency. In any organization, all employees are each other's customers.

Good customer service is not because the customer is always right but about listening to

what the customer says with a positive, courteous, and helpful attitude. Participant 35

stated, "I do not recall discussing diversity with my supervisor except for where it

involves our customers. We need to hire someone; this will be discussed in depth." Mills

(2020) stated that when organizations are dealing with a wide range of people, employees

must be aware and sensitive to cultural differences and backgrounds. The organization

must ensure that its core values and expectations are centered around employees' and

customers' experiences to reach its racial equity goal. When there are employees who

understand racial equity, diversity, and inclusion, they can provide better service to the

public. This workplace competency aligns with all seven themes: autonomy, bias and privilege, devalued, favoritism, reporting, employees feeling uncomfortable, and transparency.

Inclusivity

Leadership has faced challenges around inclusivity in the workplace. Making operational functions leveled to ensure everyone has the same opportunities can be tricky. Hirsch (2021) explained that employees that do not directly experience bias but observe it are negatively impacted. Supervisors are working diligently to ensure that employees feel included, but that practice is not spilling over into the rest of the organization. Participant 34 stated, "Team discussions and decision making are inclusive; however, the inclusion is lacking once outside of our team."

Morris (2021) argued that BIPOC lived experiences challenge organizational leadership when incorporating robust systematic changes that lay the foundation for building an antiracism organization. Building an inclusive work environment is a journey with its challenges. Based on one respondent's statement, leadership is attempting to move toward racial equity at its center. Participant 2 stated, "The emphasis on intentionally attracting more diverse candidates for vacant positions, and the effort to engage more employees in discussions about a return to the office post-COVID, are both examples of commitment to diversity and inclusion." The CRT aligns with this workplace competency through leadership managing bias and privilege and teams. Organizations need tools to help mitigate White privilege and acknowledge BIPOC experiences.

Innovation

Innovation allows organizations to increase their performance and engage employees equally. With the organization's focus on combating racial inequities, innovation as a workplace competency is a pinnacle expectation to assist in exceeding the goal of placing racial equity at its center. This workplace competency essentially enables all employees to develop and use skills, knowledge, experience, and creativity to the fullest extent. Participant 21 stated, "it seems like it is from an academic standpoint rather than bringing people with different skills and backgrounds to participate in the work." Green (2021) stated that organizations must create awareness, focus on an approach, inquiry with customers and employees, and create new ideas to achieve innovation. Leadership should welcome creative ideas from all employees to reduce racial inequities in the workplace.

In 2016, President Obama stated that

research has shown that diverse groups are more effective at problem-solving than homogeneous groups, and policies that promote diversity and inclusion will enhance our ability to draw from the broadest possible pool of talent, solve our toughest challenges, maximize employee engagement and innovation, and lead by example by setting a high standard for providing access to opportunity to all segments of our society. (Martinez-Acosta & Favero, 2018, p. 2)

CRT within this project and organization allows levels to be leveled and develop a sense of equity and equality within the workplace. This workplace competency aligns with autonomy, bias and privilege, and transparency.

Leadership

Suarez (2018) mentioned that leadership sets the tone and drives the work when organizational culture change is warranted. When a cultural change is needed in an organization, it is expected that leadership will lead the change efforts. Leadership must be aware of the concern, embrace patience over those concerns, and eliminate any uncertainty about the concerns so that racial equity can be legitimately placed at its business center. The survey results mentioned leadership over 30 times. Participant 18 stated, "The executive leadership team has been having good discussions lately about our return-to-work plans, and everyone is provided the opportunity to provide input. I feel less included in things such as the agency's strategic plan. That effort feels centralized around a select few people/divisions - which I am not sure is a concern specifically or just a reality of how those processes work." CRT allows leaders to eliminate racism in the workplace by understanding actionable steps to take by examining the six tenets, precisely interest convergence, and endemic racism. These tenets explain that racism is a part of our society, and BIPOC cannot benefit unless White people are included.

Understanding the leadership role within this organization under study should come with expectations and accountability. If there are no opportunities for BIPOC in leadership, does that pose a question on whether organizations value racial equity, diversity, and inclusion? Simply having the numbers of BIPOC does not mean that management has an agenda to change the mindset or organizational culture. Some organizations want the numbers to ensure that they are seen as an anti-racist organization, but that is not the reality of the cultural environment. Leadership has to play a significant

role in removing the stigma of Whiteness, White privilege, and White supremacy within our workplaces. Change starts with the leadership, and leadership must be transparent and accountable for the lack of equality or equity within the workplace. This workplace competency aligns with all seven themes: autonomy, bias and privilege, devalued, reporting, favoritism, employees feeling uncomfortable, and transparency.

Mutual Respect

Mutual respect is a critical workplace competency since it requires everyone to be heard. All cultural backgrounds and differences should be mutually respected, whether at work or in play. Clarke and Mahadi (2017) highlighted those recent studies conceptualized respect into group inclusion, valuing, fairness, appraisals, and humanity. Supervisors must foster these concepts as the identity of mutual respect in the workplace through words, feelings, views, tone of voice, and body language. Listening to each other's views regardless of whether we like the person eliminates friction, conflict, and organizational and personal relationship failures. Participant 12 stated, "The division director has allowed for contention amongst team members by not enforcing the exact expectations amongst all staff and clarifying policies." Resentment is formed when leadership is not listening to the voices of their staff and vice versa.

CRT is not synonymous or interchangeable with racial equity, diversity, and inclusion, but it builds a foundation around these concepts and the need for our workplace competencies. CRT highlights underrepresented or marginalized groups' experiences and history to build mutual respect. The organization under study is a White-led organization with employees accepting their White privilege and Whiteness, so a

workplace competency must be established that sets expectations with accountability. With recent incidents throughout the United States, mutual respect is critical for all organizations to decrease absenteeism, build a positive environment, and improve productivity. This workplace competency aligns with autonomy, bias and privilege, devalued, employees feeling uncomfortable, and transparency.

Stewardship

As a Washington State government organization, stewardship of state assets is extremely important. Employees of a state government organization are identified as public servants. There is an expectation that public servant makes fair and strategic decisions about using state government resources. Stewardship as a workplace competency realigns that expectation.

Understanding stewardship is the key to bridging the gap on racial equity within a state organization. Curren et al. (2016) emphasized that implementing racial equity within an organization requires well-resourced stewardship with strong accountability structures and clear communication with all stakeholders. Tracking progress and performance requires some form of accountability, quality, and consistency to advance racial equity. This workplace competency allows for buy-in from organizational members, including leadership. Leadership can provide the necessary resources or shift priorities to implement this cultural change. CRT forces leaders to look at privilege, teams, processes, policies and relook resources to meet the organization's demands while maintaining racial equity, diversity, and inclusion.

Teamwork and Collaboration

Working together cohesively and collectively to solve problems and address concerns within the governmental system will create a better platform for all members of an organization and not just for White people. All state government organizations must close the gap on racial inequities and inequalities. This workplace competency encourages organizations to break down barriers, build trust, and welcome learning from each other. White privilege and Whiteness are not an excuse to not learn about BIPOC's experiences that are considered racist, discriminatory, or frightening. Participant 25 stated,

> I feel comfortable asking questions with my supervisor and a few team members.
> Overall, my team does not accept questions and different points of view. Even
> though it is usually uncomfortable in the team setting, I still ask questions and
> share my point of view. I feel it is essential, and my supervisor strongly
> encourages us to do so. My supervisor has made our team more accepting of
> everyone's viewpoint and asked questions.

Bikha (2019) emphasized that honoring teamwork and collaboration comes with benefits. Teamwork and collaboration provide a sense of belonging and ownership, motivation, transparency increases, various viewpoints are received, and retention issues decrease. CRT within a team or work environment can be, in some opinions, counterproductive due to the brainwashing factor, with White people believing that they are evil racists due to historical factors when it is most likely a need to be educated again.

Strengths and Limitations of the Project

This professional administrative project had a few strengths and limitations. A few strengths of this qualitative professional administrative project were the availability of the secondary datasets and organization representatives. This project can support a quantitative design method, future research, and the workplace competencies framework can be shared with other Washington State government organizations. The limitations of this project were the survey respondents (sampling of participants) and survey questions. The sampling size was insufficient for generalization throughout the Washington State government sector. While the entire organization under study was invited to participate, the data results were limited because of the respondent's generic responses and willingness to participate.

Section 4 presented the project findings and recommendations with seven emergent themes to inform one RQ about racial equity, diversity, and inclusion workplace competencies. Finally, each theme was aligned to CRT and identified nine workplace competencies that would assist the organization in placing racial equity at its center. Section 5 explains how the study results will be disseminated to the Washington State government organization under study.

Section 5: Dissemination Plan

In Section 4, I identified and outlined the evaluation of the secondary data, data analysis, survey results, recommendations, strengths, and limitations of the project. Section 5 details the audience, dissemination plan, and summary. The project results were disseminated through a 30-page PowerPoint presentation to executive leadership, human resource staff, and EDIC committee members of the organization under study. The targeted audience for this project was the organization's under study assigned staff. The presentation included emergent themes generated through the secondary data analysis aligned with the CRT and racial equity, diversity, and inclusion workplace competencies framework. These workplace competencies can assist the organization in placing racial equity at its center.

The project results can be shared with the staff members during meetings, training, conferences, potential listening sessions, and further research. This qualitative research study allowed the organization under study to accomplish one of the 12 recommendations based on its 2020 organizational-wide racial equity assessment and establish a racial equity, diversity, and inclusion workplace competencies framework to move forward. Consequently, the findings did reveal staff's feelings toward inequities and inequalities within the organization related to autonomy, transparency, de-valued, reporting, and uncomfortable feelings, which were among the highest emergent themes identified.

Utilizing CRT as a theoretical framework for this project was instrumental in connecting the historical perspective of Whiteness, White fragility, White supremacy,

and White privilege and aligning it to the workplace competencies to eliminate future friction, conflict, and unfairness. Campbell (2014) noted that "CRT as a theoretical framework and interpretive model, demonstrates to be a valuable tool of social justice that further promotes a space placing race in the center of analysis and proving to be beneficial" (p.80). Racial equity, diversity, and inclusion workplace competencies are beneficial for not the organization under study but its staff. The organizational staff is the most valuable asset.

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Appendix A: Racial Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Workplace Competencies
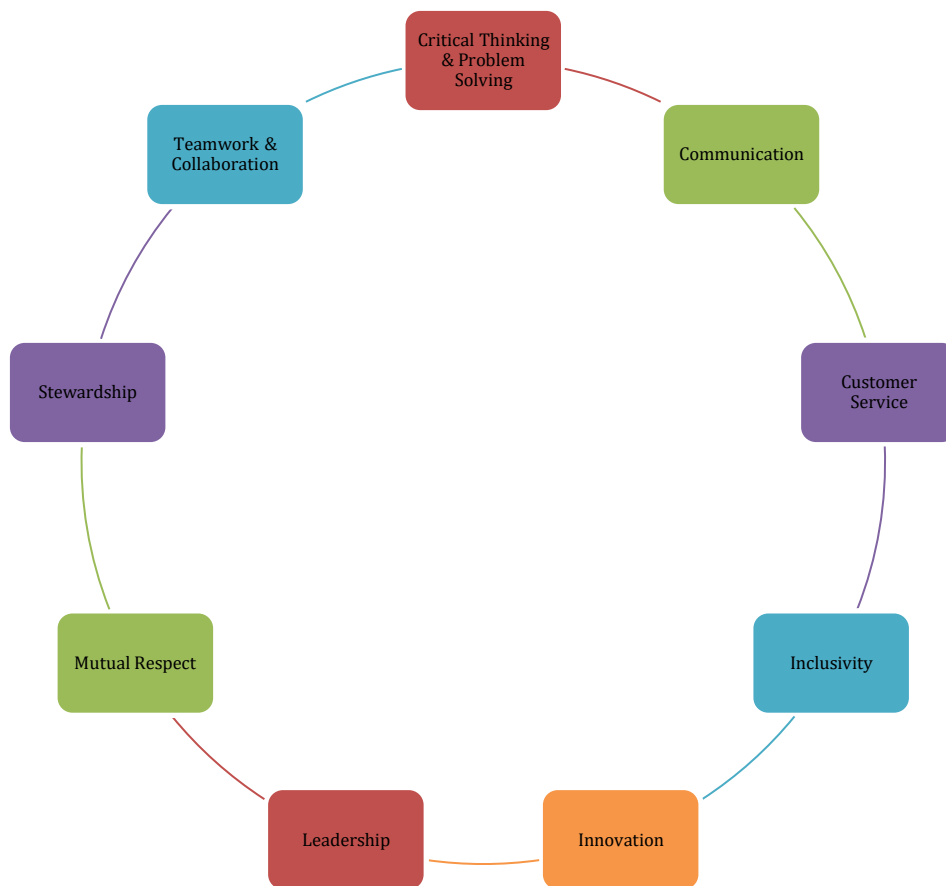
Appendix B: Data User Agreement

This Agreement has been drafted by Yolanda D. Geolingo for the masked agency name and is dated and signed on August 23, 2021.

This Data Use Agreement ("Agreement"), effective as of (August 23, 2021) ("Effective Date"), is entered into by and between (Yolanda Geolingo)("Data Recipient") and (masked agency name) ("Data Provider"). The purpose of this Agreement is to provide Data Recipient with access to a Limited Data Set ("LDS") for use in research in accord with the HIPAA and FERPA Regulations.

1. Definitions. Unless otherwise specified in this Agreement, all capitalized terms used in this Agreement not otherwise defined have the meaning established for purposes of the "HIPAA Regulations" codified at Title 45 parts 160 through 164 of the United States Code of Federal Regulations, as amended from time to time.

2. Preparation of the LDS. Data Provider shall prepare and furnish to Data Recipient an LDS according to any applicable HIPAA or FERPA regulations.

3. Data to be included in the LDS. **No direct identifiers such as names may be included in the Limited Data Set (LDS).** The researcher will not name the Data Provider in the doctoral study published in ProQuest unless the Data Provider makes a written request for the researcher to do so. In preparing the LDS, the Data Provider or designee shall include the data fields specified, which are the minimum necessary to accomplish the research: Employee Engagement and Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Survey data.

4. Responsibilities of Data Recipient. Data Recipient agrees to:

a. Use or disclose the LDS only as permitted by this Agreement or as required by law;

b. Use appropriate safeguards to prevent use or disclosure of the LDS other than as permitted by this Agreement or required by law;

c. Report to Data Provider any use or disclosure of the LDS of which it becomes aware that is not permitted by this Agreement or required by law;

d. Require any of its subcontractors or agents that receive or have access to the LDS to agree to the same restrictions and conditions on the use and/or disclosure of the LDS that apply to Data Recipient under this Agreement; and

e. Not use the information in the LDS to identify or contact the individuals who are data subjects.

5. Permitted Uses and Disclosures of the LDS. Data Recipient may only use and/or disclose the LDS for its research activities.

6. Term and Termination.

a. Term. The term of this Agreement shall commence as of the Effective Date and shall continue for so long as Data Recipient retains the LDS, unless sooner terminated as set forth in this Agreement.

b. Termination by Data Recipient. Data Recipient may terminate this Agreement at any time by notifying the Data Provider and returning or destroying the LDS.

c. Termination by Data Provider. Data Provider may terminate this Agreement at any time by providing thirty (30) days prior written notice to Data Recipient.

d. For Breach. Data Provider shall provide written notice to Data Recipient within ten (10) days of any determination that Data Recipient has breached a material term of this Agreement. Data Provider shall allow Data Recipient to cure said alleged material breach upon mutually agreeable terms. Failure to agree on mutually agreeable terms for cure within thirty (30) days shall be grounds for the immediate termination of this Agreement by the Data Provider.

e. Effect of Termination. Sections 1, 4, 5, 6(e), and 7 of this Agreement shall survive any agreement termination under subsections c or d.

7. Miscellaneous.

a. Change in Law. The parties agree to negotiate in good faith to amend this Agreement to comport with changes in federal law that materially alter either or both parties' obligations under this Agreement. Provided, however, that if the parties are unable to agree to mutually acceptable Amendment (s) by the compliance date of the change in applicable law or regulations, either Party may terminate this Agreement as provided in section 6.

b. Construction of Terms. The terms of this Agreement shall be construed to give effect to applicable federal interpretative guidance regarding the HIPAA Regulations.

c. No Third-Party Beneficiaries. Nothing in this Agreement shall confer upon any person other than the parties and their respective successors or assigns any rights, remedies, obligations, or liabilities whatsoever.

d. Counterparts. This Agreement may be executed in one or more counterparts, each of which shall be deemed an original, but all of which together shall constitute one and the same instrument.

e. Headings. The headings and other captions in this Agreement are for convenience and reference only and shall not be used in interpreting, construing or enforcing any of the provisions of this Agreement.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, each of the undersigned has caused this Agreement to be duly executed in its name and on its behalf.

Appendix C: 2015 Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Survey Questions

1.	Age
2.	Disability
3.	Manager or supervisor
4.	Gender identity
5.	Race/ethnicity
6.	Veteran
7.	Do you believe there is a need for a diversity committee at your agency?
8.	How often are issues about diversity discussed within your unit or department?
9.	In your opinion, what level of value does the agency culture at your agency place on diversity?
10.	Have you ever been told or overheard a comment at this agency that offended you based on age, gender, race, religion, ethnicity, color, national origin, class, sexual orientation, a difference of ability, or any other perceived or innate characteristics?
11.	How welcome to you feel at your agency in terms of your age, gender, race, religion, ethnicity, color, national origin, class, sexual orientation, difference of ability, or any other perceived or innate characteristics?

Appendix D: 2021 Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Survey Questions

Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Survey (Teams)
This survey is voluntary, but we encourage you to take it and give us your feedback - even anonymously! As we strive to be a more diverse, equitable, and inclusive organization, your feedback on this survey helps us know where we are in relation to those goals and develop workshops, training, and ways to infuse EDI in our daily work.
Please respond to the following statements based on your experience in your team
1. My supervisor emphasizes the value of diversity in creating a stronger team. (Valuing diversity means embracing the differences of each individual's unique attributes, backgrounds, and characteristics and infusing those perspectives to influence team decisions. For more information about workforce diversity, see EDI glossary)
2. I feel that I have the same access to resources and training that other on my team have.
3. I feel included in team discussions and decision-making.
4. My supervisor values people with different skills and backgrounds.
5. My supervisor values my talents and the contributions I make.
6. Sometimes I feel uncomfortable at work because of my personal characteristics (e.g., gender, race, religion, ethnicity, age, sexual orientation).
7. I feel that my unique attributes, skills, traits, and abilities are valued in my team.
8. If I had a concern about harassment or discrimination, I know where and how to report that concern.
9. I feel comfortable reporting harassment or discrimination issues.
10. In my team, I feel comfortable asking questions, sharing my point of view, and giving and receiving feedback.

Appendix E: 2020 State Employee Engagement Survey Questions

The 2020 State Employee Engagement Survey consists of *36 questions: twenty standard perception questions, one rotating question, five COVID-19 supplemental questions, and ten demographic questions. *Agencies had the option to present a modified amount of demographic questions to their employees. Please see the demographic section below.

Standard Questions
For the standard perception questions, the respondent is asked to rate the statements from 1 to 5 where:

1=Never or Almost Never
2=Seldom
3=Occasionally
4=Usually
5=Almost Always or Always

1) I have the opportunity to give input on decisions affecting my work.
2) I receive helpful communication from my agency.
3) I find meaning in my work.
4) I know what is expected of me at work.
5) I have opportunities at work to learn and grow.
6) I have the tools and resources I need to do my job effectively.
7) My supervisor treats me with dignity and respect.
8) My supervisor gives me helpful feedback.
9) I receive recognition for a job well done.
10) A spirit of cooperation and teamwork exists in my workgroup.
11) I know how my agency measures its success.
12) My agency supports a diverse workforce
13) My agency helps me navigate change.
14) I am encouraged to come up with better ways of doing things.
15) At my job, I have the opportunity to make good use of my skills.
16) At my workplace, I feel valued for who I am as a person.
17) How satisfied are you with your flexibility?* (the ability to adjust your scheduled hours as needed)
18) How satisfied are you with your mobility?* (the ability to work remotely from a variety of locations, such as your home or alternate work sites)
19) My agency encourages inclusion in the workplace. (2020 Rotating Question)
20) In general, I'm satisfied with my job.
21) I would recommend my agency as a great place to work.

COVID-19 Supplemental Questions
22) My agency makes decisions that prioritize my safety during the COVID-19 pandemic.
23) My agency takes steps to positively impact my work/life balance during the COVID-19 pandemic.
24) I find meaningful ways to stay connected to coworkers during the COVID-19 pandemic.
25) My agency keeps me informed about workplace impacts from the COVID-19 pandemic.
26) When the workplace is safe (such as low case counts, vaccine) to reopen for employees, I would be interested in teleworking:

Survey Question Response Options:

Questions 1-16,19-25	Questions 17, 18	Question 26
1=Never or Almost Never	1= Very Dissatisfied	Not telework at all
2=Seldom	2=Dissatisfied	Less than 1 day per week
3=Occasionally	3= Neutral	1-2 days per week
4=Usually	4=Satisfied	3-4 days per week
5=Almost Always or Always	5=Very Satisfied	100% every week
	N/A=Doesn't Apply to My Position	N/A=Doesn't Apply to My Position

Standard Demography Questions
The following questions are the standard demographic questions that are presented to employees. Agencies that requested modified demographic questions only received questions with an asterisk (*).

27) * Which agency do you work for?
  o (all agencies listed)
28) * How long have you worked for your current agency?
  o Less than 1 year
  o 1 to 2 years

  o 3 to 5 years
  o 6 to 10 years
  o 11 to 15 years
  o 16 to more years
  o Prefer not to say
29) *Are you a supervisor?
  o Yes
  o No
  o Prefer not to say
30) *In which county o you work a majority of the time?
  o (all counties listed)
  o Telework or fieldwork 100%
  o Out of state
  o Prefer not to say
31) What is your age?
  o Under 18
  o 18-24
  o 25-34
  o 35-44
  o 45-54
  o 55-64
  o 65+
  o Prefer not to say
32) What is your gender?
  o Female
  o Male
  o Non-binary/X
  o Prefer not to say
33) Are you a US Veteran?
  o Yes
  o No
  o Prefer not to say
34) Do you identify as having a disability?
  o Yes
  o No
  o Prefer not to say
35) Do you identify as LGBTQ+
  o Yes
  o No
  o Prefer not to say
36) What race and/or ethnicity do you consider yourself?
  o American Indian or Alaska Native
  o Asian
  o Black or African American
  o Hispanic or Latino
  o Middle Eastern or North African
  o Pacific Islander
  o White
  o Another race or ethnicity
  o More than one race or ethnicity
  o Prefer not to say

*Would you be willing to answer additional demographic questions in the future? (Yes/No)