A Framework for Diversity and Inclusion

The City of Elgin embraces a framework for change and inclusive growth through practices that reflect diverse values, promote progressive leadership and allow innovation to flourish.

Diversity and inclusion guide City staff to actively embrace human differences as vital assets that enrich the organization and community, spur transformation and innovation, and strengthen the City’s ability to deliver services that make a positive impact.

The City of Elgin began a formal journey in 2012 to incorporate diversity and inclusion within its practices and programs. The organization more deeply committed to the work in May 2017 under the guidance of leadership and inclusion consultant Relationships Matter Now. The journey forward is guided by a framework that provides space in the organization for intentional conversations to occur, time for personal and professional growth, and opportunities for reflection of practice and progress.

The Elgin City Council further demonstrated its commitment in December 2017 by identifying diversity and inclusion as one of four key organizational values in the adopted 2018-2022 Strategic Principles and Priorities, the City’s highest level planning and visioning document. The strategic plan gives focus in providing...
exceptional City services, improving Elgin’s quality of life and enhancing the uniqueness of the Elgin community.

Work within the Diversity and Inclusion Framework aligns around three goals identified by City Council and senior leadership staff:

• Deliver superior programs and services to all segments of the community

• Monitor and manage supplier diversity

• Continue building a diverse workforce and drive workplace inclusion

As an evolving document and process, the Framework is not time-bound. Due to the fluid nature of the process, measurable initiatives, communication and reporting are key components of evaluating the progress as individuals, as departments and as an organization.

Why a Framework?

The City of Elgin’s work with Diversity and Inclusion goes beyond a single plan. The word “framework” was intentionally selected to describe and exemplify a flexible system that is being developed to support multiple plans needed to continue toward the City’s goals.

The strength of the Diversity and Inclusion Framework provides opportunities to recognize the impact of existing activities, while providing structure to link new initiatives, recognize challenge points and celebrate successes throughout the organization.

**Time** - There is no end date to the Framework, but specific action plans will exist related to each goal. Organizational cultures are not built quickly, and therefore lasting change requires adequate time to permeate through an organization.

**Measured Progress** - The work will be held accountable through transparent milestones and measurable outcomes using qualitative and quantitative methods.

**Communication** - Various methods will be used for diverse audiences to help communicate opportunities for stakeholder participation, progress updates and opportunities for feedback.
Defining Our Work

Aligning on definitions that are used throughout the Framework provides a common lens by which the organization understand its work and sets expectations. This list is not comprehensive, but sets a baseline for the work ahead.

Diversity

Diversity is defined broadly to encompass the range of human characteristics and experiences that comprises an individual’s personality, knowledge, reactions and perspectives. Diversity can include, but is not limited to, race, ethnicity, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, generational aspects, social class, physical ability or attributes, veteran status, educational background, work status, family status, religious or ethical values system, national origin, professional experiences and political beliefs.

Layers of Diversity

The Layers of Diversity model broadens the conversation about diversity, and sets the tone for inclusion by reflecting each person’s reality in an organization.

Adapted from Gardenswartz and Rowe, 2003
**Equity**

Equity provides for fair treatment, access, opportunity, and advancement for all people, while at the same time striving to identify and eliminate barriers that have prevented the full participation of some groups. Action around equity requires the understanding of root causes of disparities, while taking positive steps in removing barriers to promote access and inclusion.

**Inclusion**

Inclusion is the act of creating environments in which any individual or group can feel and be welcomed, respected, supported and valued to fully participate. An inclusive organization promotes and sustains a sense of belonging, and uses the full compliment of talents, experiences and capacity of its employees, leadership and external stakeholders.

**Implicit or Unconscious Bias**

Implicit bias is the attitudes or stereotypes that affect one’s understanding, actions and decisions in an unconscious manner. Recognition of unconscious or implicit bias helps organizations to be deliberate about addressing issues of inclusivity. Time, resources and courage are required to fully understand one’s own implicit biases and how they might interact with the organization and expectations of the community.

**Lens**

Life experiences provide each person with a different viewpoint or lens in which the world is viewed and understood. Considering other lenses asks that one be open to differing perspectives and open to challenging one’s own assumptions and perspectives.

The celebration of diversity and development of inclusive environments catalyzes communities and workplaces to become more enriched as they draw upon the variety of experiences, perspectives and skills contributed by its people.
Diversity and Inclusion Goals

Deliver superior programs and services to all segments of the community
The City of Elgin is committed to developing and delivering high quality city programs and services efficiently and equitably to all members of our community.

Monitor and manage supplier diversity
The City of Elgin will review, monitor and maintain procurement policy, practices, and outreach to provide minority-owned and women-owned businesses with a fair opportunity to successfully participate and compete to supply goods and services.

Continue building a diverse workforce and drive workplace inclusion
The City of Elgin is committed to ensuring that its workforce includes people with diverse backgrounds, skills and perspectives who feel valued and can contribute to the organization. The city will continue implementing policies and practices that support an inclusive culture and provide equal opportunities to all employees.

Everyone Has a Seat at The Table

It is not possible to make progress in the spaces of diversity and inclusion if conversation and action are only among certain groups within the organization. Whether you represent the City Council, senior staff, management or union employee, work part- or full-time, serve as a volunteer on a board or commission, or are a member of the public, there is a role for all with the City’s Diversity and Inclusion Framework.

“Inclusion and diversity go hand in hand.”

Meaningful work within diversity and inclusion requires everyone to be invited, feel welcome to participate, and be supported both in the journey and during productive contributions.

The City’s work with consultant partner Relationships Matter Now provides a third-party facilitator to help identified audiences within the multi-faceted environment of a municipal organization.
understand where they are in the journey on a personal level, professional level, and in the context of the organization. Work will also identify and align on organizational actions and goals needed to continue progress in creating a more inclusive community for all.

Transforming Goals Into Action

The City of Elgin is committed to taking tangible steps toward driving continued progress in creating a more diverse workforce and inclusive workplace, delivering high quality programs and services to all segments of the community, and in the monitoring and management of supplier diversity.

City staff used 2017 to refocus its goals and establish a baseline understanding of specific aspects within each of the three identified goals. Relationships Matter Now conducted specific assessments under each goal, and the recommended next steps are included as appendices within this Framework.

Continue building a diverse workforce and drive workplace inclusion

Action Item: Organizational culture and climate assessment

Deliver superior programs and services to all segments of the community

Action Item: Review of City boards and commissions

Monitor and manage supplier diversity

Action Item: Review of vendor and supplier landscape

Work in 2018 includes a review with key stakeholders of information observed in each action item. Concurrent development through micro and macro lenses and plan implementation will occur throughout the year, with key measurable outcomes identified to help the City Council and organization measure progress.

Updates to the Framework will occur throughout 2018 and beyond.
**Employee Development**

Critical in this Framework includes time for facilitated leadership development, particularly at the senior staff level for their role in leading the organization. By understanding one’s own diversity, challenging unconscious bias or assumptions, promoting inclusion and applying our insights to the delivery of services, programs and communication, change is possible. Staff at all levels need to be equipped with the skills, tools and support necessary to create and sustain an innovative organization to promote Elgin’s competitive edge in an increasingly competitive market.

**Evaluating the Framework**

Diversity can exist within an organization, but its impact is only fully realized when there is a demonstrated inclusive culture.

Continued measurement of progress toward identified outcomes will occur, allowing the organization and community to celebrate successes, address friction points and reaffirm commitments. Action plans within each goal area will always include next steps that can be reported on, and when possible, objective data will be used to assess progress in the qualitative nature of the three diversity and inclusion goals.

The City Council, staff at all levels and the community play important roles in providing feedback to both the friction and progress points within the Framework. Open, authentic communication is a key component to keep the work accountable and drive progress.
APPENDICES

This section contains documents that describe action related to each of the City of Elgin’s three goals for diversity and inclusion. The appendices are organized by date added and in alphabetical order. A brief summary accompanies each listing to identify the action occurring within the Diversity and Inclusion Framework.

January 2018

The City of Elgin’s consultant partner Relationships Matter Now conducted assessments in Fall 2017 related to each diversity and inclusion goal. The findings and recommendations will set the course for the next phase of the Framework. Each assessment or report is provided as a separate appendix.

Appendix A
Boards and Commissions Assessment
*Goal: Deliver superior programs and services to all segments of the community*

Appendix B
Procurement Assessment
*Goal: Monitor and manage supplier diversity*

Appendix C
Culture and Climate Assessment - Executive Summary
*Goal: Continue building a diverse workforce and drive workplace inclusion*

Appendix D
Culture and Climate Assessment - Report
*Goal: Continue building a diverse workforce and drive workplace inclusion*
Boards and Commissions
Assessment and Next Steps
Submitted by Relationships Matter Now | October 2017

Deliver superior programs and services to all segments of community

Relationships Matter Now (RMN) conducted an analysis in October 2017 of City of Elgin’s 24 boards and commissions. The analysis was executed to obtain an understanding of the current boards and commissions landscape and ascertain how RMN may assist the City of Elgin in board and commission execution as part of its diversity and inclusion goal of developing and delivering high quality City programs and services efficiently and equitably to all members of the Elgin community.

Findings

Elgin has 24 boards, commissions or committees currently operating.

RMN looked at each board, commission and committee and where possible, found documentation for their formation to gain insight on definition, intention and current relevance. Approximately one-third of the boards and commissions are statutory and several have undergone an update and reorganization in the last 24 months. RMN did not find definitive definitions of the terms “boards,” “commissions” and “committees” for City of Elgin, but do note that the current purpose of each of the commissions and boards are clearly defined, with the exception of one group. There are two other commissions/committees that warrant a conversation about how they operate today.

Further, there is very little documentation around how to apply and appointments. Now may be a good time to build a process and publicize it as part of the overall messaging of building a more inclusive community.

Elgin recently implemented a student representation on boards and commissions project.

Although this new program is not fully executed, the inclusion work gives the City of Elgin another opportunity to showcase and publicize its effort to bring young people into the process of governance and policy making by giving them representation on a select group of boards, commissions and/or committees. The review and communication around the greater boards, commissions and committees’ inclusion work can be a vehicle to lift the message about student representatives.
**Recommended Next Steps**

- Define and post definitions of “boards,” “commissions” and “committees.”
- Map process for appointment, application, terms and outline for public consumption.
- Build an outreach framework for vacancies on boards and commissions.
- Update the Human Relations Commission with HRC members and staff to reflect work they are doing versus what the ordinance currently states and update ordinance.
- Suggestion: Bike and Pedestrian Advisory Committee potentially move to operate within Parks and Recreation Board or Sustainability Commission.
- Have a conversation about reimagining/updating Image Advisory Committee with IAC members and staff - look for links to potential other existing commissions.
Monitor and Manage Supplier Diversity

Relationships Matter Now (RMN) conducted an analysis in early September 2017 of City of Elgin procurement activity from January - August 2017. The analysis was get an understanding of the current vendor universe and ascertain how RMN may assist the City of Elgin in its strategic priority to review, monitor and maintain procurement policy, practices, and outreach to provide minority-owned and women-owned businesses (MBE/WBE) with a fair opportunity to successfully participate and compete to supply goods and services. Additionally, we conducted a competitive analysis of the top 15 cities in Illinois to find out how peers of the City of Elgin currently operate from a supplier diversity perspective.

Top 15 Illinois Cities in Population


Findings

Elgin, like many communities of its size, tracks minimal procurement vendor diversity data. Elgin has a small number of MBE/WBE in its procurement vendor base today.

Fewer than five of the top 15 cities in Illinois track supplier diversity.

Elgin tracks little procurement data and only collects self-reported Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) utilization as it relates to supplier diversity. In the
47 projects larger than $20,000 RMN reviewed, there were three vendors who are MBE/WBE certified and that was confirmed by third party sources of data. Those three vendors represent six percent of the total dollars spent from January through August 2017. There were a total of two vendors in the under $20,000 payments data that are certified MBE/WBE.

*Elgin is comparable to the majority of other top 15 cities as it relates supplier diversity.*

Only three cities in the top 15 in Illinois (besides Chicago) have any supplier diversity commitments, programs or communication. Evanston and Springfield both have specific supplier diversity goals while Champaign has only an expressed statement about supplier diversity.

**Recommendations**

- More thoroughly track procurement data and ask vendors to self-identify diversity status (MBE/WBE, Veterans, PwD)
- RMN supports the City’s current path of updating procurement tracking via a new procurement software platform. As part of this update, we recommend asking vendors to self-identify in all contracting opportunities. We believe it best to understand our potential universe of purchasing well before making recommendations on where opportunities lie.
- Create a statement of commitment to supplier diversity and strengthen our Elgin vendor preference communication. RMN recommends Elgin make their strategic priority public and create a statement of their commitment both internally and externally. We currently have little language around the Elgin vendor preference and believe we can boost that communication with an overall supplier diversity message.
- Build relationships in supplier diversity spaces to lift Elgin as a community interested in doing business with diverse suppliers.
- Utilizing memberships the City currently has and investigating opportunities for outreach, we recommend building a plan to make more connection and contact with potential diverse vendors. We recommend building this plan for 2018 and beyond with specific quarterly connection goals to expand our current reach.
- Review data at the end of 2018 and make any necessary updates.
Climate and Culture Assessment

Executive Summary

Submitted by Relationships Matter Now | October 2017

Continue building a diverse workforce and drive workplace inclusion

Relationships Matter Now (RMN) conducted a quantitative and qualitative analysis of the City of Elgin workplace climate and culture during August and September 2017. The analysis was designed to obtain an understanding of the current environment and ascertain how RMN may assist the City of Elgin in its priority to continue building a diverse workforce and drive workplace inclusion. Specifically, RMN wanted to gather information about employee experience and use it to build policies and practices to support an inclusive culture and provide equal opportunity to all.

The internal assessment was agreed upon after RMN met initially with the City of Elgin's leadership team and City Council in the late spring and summer of 2017, at which time city leadership updated and better defined the strategic goals that guide the City of Elgin's journey to be a more inclusive community.

The Climate and Culture Assessments marked the data gathering and analysis stage of Diverse Workforce and Workplace Inclusion priority. RMN completed the administration of the online survey, in-person focus groups and assessment analysis to provide insight into the City's overall framework moving forward.

Understanding the Assessment Tools

Two survey tools designed by RMN were used to analyze how the City and its departments are viewed in key areas such as recruiting and talent development, to understand the cultural experiences of City employees, to assess leadership's ability to demonstrate an inclusive work environment, and to solicit suggestions for improving the departments’ climate in respect to valuing individuals’ differences.

An online survey included 16 questions across the categories of recruiting, talent development, leadership and cultural experience. Respondents were asked to self-report demographic information of age, gender identification, race and ethnic identification, management or non-management and tenure with the City.
In-person focus groups occurred following the online assessment for an opportunity to better understand certain aspects and questions about each participant’s experience within the City of Elgin. Focus groups were voluntary and conducted across a two-week period in various City facilities. The 20 questions used during the focus groups reflected the same four categories from the climate survey: recruiting, talent development, leadership and cultural experience. When applicable, probe questions were asked of women, people of color, people with less tenure and respondents in younger or older age brackets.

**Participation and Engagement**

Employees were informed about the opportunities to participate in the climate and culture assessments through a series of three emails. Senior staff members were also responsible for discussing these opportunities with their departments.

The online survey assessment received 285 employee responses, or approximately 41 percent of the organization's workforce. Thirty-four employees participated in the in-person focus groups, representing less than five percent of the organization. The low response and engagement rates with the survey tools provides us with insight to the City's current place in its diversity and inclusion journey, as well as highlights potential challenges with communication. These engagement numbers represent a snapshot in time, and it is recommended to complete similar assessments in 2019 after intentional progress is made toward the City’s three framework goals.

**Key Findings**

High-level findings from the Climate and Culture Assessment provide a glimpse of the baseline or “snapshot in time” about how employees experience work within the City. A complete description of the online and in-person responses are available in the Climate and Culture Assessment Report.

- The 41% survey response rate is below what RMN normally sees for culture and climate assessments but is on par for Elgin City employee engagement of internal communications based on metrics provided by City staff.

- The survey data indicates that most of the respondents were non-management white males between 35-54.
• Quantitative data indicates that most respondents have a positive work experience with the City of Elgin while the qualitative data gives insight to where there are opportunities for improvement.

• Elgin over indexed on focus group participation with 20 percent more participation versus those who signed up in advance.

• Younger (under 35) respondents report high approval in the key areas of inquiry - recruitment, leadership, talent development and cultural experience in both the survey and focus group contributions.

• Women and People of Color (PoC) report vastly different levels of agreement on leadership and cultural experience versus their white male counterparts.

• There is a sense of “fatigue” amongst the city’s employees as it relates to talking diversity and inclusion and a clear appetite for action and next steps.

**Recommended Next Steps**

• Create space in the organization to reflect on the data findings and accept what we heard from employees without judgment or need to “solve” immediately.

• Spend time with the leadership team and a temporary taskforce (representing the greater City of Elgin employee voice) building a set of recommendations for next steps in Q1 2018

• Develop action plan in Q2 2018 to address key aspects of recruitment, talent development, leadership and culture.

• Schedule a Climate and Culture Assessment in Fall 2019.
Continue building a diverse workforce and drive workplace inclusion

Relationships Matter Now (RMN) conducted a quantitative and qualitative analysis of the City of Elgin workplace climate and culture during August and September 2017. The analysis was designed to obtain an understanding of the current environment and ascertain how RMN may assist the City of Elgin in its priority to continue building a diverse workforce and drive workplace inclusion.

The online survey consisted of 16 questions across the categories of recruiting, talent development, leadership and cultural experience. The questions asked helped understand the cultural experience of City employees, assess leadership’s ability to demonstrate an inclusive work environment, and solicit suggestions for improving the departments’ climate in respect to valuing individuals’ differences. Demographic information was also asked and self-reported.

Agreed upon by City leadership, the goal of the climate and culture assessment was to identify the general atmosphere that exists among the workforce with the intent of identifying areas of opportunity to be a more inclusive work environment. “Climate” and “culture” were not defined in the survey but RMN did define “diverse talent” and “contribute” as it relates to the recruitment process. Employees received no fewer than three email communications and leadership team members were instructed to bring up this topic at department/division meetings whereby information was to be shared pertaining to the importance of the assessment.

Relationships Matter Now then conducted focus groups to provide a deeper analysis of the data derived through the Climate and Culture Survey. This qualitative analysis was recommended to give the team the chance to “dive into” certain aspects and questions about each participant’s cultural experience at the City of Elgin. Focus groups were voluntary and conducted across a two week period in various locations across the City of Elgin. All focus groups were held in person September 7, 8 and 14. The 20 focus group questions asked fell into the same categories as the Climate Survey: Recruiting, Talent Development, Leadership and Cultural Experience. When applicable and conditions warranted, probe questions were asked of women, people of color, people with less tenure and respondents in younger or older age brackets.
Overall Climate and Culture Experience

With fewer than half of the city's employees responding to the survey (41%), and fewer than 5% volunteering for the focus groups, we have to carefully consider what the data tells us as it is a very low percentage of response overall across the quantitative and qualitative measures. However, we must look at the data we have and reflect on how it captures this specific moment in time in the City of Elgin for the employees who did choose to participate.

Generally speaking, the overall message from the data is that employees who did participate in the survey and/or the focus groups have an overall positive view of the climate and their cultural experience with the City of Elgin. From their recruitment experience through talent development, respondents held a positive view with some neutral and minor dissenting views in both the survey and at the focus groups. It is significant that more than 35% of employees are neutral, disagree, and strongly disagree to contributing to the recruitment process and no one reported ever being directly asked to refer candidates in the focus groups.

Overall, a majority of the respondents feel valued, respected and supported.

Most responding employees feel leadership communicates the commitment to diversity and inclusion in the organization, and the leaders demonstrate an inclusive work environment. However, none of the focus group attendees could give specific details on what that behavior consisted of in real life situations. Most of the employee respondents indicate that they own their career development, however, there is an opportunity for leaders to be more fair and equitable in the career advancement, promotion and leadership opportunities.
Online Climate Survey

The survey assessment received 285 employee responses, from an estimated total employee population of 700 possible respondents for a 41% response rate.

Demographics

Race/Ethnicity

The sample mostly identified as being White (77%), with 11% identifying as Hispanic/Latino, 5% identifying as Black, 1% as Native American, 2% Asian/Pacific Islander, and 4% multiracial. City employee representation is 82% White, 12% Hispanic, 5% Black, 1% Asian, and 1% Native American.

The 2010 census described the Elgin’s demographics as: 65.9% White; 7.4% Black; 5.4% Asian; 43.6% Hispanic (any race). The 2015 census described the demographics as: 45% Hispanic; 40.8% White; 6.7% Asian; 6.5% Black; 1.4% multiracial.

Age/Gender

Over 81% of all respondents were over 35 with the highest concentration in the 35-54 age range. Respondents under 35 years of age reflected on 19% of the responses, while respondents over age 54 made up 20%.

The gender demographics reflect that the majority of respondents were males (56.18%). This gender demographic breakdown is not consistent with the Elgin demographics (City= Males 49.4%/Female 50.6%), nor the workplace demographic (Female = 23%/Male = 77%). Females over indexed in responses versus what we may have expected due to demographic information.

Job classification/Tenure

Only 37% of the responses reflected management views on the survey. 63% of the respondents identified as non-managers. As well, the largest group that responded consisted of employees who have worked in the City between 10-15 years (27%) and the next largest worked fewer than 5 years (23%). This distribution does not follow a normal bell-curve, which suggests that either employees of the organization are new or they have been there many years.

In summary, most of the respondents to the survey were white, non-management males at the City of Elgin.
Survey Category: Recruitment

Questions related to recruitment focused on how the City actively recruits diverse talent, how individuals felt during their interview process, and if individual team members felt comfortable contributing to Elgin’s recruitment process. RMN attempted to better understand the current recruitment model for Elgin and ascertain if the model was effective in attracting diverse personnel.

When discussing if Elgin actively recruits diverse talent, about seventy-two percent (72%) felt that Elgin is effective in this regard. Seventy-one percent (71%) of employees felt welcomed during the recruiting process and expressed that the recruitment process was enjoyable. More than sixty-four (64%) of employees stated that they are actively involved in the recruitment process.

Areas of Strength

• The vast majority of the respondents felt they had a good experience during their recruitment process.

• A majority of employees are active in recruitment of candidates to the city.

Survey Category: Leadership

The leadership section of the Elgin assessment focused on how individuals needs are being met at the organization, how individuals are allowed to “be themselves” in their department, if leaders demonstrate support for diversity and inclusion and demonstrate an inclusive environment for employees.

When asked if the organization communicates the city’s commitment to diversity and inclusion, about sixty-three (63%) agreed that the city does achieve this goal. Respondents also felt that their individual differences are openly valued in their department (60%). Leaders were described as supporting diversity and inclusion in his/her actions/words with more than 65% of respondents agreeing with this statement. In regards to leadership demonstrating an inclusive environment about fifty-six (56%), agreed that Elgin leadership demonstrate an inclusive environment.

Areas of Strength

• More than half of the respondents indicate that individual differences are openly valued in their department.

• Younger (under 25) respondents felt strongly that differences are valued in their department.
Areas of Opportunity

- Almost fifty percent of People of Color (POC) respondents feel that individual differences are not openly valued in their department.
- Forty percent of women do not strongly agree leaders demonstrate an inclusive environment where views are valued.
- 10-15% of respondents skipped three questions on leadership.

Survey Category: Talent Development

The focus of the talent development question included retention as well. The first question asked if Elgin was able to retain diverse talent; sixty-four (64%) agreed with this statement. When discussing if everyone is treated equally, most employees either disagreed or were neutral in their response. The question related to understanding and participating in career development opportunities had staff agreeing that Elgin does a good job of this (64%). Finally, when staff were asked if they create opportunities to develop their skills for work, ninety percent (90%) agreed with this statement.

Areas of Strength

- City employees feel ownership for their own career development.

Areas of Opportunity

- More than fifty percent of those employees who answered the question on equitable treatment were neutral or disagreed.
- All POC respondents were either neutral or disagree that everyone is treated fairly regarding career advancement, promotions, and leadership opportunities.
- 10-12% of respondents chose to skip questions related to talent development leadership and cultural experience versus their white male counterparts.
Survey Category: Cultural Experience

When considering Elgin’s cultural experience, we learn about employees’ experience at work. In the discussion about people’s diverse backgrounds, seventy-seven percent (77%) felt that individuals with different racial and ethnic backgrounds are included in the department. As well, sixty-six percent (66%) felt that they are valued and respected in their division in Elgin. Sixty percent (60%) of respondents felt individual differences are openly valued in their departments.

Areas of Strength

- Slightly more male than female respondents feel valued and respected within their department.
- There are no significant differences between male or female respondents in the belief that people of all backgrounds are welcomed and feel included in their department.
- Seventy percent of POC respondent feel their departments value and make use of all employees’ unique strengths and abilities.

Areas of Opportunity

- 40% of all respondents were neutral or disagreed that differences are openly valued in their department.
- Women and people of color were mostly like to be neutral, disagree or strongly disagree with feeling valued and respected.
- 10% of respondents skipped the question about differences being openly valued.
Focus Groups

Thirty-four employees out of approximately 700 City employees participated in the in-person focus groups, representing less than five percent of the organization. The low response and engagement rates with the survey tools provides us with insight to the City's current place in its diversity and inclusion journey, as well as highlights potential challenges with communication. These engagement numbers represent a snapshot in time, and it is recommended to complete similar assessments in 2019 after intentional progress is made toward the City’s three framework goals.

The twenty focus group questions asked fell into the following categories: recruiting, talent development, leadership and cultural experience. Participation in the focus groups was encouraged but not required. All participants volunteered.

One hundred-twenty percent of employees who confirmed attendance to participate in the focus group sessions actually attended the sessions - we had 29 RSVPs and 34 final participants across five sessions. Two groups had additional participants who were not on the confirmed list and in both cases the additions were from within the same building, indicating that the focus groups had a “word of mouth” experience effect.

Participants in all sessions reported not responding to the Climate Survey for a total of one-third of all focus group participants. There was disparate understanding of information about the purpose of the focus group session and/or cultural climate assessment.

Significant Quotes

“I didn't hear about the survey at all.”

“I wanted to contribute to the conversation.”

“Why didn't we invite everyone and make it mandatory?”
Category: Recruitment

Areas of Strength

- Employees generally remembered their recruitment experience and said it was typical (not special or significant in any way).
- Many employees spoke about the civil service commission which is no longer operating as a major barrier to entry.
- Police department employees mentioned major changes for the better in their recruitment experience from the time they first came to the city citing major restructuring of the Police and Fire commission as the main reason for positive change.
- A high percentage of respondents affirmed they would and did recommend people to work for the city of Elgin.
- Many people had many specific positive responses as to why they would recommend.

Significant Quotes

“I felt like I hit the lottery. I’d been out of work for a while and this role came along. Applied not feeling particularly confident but I did like it here from day one”

“Yes, definitely (recommend someone to work here) for the pay and benefits although the pay might get you but it won’t keep you.”

“Elgin is very progressive and embraces officer wellness.” “Elgin does a lot of things that other PDs are afraid to do.”

“Coworkers here are great - the people for sure are why I would recommend someone.”

Areas of Opportunity

- People are not directly asked to generate employment candidate leads.
- Panels and multiple interviews can be intimidating.
- Some people feel politics plays too big a role in hiring and advancement.
- People felt that an emphasis on diverse candidates made the city pass on qualified candidates.
Significant Quotes

“First interview was very intimidating. Five people in room, mostly male and I was a young female candidate.”

“...the atmosphere is very political. It’s who you know and not necessarily your education/skills. Cliques abound and that is very disappointing”

“No (would not recommend)... lots of politics. It’s “who you know” for advancement.” “I wanted to learn about the D&I [Diversity and Inclusion] efforts.”

“It appears as the city has gone to the extreme end of placing diversity above hiring the best person for the position.”

Category: Cultural Norms and Behaviors

Areas of Opportunity

While questions about cultural norms and behaviors were designed to gather insight across the city, we also opened it up to specific department norms and behaviors. Most respondents felt comfortable with the question many gave insight on their respective departments versus the entire city. Participants observed that the cultural norms of the city “bleed into every department anyway.”

Top Five Cultural Norms Noted Across All Groups

• Lack of accountability

• Lack of consistency

• Favoritism

• City council agenda meeting has a definite hierarchy of importance - “at the table” versus not at the table

• Management and the people getting the work done are not in sync.

Significant Quotes

“There is a huge ‘watching each other’s back’ subculture’ within departments without what’s best for the residents.”

“If someone barks loud enough or throws out the right name, then issues get resolved in a very timely manner.”

“Lack of accountability is a cultural norm.”
“Every other week there is an agenda meeting where only the department heads are allowed to sit at the main table. If you are not a head you are expected to take a seat not at the table – even if you're the one ACTUALLY presenting at the city council meeting”

“Open door policy is more like door closed”

“When looking for info, one has to search many programs for one answer. Finance has three places to check for numbers, etc.”

**Category: Differences: Accepted/Valued/Handled**

One question and one probe question were asked to capture how differences are accepted, valued and/or handled in their department. Participants were clear that their answers were mostly focused on their specific team/division within the overall department.

**Areas of Strength**

- Most group participants had witnessed differences handled within their teams.

- Across groups there was a distinction on the types of differences accepted with race, sexual orientation and other protected class type differences being ok versus differences in opinion.

- People feel like they are asked their opinion

- Across the groups there was a tone that more ideas were accepted from new hires versus people who had been in the department a long time.

**Significant Quotes**

“People type differences are accepted- race, sexual orientation etc.”

“In general, (people) want to accept differences, but not true across the board - depends on the area.”“Yes, our group is very similar so it is easy to accept differences.”

Newest employee has “found a few positive shortcuts that he has shared with people and he has found they are receptive for his suggestions.”

“Opinions will be heard. (It) Feels like management is obligated to hear people out but not sure that anything is ever done.”

“Everyone knows they have a voice, although some people choose not to use their voice. If someone has an issue, they need to come forward.”
Areas of Opportunity

• Differences in thinking and how to solve problems were cited as the most difficult.

• Women across all groups expressed that differences were not accepted or valued from women as much as their male counterparts. In groups with men and women, it was clearly males who felt differences were accepted while females in the same group felt the opposite or remained silent.

• POC and Women in the various groups had the most to say about how they felt about differences versus white males who mostly felt differences were both accepted and valued - most notably this was delineated with internal and external examples.

• Across the board, many respondents felt differences were not being valued.

Significant Quotes

“It is considered taboo to talk about differences.”

“Differences accepted, whether or not they are acted on that’s a different story.”

“Feeling that no one wants to address any issues. Differences are not acknowledged/accepted unless there is a group of people saying the same thing. Good luck by yourself”

“It has been difficult to explain your point of view, lots of push back on new ideas, the fact you have to explain yourself and your point of view is concerning.”

“After a while, the issues get old so you suck it up and figure nothing will be done anyway.”

“May not bring up opinion because it is not worth the hassle to stir the pot or cause conflict.”

“The manager not being a good example of handling differences makes it difficult.”

“Our department differences not approached, daily/quarterly/ever, huge turnover, people at top are in park (stuck like a car), people at bottom can’t leave department/city soon enough.”

Male respondent answered that he notices “that (a different value between women and men responsiveness) with residents”. He often has to “reiterate the same answers that female coworkers have given to residents for the residents to take heed of what is being said.”
Category: Leadership

This set of questions was designed to ascertain how people perceived leadership’s commitment to diversity and inclusion at the City of Elgin as well as how leaders led in general.

Areas of Strength

- Every participant group had someone who recognized some efforts by leadership about diversity and inclusion.
- POC and Women groups across departments cited current work on D&I initiatives.
- Women across all groups spoke to how they believe the D&I efforts have already improved their experience and will continue to impact them positively.
- Across the groups, the general sentiment was that D&I efforts would have a positive impact on their experience - most notably by women or POC in groups.

Significant Quotes

“Management tries but there is rarely follow through.”

“Open meetings and encouraging staff contributions in our department (engineering)”

“We have a real open door policy with our supervisor which makes me feel included.”

“Recently hired two employees. The hiring word went out to all areas/segments of population.”

“Ideas are thrown out and management agrees to let the ideas be tried out.”

Areas of Opportunity

- Many people are fatigued of talking about diversity and inclusion.
- Many people don’t see any reason for the conversation as this is about “talent, skills and knowledge” more than anything else.
- Some departments had no exposure to diversity and inclusion efforts before this.
- Many cited leader inconsistency in many areas particularly socializing and communication.

Significant Quotes

“Department is a majority of white males, however, it’s important to stress that it’s the skill, the knowledge and talent that matters.”
“Water Department is not aware of diversity/inclusion goals.” (This was stated multiple times across two sessions)

“(Specific department named and redacted at the request of the person quote) feels that is a huge disconnect with leaders versus staff. They need to relate more to staff.”

“People talk a lot about the issues, but people do not take actions to deal with the issues.”

“Supervisor can joke with subordinates but not vice versa.”

**Category: Diversity and Inclusion Fatigue**

This question arose in the first session and was subsequently asked each session as a way to gage the “temperature” about the topic, after we’d had significant discussion.

Overall, there is a sense of fatigue about diversity and inclusion in many areas of the city while in others, there is little to no exposure or discussion about diversity or inclusion.

The police department is very aware and openly discusses issues of diversity and inclusion versus other departments. Other departments in the city are aware of the efforts in the police department but do not necessarily see or feel the impact of diversity and inclusion in other areas.

Aside from police department, the overall sentiment is fatigue but mostly fatigue of talking about diversity and inclusion and not seeing any actual movement in actions or behaviors.

**Significant Quotes**

“There are other biases than just racial. So when you can break down bias you can get more real feedback from folks.”

“Lip service”

“Too much fear for retaliation for those that try to point out issues and make changes. Lots of people are afraid.”

“Police department and Parks and Recreation have the most diverse group of employees and I think you can see those environments as more inclusive in the city than others.”

“I just sense lack of empathy from management about people or topics that are different from them. They don’t care.”