



# A CDEIO's First 100 Days Report

*Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion  
Metropolitan Government of Nashville and Davidson County*

Finance Department

SEPTEMBER  
2021

## *A Message from the Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion*

It is an honor and privilege to serve the City of Nashville as Chief Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Officer. My goal is simple—to establish an environment where equity and inclusion are natural and positioned as business as usual. It's not forced or meant to cause resentment. It will be a bridge to correcting historic harm and inequity.

As a department, we will lead by example advocating equity and for accountability from all levels. To champion diversity, equity, inclusion, belonging, and anti-racism, the ODEI has implemented a few strategic adjustments to start a conversation of significant change—we have launched a Metro-wide assessment and planning process. The process includes an assessment of internal DEI methodology and practices by Metro leaders, elected officials, local businesses, and community organizations. We are in the beginning stages of this endeavor and will be transparent with its progress. During the first 100 days, the ODEI has engaged in wide-ranging initiatives to address immediate concerns; we will continue to gather additional input from community members; build frameworks and capacity within Metro Government; and seek out opportunities for future, long-term growth and collaboration.

In addition, we are launching our Finance Department-wide "Listen, Understand, and Act" framework. Throughout the year, we will facilitate listening sessions for staff, as well as lead sessions for the Finance Leadership Team on systemic racism and practices.

This 100-day summary is meant to record an important new chapter in Nashville's equity and inclusion efforts. It is intended to solicit additional opportunities for conversation and collaboration, reveal areas requiring additional attention, and produce greater accountability.

Diversity is an action, equity is a system, inclusivity is cultural, and belonging is a feeling. This is the first step we need, but it starts with acknowledging that some change is necessary. With these promising efforts in full force, we welcome you to stay connected and join our efforts. Our office will serve as the convener, while also providing insight into Nashville's DEI future.

Regards,



Andrea Blackman

Chief Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Officer





Nashville  
Communities and  
Local Businesses

**Office of Diversity,  
Equity, and Inclusion**

Mayor's  
Office

Minority and Women  
Business Assistance  
Office

Community  
Organizations  
and Nonprofits

Metro Department Heads  
and Employees

Metro Council and  
Elected Officials

*"...our city's DEI work must be a cultural shift, and not a special project."*

**-Howard Gentry, Criminal Court Clerk**

# What is DEI?

**Diversity** Difference.

Refers to all aspects of human difference, including but not limited to race, sex, gender, sexual orientation, socio-economic status and class, age, education, language, (dis)ability, ethnicity, nationality, heritage, perspectives, as well as cultural, political, religious, and other affiliations.

**Equity** Both a process and a product.

Refers to fair practices and policies that ensure everyone has access to the same opportunities. Equity and equality have different meanings. Equality means treating everyone as if their experiences are exactly the same. Equity means acknowledging and addressing past and present structural inequalities that advantage some and disadvantage others.

**Inclusion** The intentional act to include differences.

Creating environments in which any individual or group is welcomed, respected, supported, valued, and given the opportunity to fully participate.

\*Definitions built upon those found in Ashford Hughes' 2019 DEI Roadmap.

# Why is it Important?

**Diversity**

You have a diverse workforce when you have a representative number of employees from various backgrounds. However, achieving diversity doesn't always mean that everyone within it feels welcomed, respected, supported, or valued.

**Equity**

The policies, institutions, and structures that perpetuate disparities limit many communities from reaching their full potential. Recognizing differences ensures that those differences will not predict one's success, improving outcomes for all.

**Inclusion**

Differences should be celebrated, not separated. To bring their unique ideas, experiences, and practices to life, people need to be empowered. To be truly effective, inclusion must be ingrained and integrated throughout the entire workforce.

## Background on CDEIO position

"...in fact, all changes to racial and equitable diversity is based upon the political will of our leadership."

**-Council Member, Sharon Hurt**

### Why in Finance?

By establishing the Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion within the Finance Department, we are ensuring that our office can, successfully and without disruption, align with and dedicate itself to the City's responsibilities of long-term DEI success, stability, accountability, and sustainability.

### Why was the new position formed?

In 2020, the Metro Council and Minority Caucus of Nashville advocated for a new CDEIO position stating that, "this position is essential to the work of our city, and these are tangible steps that can be taken to ensure you are listening to and addressing the needs of the Black community...".

In 2021 the position was created to address known and unknown disparities within Metro Government and the City.

# Mission

- Provide leadership, guidance, and oversight of the City's equity, inclusion, and anti-racism framework
- Promote equitable procurement, contracting, and entrepreneurship outcomes
- Establish ourselves as conveners while continuously reviewing and redefining strategies, processes, and priorities to better reflect a continuum in equity

# Vision

- An intentionally diverse, equitable, and inclusive experience throughout the Nashville Metropolitan area
- A workforce reflective of Nashville's diverse population with equally accessible opportunities and a strong sense of belonging
- Recognized as core institutional values, and inform thinking, policies, and practices

# Values

- Acknowledgment of Historic Harms
  - We strive to take action against harmful policies and practices and encourage anti-racist and anti-oppressive structural changes
- Equity and Inclusion
  - We recognize the importance of differing perspectives and are committed to listening to the many diverse voices in Nashville
- Sustainable Change
  - We are committed to changing policies and practices, not just mindsets



*"...we understand that there is a difference between policy and perception: we want to address the challenging role of planning departments in issues related to social justice and equity..."*

**-Lucy Kempf, Metro Planning Department**

*"...we have to remove the inequities and disparities from our system."*

**-Brenda Wynn, Davidson County Clerk**

## **Initial DEI Assessment**

Two primary goals of the initial diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) assessment are to collect and analyze data from department heads, elected officials, council members, employees, and community members so as to discern perception of the DEI climate in Metropolitan Government and the city; and to assess organizational processes, decision making, policy development, staff engagement, and community relations within specific departments.

## **Assessment Methodology**

Departments were assessed based on an inclusion continuum with a rating of 0 to 5; department heads and elected officials responded to a series of questions in order to raise critical awareness and thoughtful reflection about past, present, and future practices, policies, and ethos relative to issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Departments were assessed on a scale of 0 - 5

# The Inclusion Continuum

Based on initial assessments, the City will fall between a 2 and 3 on this continuum

0



UNAWARE

Equity and inclusion efforts are not a part of governance

1



COMPLIANT

Equity and inclusion are considered when legal risks and requirements are presented

2



SUPPORTIVE

Equity and inclusion initiatives are focused on supporting and helping selective groups

3



ENGAGED

Equity and inclusion is part of a growing awareness and part of performance; evidence of enthusiasm and commitment is understood as a business benefit

4



CHANGE AGENTS

Deep understanding of systemic changes, historic harm, and the need for effective policy and performance changes; driving real cultural and numerical change

5



ABLE TO LEVERAGE INCLUSION

Inclusion is a strategic asset for growth, innovation, and performance; an inclusive and cyclical culture has been created which reflects leadership, teams, power distribution, and decision-making

*"...we are hungry for ideas and innovation in DEI. I don't want to lead by doing what's easy..."*

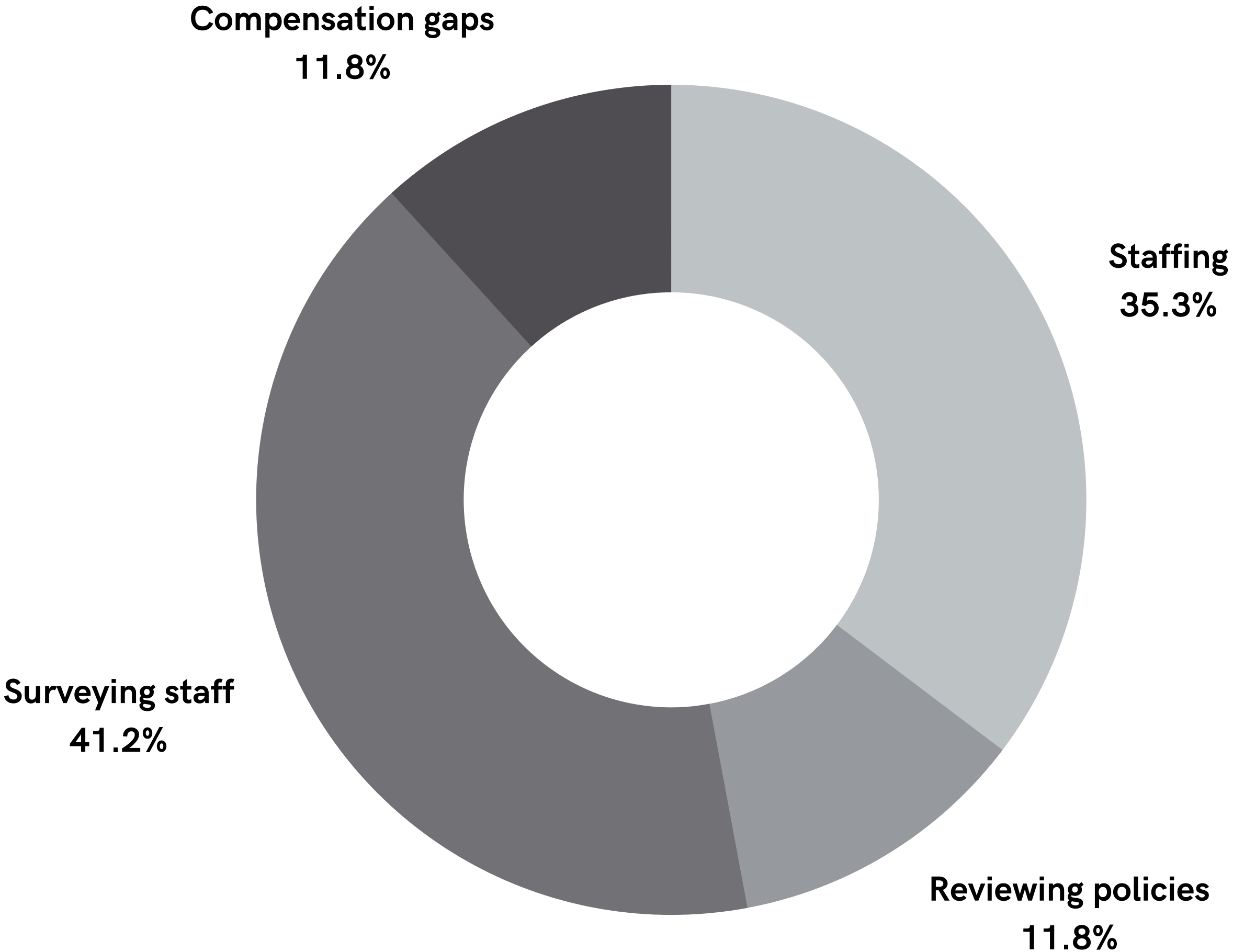
**-Keith Durbin, Metro ITS**



# Assessment Findings

During the first phase of internal assessments, the ODEI met with 1/3 of Metro department heads and elected officials. Leaders were asked a series of questions beginning with:

*What has been your personal approach, practice, effort, or methodology to achieving DEI in your department?*



## The assessment revealed:

11.8% of respondents' approach to DEI is to advocate for employee compensation;

11.8% evaluate internal policies;

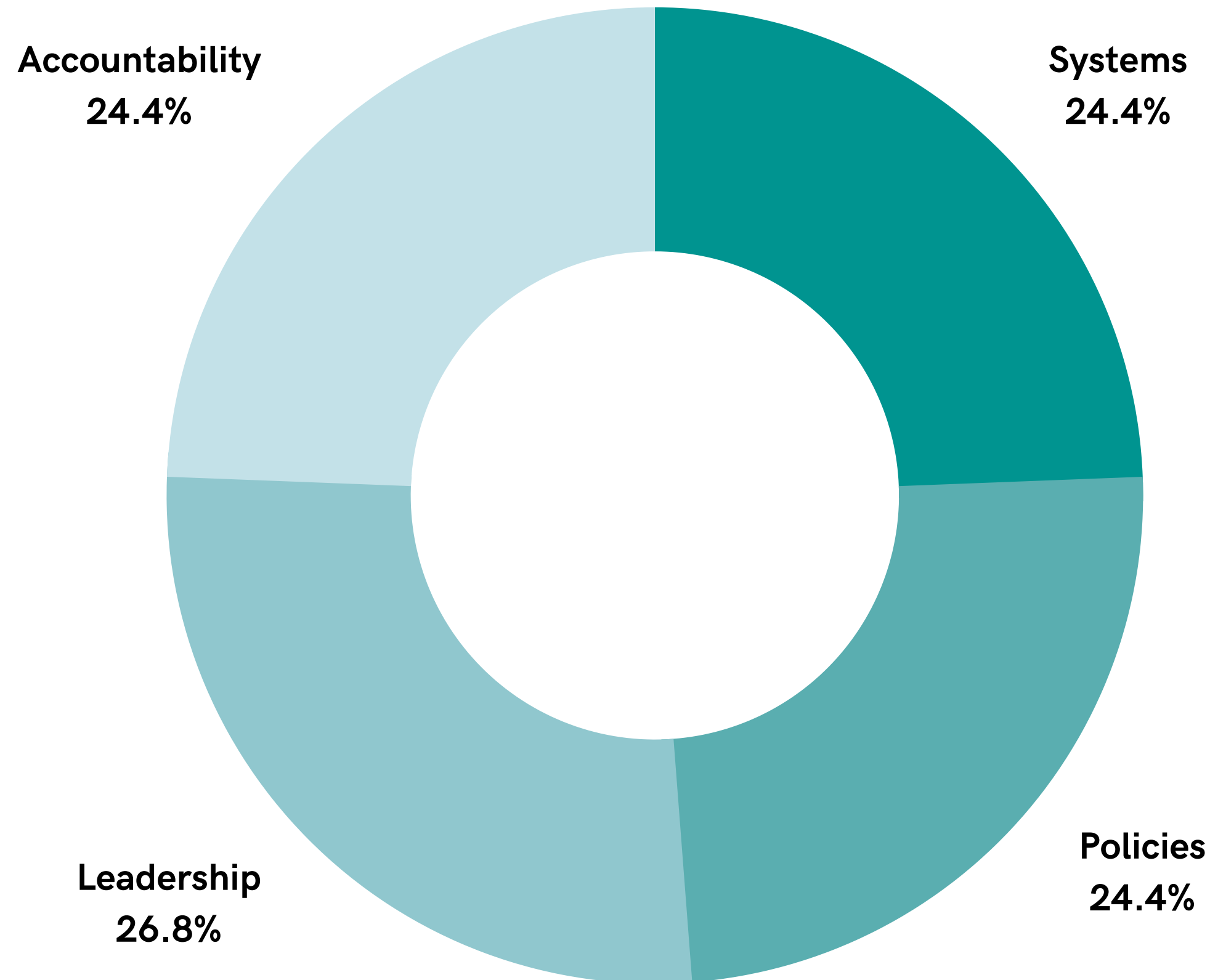
35.3% hire a diverse workforce;

41.2% rely on internal staff surveys to gauge staff engagement

# Assessment Findings

For the next phase of assessment, community members and business leaders were also included in the surveying and engagement. When asked:

*What are the areas that might hinder measurable and sustainable diversity, equity and inclusion in our City?*



The assessment revealed:


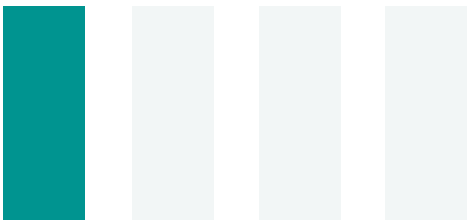
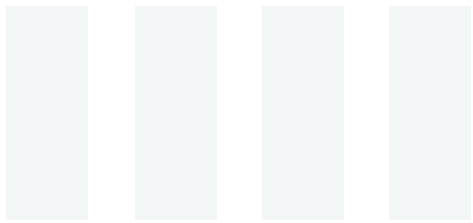
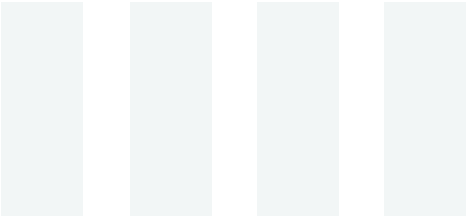
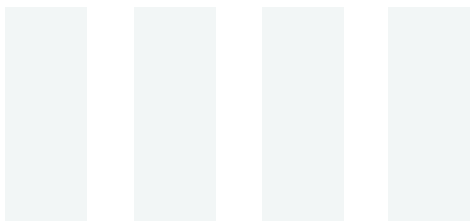
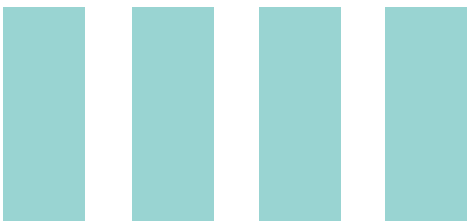
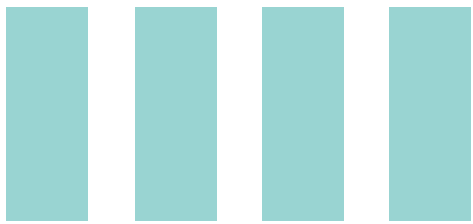
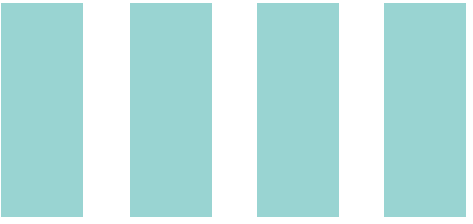
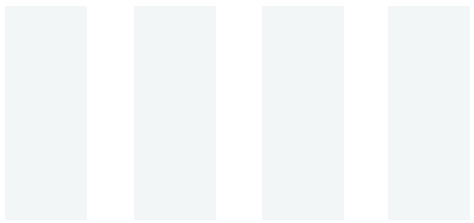
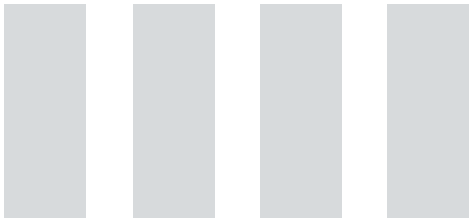
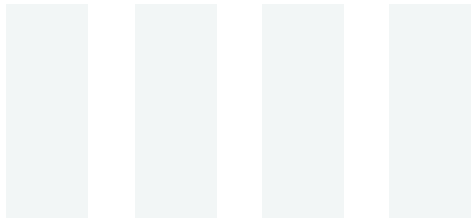
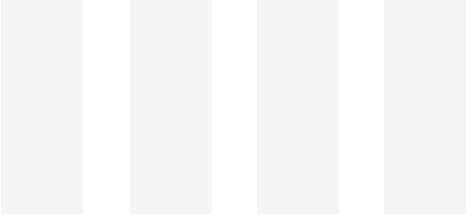
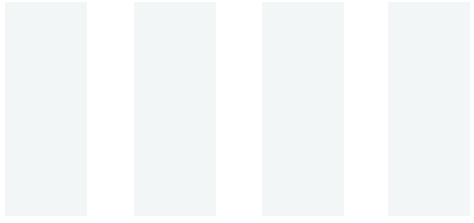

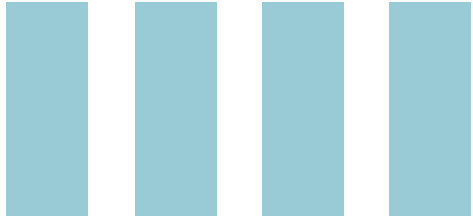
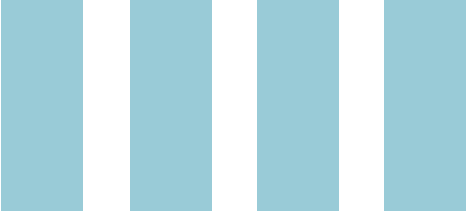
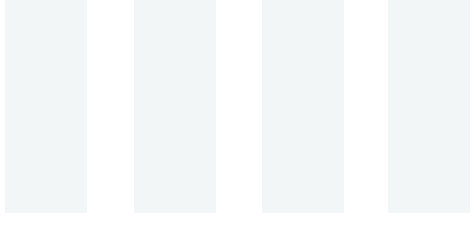



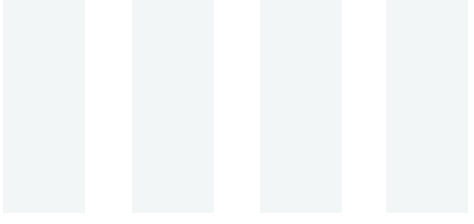



24.4% of respondents shared concern with accountability for any DEI initiative;

24.4% also stated that existing structures and systems will hinder DEI progress;

24.4% shared that existing policies and rules hinder adequate DEI progress;


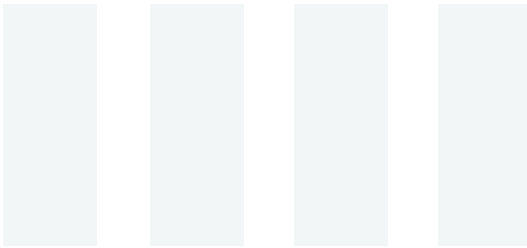
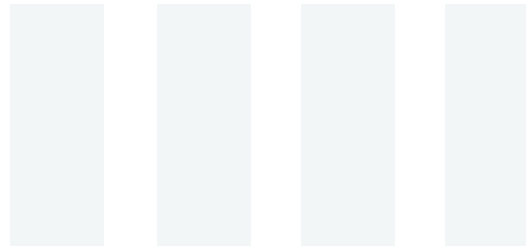



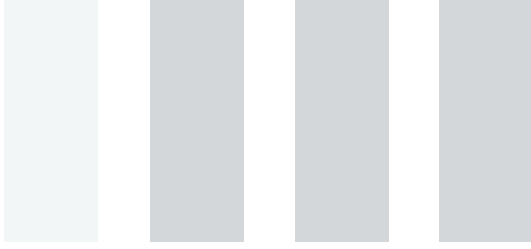
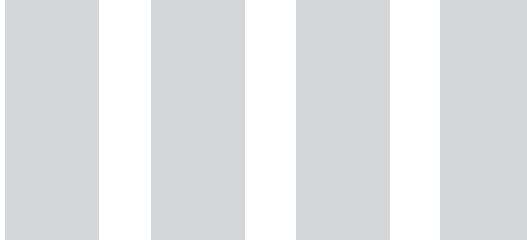
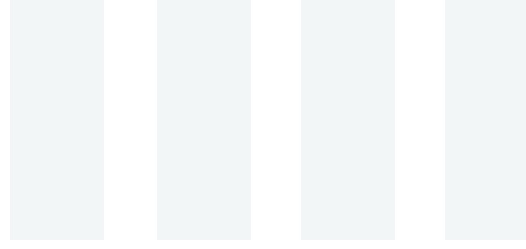
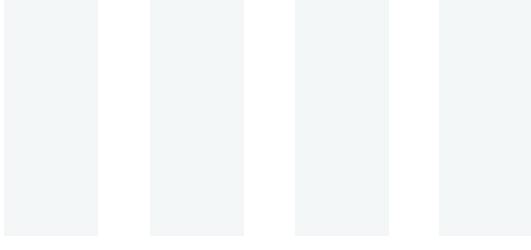


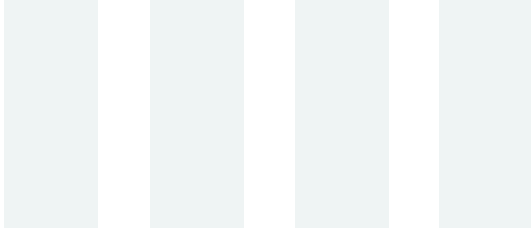


26.8% voiced leadership as the barrier and hinderance to DEI progress and sustainability

# Accomplished in the First 100 Days

Goals	Days 1-25	Days 25-50	Days 50-75	Days 75-100
Initiate assessment of what measurable DEI work has been done within departments				
Begin investigating previous and current equity impact assessment tools used by departments and community*				
Begin to define DEI vision for departments and internal and external stakeholders				
Present departmental recommendations based on compiled data*				
Establish integrated DEI practices with the finance leadership team/finance department				
Determine and curate equity performance metrics				

\*Outcomes regarding these deliverables will be available in future reports

# Long-term Goals and Strategies

Goals	FY 2022	FY 2023	FY 2024
Establish assessment tools to measure DEI competency among departments			
Work internally to increase DEI competency of department leaders and employees			
Design and curate an equity map to aid City in making data-informed decisions			
Determine areas of shifting needs, manage resource allocations, and identify efficiencies			
Curate benchmarks to assess if the needs of Metro and the City are being met			

**This document is an active and dynamic record of progress.**

**DEI work is neither exhaustive nor complete; it must be an ongoing and intentional part of our work, both now and in the foreseeable future.**

*Sneh Pravinkumar Patel*

DEI Research Analyst  
sneh.patel@nashville.gov  
o: 615-862-6273

*Andrea Blackman*

Chief Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Officer  
andrea.blackman@nashville.gov  
o: 615-862-6184  
c: 615-588-8903

*Michelle Boudreaux*

Administrative Services Officer  
michelle.boudreaux@nashville.gov  
o: 615-862-6161