



The Bigger We: DEIB Through the GARE Network & Approach

Stories from Mercer Island and Kent
AWC Annual Conference

June 21, 2023

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Wendy Weiker
Councilmember, Mercer Island

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Dana Ralph
Mayor, Kent

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Janine Christiano
GARE Director of Strategic Partnerships

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Government Alliance on Race and Equity

A national network of government entities working to achieve racial equity and advance opportunities for all.

- ✓ Membership network – 450 members
- ✓ Transforming the public sector network - 32 states, 450+ cities, counties and agencies
- ✓ Provide tools to put theory into action



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The GARE Approach

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We lead with race

From infant mortality to life expectancy, race predicts how well you will do...



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Why we lead with race

- Racial inequities are deep and pervasive
- Racial anxiety is on the rise – race is often an elephant in the room
- Learning an institutional and structural approach can be used with other areas of marginalization
- Specificity matters

Race explicit, but not exclusive
always bring an “intersectional” analysis

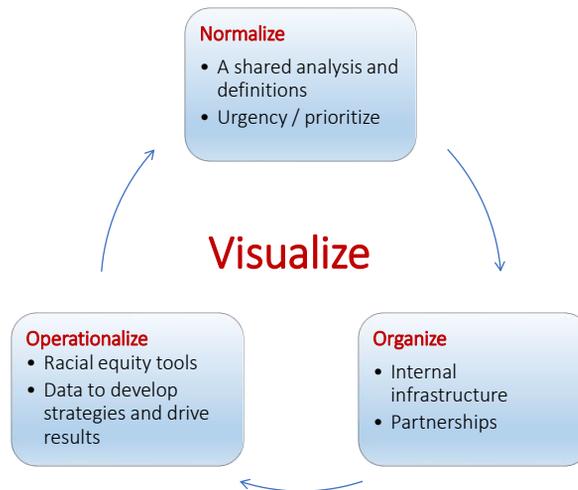
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Racial equity means:

- “Closing the gaps” so that race does not predict one’s success, while also **improving outcomes for all**
- To do so we:
 - ✓ Target strategies to focus improvements for those worse off
 - ✓ Move beyond “services” and **focus on changing policies, institutions and structures**, which strengthens systems for all

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VNOO Practices



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Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

DIVERSITY → INCLUSION → EQUITY



Quantity

Different identities & cultures



Quality

Participation across identities & cultures



Justice

Policies, practices, & procedures to ensure equitable outcomes

Source: City of Portland Office of Equity and Human Rights

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Panel Introductions

Tell us a little about yourself and what brings you to the work of DEIB?

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How is DEIB being implemented in your city?

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What are the tools and assets that have been helpful to the work?

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What are some challenges you've
faced and how have you
addressed them?

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How has GARE been helpful on
your city's journey?

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Questions

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Closing Thoughts

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Thank You!

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Contact information

Janine Christiano

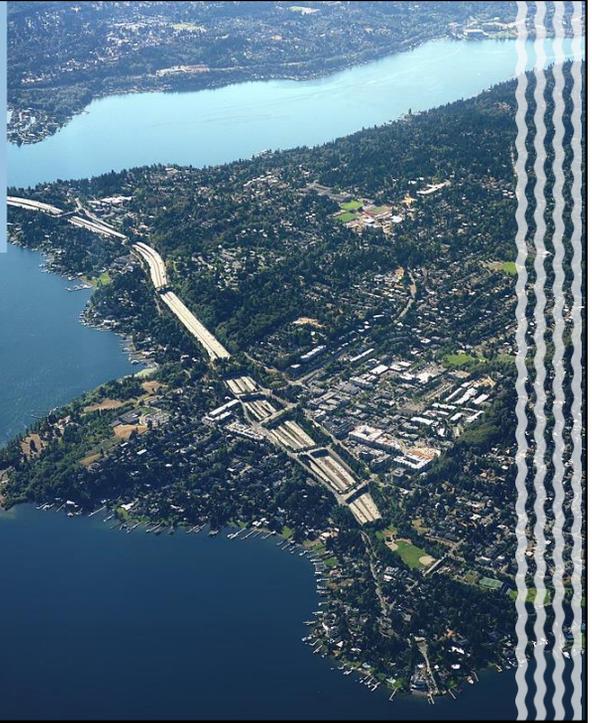
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City of Mercer Island
*Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and
Belonging Partnerships, Progress
& Possibilities*



Wendy Weiker, Councilmember
AWC Annual Conference DEIB session
June 21, 2023

What can a city leader do about disparity; start with your why then the how:



Top 5 Barriers to DEIB Program Implementation*:

- 1.Lack of Goals and Metrics.
- 2.Inadequate Training.
- 3.No Buy-In From Leadership.
- 4.Budgetary Restrictions.
- 5.Cultural and Political Resistance.

*wellright.com

Mercer Island DEIB playbook components:

Internal and External

- Policy
- Programs
- Partnerships
- Practice



The City of Mercer Island, Washington

Proclamation

RENEWED COMMITMENT TO DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION

WHEREAS, the City of Mercer Island has declared a commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion as a community priority by Proclamation No. 201 on November 21, 2016; and

WHEREAS, the inhumane treatment and tragic death of George Floyd in Minneapolis, Minnesota, provides yet another example of the work remaining to be done as a country in the area of combating racism, and while we recognize that this tragedy highlights law enforcement, we also recognize that such issues go far beyond the criminal justice system; and

WHEREAS, since the outbreak of COVID-19, immigrant and refugee community leaders and civil rights organizations have reported a regional and national increase in bias, harassment, and hate crimes, particularly against Asian American and Pacific Islander, Black and African American, Hispanic and Latino, and other marginalized communities; and

WHEREAS, conduct directed to inflict emotional, mental or physical harm against individuals because of their race, ethnicity, place of origin, physical ability, socio-economic status, gender identity, sexual orientation, age or religion, including the propagation of misinformation of COVID-19, has no place in our community and country; and

WHEREAS, the City of Mercer Island expressly rejects such conduct and acts; and

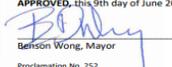
WHEREAS, each of us can and should promote inclusiveness, celebrate diversity, support all fellow community members, prevent the spread of misinformation, and reject hate and bias in all forms which will make Mercer Island a stronger and healthier community; and

WHEREAS, we ask community members who observe or are experiencing incidents of discrimination, harassment, or hate crimes to call 911 in emergency circumstances, and/or to report the incident to the Washington State Human Rights Commission (Toll-free 1-800-233-3247) or the King County Office of Civil Rights at (206) 684-4500;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Benson Wong, Mayor of the City of Mercer Island, Washington, and on behalf of its City Council, do hereby proclaim:

Our continuing commitment to be an inclusive community that rejects stigma and bias against individuals because of race, ethnicity, place of origin, physical ability, socio-economic status, gender identity, sexual orientation, age or religion, and we urge all our members and residents of our community to treat each other with respect and work together to overcome all expressions of hate and bigotry.

APPROVED, this 9th day of June 2020


 Benson Wong, Mayor
 Proclamation No. 252

Upcoming Events

The City of Mercer Island & ONE MI Community Conversations

- October 24** **How to be an Ally - Trans**
- October 26** **How to be an Ally - Ability**
- November 7** **Disability as a Strength**
- December 8** **Mitigating Implicit Bias**

ONE MERCER ISLAND

www.letstalk.mercerorg.org/community-conversations

Mitigating Implicit Bias

Part of the Community Conversations series presented by ONE MI and the City of Mercer Island

Everyone holds. That doesn't make us "bad people." It just means that we have work to do. This interactive training will teach you how to understand your own implicit biases in order to begin to undo them.

Thursday, December 8, 6:30 PM

Register to attend online: www.letstalk.mercerorg.org/community-conversations



JUNETEENTH CELEBRATE FREEDOM

Mercerdale Park

We're committed to DEIB work: As leaders and in our city's community work

“The City recognizes and supports matters of diversity, equity, and inclusion by participating in cultural competency training, supporting a range of community events, and issuing City Council proclamations which highlight unique experiences of community members across all backgrounds.”

Mercer Island Agenda Bills



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Our DEIB impact starts with City Hall:

- Make clear DEIB statements and commitments at City Council and City staff leadership levels internally and externally.
- Celebrate diverse holidays, cultures, and groups with unique and within broader community events & public meetings.
- Provide ongoing bias and discrimination training, training, and more training for elected/appointed leaders and city staff.
- Partner with community-based organizations and professionals in the DEIB field to provide training, public events, community dialogue
- Establish recruitment and hiring practices (ex: “blind” resumes, diverse interview panels, accommodations for people with disabilities) to increase opportunities for underrepresented groups.
- Provide translation capability on your website & communications.
- Keep the conversation, mindset, partnerships, and work going.
- Stay personally engaged, keep learning, and continue speaking up.

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Mercer Island's ongoing DEIB work:

City staff & leadership are next pursuing:

- Continue offering focused celebrations and community events with a lens toward diversity and inclusivity.
- The Youth & Family Services Department workplan includes a goal to expand equity and social justice practices in their work.
- Budget proposal coming for the development of a DEIB plan to identify areas of improvement within the City's policies and procedures.
- Support community and nonprofit partnerships like the one with One MI and the Alliance on Race and Equity (GARE) to utilize training modules and other resources.
- Review and update policies and procedures related to recruiting, hiring, and training new employees with an emphasis on inclusion.

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Further Reading and Resources:

City of Mercer Island DEIB resources:

- MI Agenda Bills focused on DEIB:
 - [Renewed Commitment to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion](#) (June 10, 2020)
 - [Black History Month](#) (February 2, 2021)
 - [Women's History Month](#) (March 16, 2021)
 - [Community Conversations about Race](#) (November 16, 2021)
- City Website Community Engagement Page Translation capability: <https://letstalk.mercergov.org/>

Association of Washington Cities DEIB resources:

- AWC equity resource guide for cities: <https://wacities.org/data-resources/articles/2021/11/30/awc-equity-resource-guide-tools-and-case-studies-for-washington-cities>
- Certificate or Municipal Leadership (CML) DEIB courses: <https://wacities.org/events-education/elearning-by-category?taxonomy=categories&propertyName=category&taxon=%2felearning%2fcml-diversity-equity-and-inclusion>

National League of Cities DEIB resources:

- <https://www.nlc.org/program/race-equity-and-leadership-real/>

DEIB Book lists:

- <https://library.educause.edu/resources/2019/1/dei-book-recommendations>
- <https://www.forbes.com/sites/lauragarnett/2020/07/15/11-books-to-read-if-you-want-to-be-a-more-inclusive-leader/?sh=45c5c26e36e6>

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“If we are to have peace on earth...our loyalties must transcend our race, our tribe, our class, and our nation; and this means we must develop a world perspective.”

Martin Luther King, Jr

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Questions?

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Ali Spietz, Mercer Island Chief of Administration

Ryan Daly, Mercer Island Parks and Recreation Director



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