

CHANGING THE GAME

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FORWARD
THINKING



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RACIAL EQUITY ACTION PLAN

2019-2025

oregoncc.org

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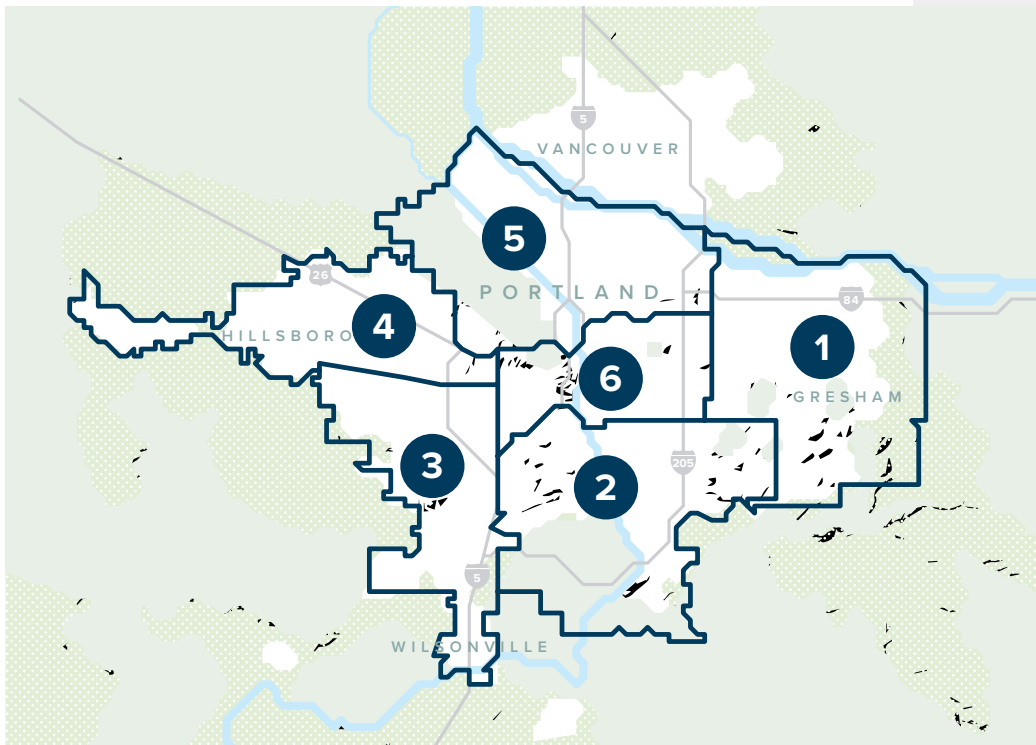
If you picnic at Blue Lake or take your kids to the Oregon Zoo, enjoy symphonies at the Schnitz or auto shows at the convention center, put out your trash or drive your car—we've already crossed paths.

So, hello. We're Metro—nice to meet you.

In a metropolitan area as big as Portland, we can do a lot of things better together. Join us to help the region prepare for a happy, healthy future.

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INSPIRE.

FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

The Oregon Convention Center is a premier event facility that leads sustainability practices for the meetings and conventions industry in the United States; now we are called to lead in ways that create better outcomes for people, especially systemically oppressed communities in our region. As the largest convention center in the Pacific Northwest, we know that to achieve greater equity in our region—and the mission of the Oregon Convention Center—we must first address the barriers faced by communities of color that were created through a long history of discriminatory policies.

Many of you have invested your time to help OCC create an equity action plan, developed by assessing all aspects of our work through a racial equity lens. Now it is time to put that plan into action. No matter what our role and connection to OCC, each of us has an important job to do to create conditions that allow everyone to flourish and participate in delivering world-class events. Over the next five years, we will learn, act, measure and adapt on the path to creating a better future. Thank you for joining me on this journey and advancing racial equity, diversity and inclusion at the Oregon Convention Center and in our communities.

ABOUT US

OREGON CONVENTION CENTER

The Oregon Convention Center is in and of greater Portland. We are owned and operated by Metro and managed through the Metropolitan Exposition Recreation Commission, so we don't just reflect greater Portland's values - we actually help fund and fuel progress here. Like the region itself, our dedication to serve people and our planet in the best ways possible demands that we constantly be on the move, that we stay open-minded and maintain an inexhaustible supply of creativity.

OUR MISSION

Inspired by our region and located in the heart of Portland, the OCC is a gathering place for our guests to share their ideas and shape the future of our world. We're passionate about advancing equity and prosperity, supporting our environment and cultivating meaningful relationships in our community.

METRO

Whether your roots in the region run generations deep or you moved to Oregon last week, you have your own reasons for loving this place - and Metro wants to keep it that way. Help shape the future of the greater Portland region and discover tools, services and places that make life better today.

LAND ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The greater Portland area rests on traditional village sites of many Indigenous Peoples who made their homes and villages here to harvest and use the plentiful natural resources of the region. The unique conditions and location of these resources on the planet have helped to support a vast population of wildlife and humans. Migratory birds and insects have been using these resources as a crucial stopping and refueling point for their seasonal 1,000+ mile journeys. The Indigenous communities of the greater PNW region have honored, protected and stewarded these resources for thousands of years before European settlers knew these lands existed. We take this opportunity to honor the Indigenous Peoples who cared for this land since time immemorial and their families who continue to remind us that living in a place creates responsibilities to the land, water, air, animals and people of that place.

THANK YOU

Thank you to the following contributors from the Oregon Convention Center, Metro and their partners including:

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METRO

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Development*



WE ARE A CENTER IN MOTION

We give people a place to gather, invent, and celebrate. We know that what we do in here matters out there. We are motion. We are action. We are creative, we are a dynamic center in a dynamic place. Passionate about serving people and planet. Working toward positive change, and endless possibility. We are the Oregon Convention Center. We are living our GO.

EQUITY VISION OF THE OREGON CONVENTION CENTER

The Oregon Convention Center furthers racially equitable outcomes for our region so that all people thrive.

We prioritize diversity, equity, and inclusion in all of our decision-making and create inclusive spaces for both internal and external stakeholders.

In order to successfully chart a path toward racial equity, the OCC's Equity Team crafted a Vision Statement. It is written in the present tense, but is not meant to identify where the Oregon Convention Center currently finds itself. Instead, it is aspirational in nature. By advancing the equity work identified in this plan, the Equity Team hopes that this will become, and remain, a true statement.

WHY WE LEAD WITH RACE

At its inception in 1990, the Oregon Convention Center was tasked with making a positive economic impact for our region. For the entirety of its existence, the OCC has maintained its focus on that goal.

And while the mission of the convention center has broadened over time, economic prosperity is still top priority. It is known, however, that not all of the region's 1.6 million residents experience that prosperity in the same way. Most communities of color in the Portland Metropolitan region currently experience the worst economic and social outcomes of any demographic group. The many decades of discriminatory and exclusionary practices that have resulted in this reality were worsened, if not directly caused, by policies created by government. So as a part of Metro Regional Government, the Oregon Convention Center identifies its influence as a key opportunity to help drive equitable change.

The OCC has outlined in this *Racial Equity Action Plan* its prioritized work to help eliminate the disparities that communities of color experience. And while it is certainly true that people of color is not the only demographic group that experience barriers, solutions that help to remove barriers for people of color will likely dismantle barriers for other marginalized groups. These other groups, such as LGBTQ+ communities, people with disabilities, the elderly community and those with low income will enjoy better outcomes alongside communities of color when we focus on achieving racial equity. This concept of targeted universalism is widely supported in research, and has been embraced by Metro.



HOW WE GOT HERE

In 2016, Metro Council approved our Strategic Plan to Advance Racial Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (SPAREDI). The backbone of this document was a set of five Equity Goals laid out for the region. Each Metro department and venue were tasked with developing an action plan identifying opportunities for progress toward these goals. This is that document for the Oregon Convention Center.

Our Changing Demographics

The demographics of the Portland metropolitan region are changing: we are becoming more diverse. This means that it has never been more important to eliminate the Equity Gap that exists in our society. The Oregon Convention Center has always worked hard to stay competitive, and so we must adapt to meet the needs of the clients, workforce and attendees of color that live in our region.

And when we take steps to level the field for historically marginalized communities, we all benefit. The wide range of perspectives and experiences employees of color bring to our workplace are tremendous value-adds. The Oregon Convention Center, and everyone throughout our region, benefit when we work toward the achievement of racial equity.

The Intended Audiences of the Racial Equity Action Plan

The Oregon Convention Center created this document to serve as a roadmap for equity advancement. Because most of the objectives focus on internal operations, OCC employees are a key target audience. But certainly not the only one.

In addition to sharing this Plan with departments and venues within Metro, the OCC plans to use it to springboard into conversations with industry partners and valued clients. The publication of this Racial Equity Action Plan represents a tremendous opportunity to leverage existing relationships to advance equity, as well as create new relationships.



OUR MISSION

Inspired by our region and located in the heart of Portland, the OCC is a gathering place for our guests to share their ideas and shape the future of our world. We're passionate about advancing equity and prosperity, supporting our environment and cultivating meaningful relationships in our community.



Plan for Implementation

The Oregon Convention Center will implement this Plan over the next five years. The objectives, strategies and actions in this document will inform work plans that OCC leaders will create to track progress. An annual Equity Report will summarize progress on the stated actions, and funding will come from both OCC and DEI program budgets.



CREATING A SHARED LANGUAGE

The Oregon Convention Center will implement this Plan over the next five years. The framework of objectives, strategies and actions in this document will inform annual work plans that OCC leadership will create to track progress. An annual report will summarize progress on the stated actions, and funding will come from both OCC and DEI program budgets.

In order to more effectively communicate the importance and direction of the path ahead, it is critical that stakeholders share working definitions of key terms.

- **Diversity**
The variance or difference among people. Examples include race, ethnicity, gender, age, sexual orientation, gender identity, as well as many others.
- **Equality**
Sameness. Provision of the same level of opportunity for everyone.
- **Equity**
Fairness. The result of the same outcomes enjoyed by everyone.

- **Historic marginalization**
When a group has been denied access to something and/or suffered institutional discrimination.
- **Inclusion**
The degree to which diverse individuals are able to fully participate in the decision-making process within an organization or group. While a truly “inclusive” group is necessarily diverse, a “diverse” group many or may not be “inclusive”.
- **Race**
A social construct that artificially divides people into distinct groups based on characteristics such as physical appearance (particularly color), ancestral heritage, cultural affiliation, cultural history, ethnic classification, and the social, economic and political needs of a society at a given period of time.
- **Racial Equity**
When race can no longer be used to predict life outcomes, and outcomes for all groups are improved.
- **Racism**
Prejudice backed by legal authority and institutional control. It is a system of advantage based on race. Racism is a structure, not an event.
- **Targeted Universalism**
Using targeted strategies to reach universal goals.

*The definition of racism is an amalgamation of definitions from several sources.



DEVELOPING THE PLAN

PHASE

1

KICKOFF AND BASELINING

The project plan was created in mid-February of 2019. Interviews were conducted with the project managers overseeing the first round of action plans. Meetings were held with members of the Metro DEI team. Employee interviews began in March, the same month that OCC's Senior Team was engaged. By the end of April, we had established an employee Equity Team. The first meeting was held in early May.

PHASE

2

GAP IDENTIFICATION

The employee interviews, conducted in small groups as well as individually, allowed for the identification of gaps. During this same time, a contractor was hired to perform a cultural assessment of the Setup & Operations work team. Outcomes of each of these bodies of work highlighted a desire for improvement in the following areas:

- *Communication*
- *Accountability*
- *Transparency*
- *Respect*

PHASE

3

PLAN DEVELOPMENT

Throughout the Fall and Winter, input was provided by staff on how the five Equity Goals could be actualized in the work of the OCC. Themes began to emerge. As commonalities floated to the top, the Equity Team drafted objectives that could house more specific action items. These objectives would then be nested in the Metro-wide goals.

PHASE

4A

REVIEW AND APPROVAL

Meetings were held with every work group in February of 2020 to allow for additional touchpoints and review. Key clients representing culturally-specific events regularly hosted at the venue were given the opportunity to provide feedback. Additionally, the Equity Team worked with Travel Portland, a close partner also working to advance racial equity. A final draft of the Plan was approved by the Equity Team in March of 2020, and senior leadership followed suit in April of the same year.

**PHASE
4B**

EQUITY & BELONGING PROGRAM MANAGER

As crafted, the Plan outlined a series of actions untouched by a global pandemic. Yet, in the time between OCC leadership's approval and the first implementation steps, the COVID-19 global pandemic decimated and fundamentally changed OCC's business and operations.

OCC understands it must commit time and resources to provide learning and engagement opportunities for everyone, top-down, to be a part of the shared goals of racial equity and racial justice. Despite significant staff reductions caused by the pandemic, the position of Equity & Belonging Program manager was created and taken on by existing staff to make progress towards those goals.

**PHASE
4C**

DEEPER DISCUSSIONS SERIES WITH MERC

OCC understands it cannot realize fundamental change through a single training or workshop that checks single box. To ensure support of the Plan with deepened understanding, OCC launched the Deeper Discussion Series. In August 2020, all staff members were invited to join commissioners from MERC to better understand racism and how we work towards achieving racial equity and racial justice through conversation.

Topics have included: the historical context of racism, unconscious bias, systemic racism, white privilege, Black Lives Matter, and Black Heritage Month. By building a shared vocabulary and developing an analysis of where our organization is and what we must overcome, we are setting ourselves up to achieve better outcomes for everyone.

**PHASE
4D**

INTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS IMPROVEMENT PROJECT

In May 2019, OCC created a project to evaluate its internal communications and to provide recommendations for improvements to streamline how information is shared with staff by establishing protocols and best practices.

As recovery from the pandemic began, and with the actions of the Plan formalized, the project was reimaged and implemented with a heightened focus toward ensuring employees of color at OCC feel included, valued and empowered while at work.

**PHASE
4E**

ONBOARDING PROGRAM PROJECT

Beginning in September 2020, OCC worked to address its onboarding program by creating an improved holistic ecosystem with racial equity considerations evaluated every step of the way.

Through this more inclusive onboarding experience, the program supports all new employees, not just some of them. With inclusion as a focal point, each person is invited to feel seen during their employee journey and receive the support they need to get settled and ultimately contribute fully.

SEEING OURSELVES IN METRO'S EQUITY GOALS

In order to advance Metro's five Equity Goals at the Oregon Convention Center, the OCC Equity Team crafted eight aspirational Objective Statements. They are written in the present tense, as is the Equity Vision Statement, to serve as the initial goalposts for this equity work. As these Objectives are reached, and then expanded upon, in the coming years, more Objectives will be written. As mentioned in other parts of this plan, what is outlined here represents only what has been prioritized for the next five years.

A: METRO CONVENES AND SUPPORTS REGIONAL PARTNERS TO ADVANCE RACIAL EQUITY

Objective A1. *The Oregon Convention Center utilizes its sphere of influence to advance racial equity. (Our Relationship with Partners)*

B: METRO MEANINGFULLY ENGAGES COMMUNITIES OF COLOR

Objective B1. *The Oregon Convention Center has strong relationships with, and fosters opportunities for, clients hosting diverse group events. (Our Relationship with Clients)*

C: METRO HIRES, TRAINS AND PROMOTES A RACIALLY DIVERSE WORKFORCE

Objective C1. *The Oregon Convention Center is equitable in its hiring practices. (How We Hire Employees)*

Objective C2. *The Oregon Convention Center has formal onboarding, training, professional development and performance review programs that support and improve retention of a racially diverse workforce. (How We Retain Employees)*

D: METRO CREATES SAFE AND WELCOMING SERVICES, PROGRAMS AND DESTINATIONS

Objective D1. *The Oregon Convention Center is a welcoming space for all guests. (Inclusivity for Guests)*

Objective D2. *All employees of color at the Oregon Convention Center feel included, valued and empowered while at work. (Inclusivity for Employees)*

E: METRO'S RESOURCE ALLOCATION ADVANCES RACIAL EQUITY

Objective E1. *The Oregon Convention Center advances racial equity with its procurement policy and processes. (How We Contract)*

Objective E2. *The Oregon Convention Center weaves racial equity throughout venue operations. (How We Make Equity Progress)*

THE OREGON CONVENTION CENTER'S RACIAL EQUITY ACTION PLAN

Elaborated upon in the following pages are the eight Objective Statements that help support the five Equity Goals outlined in Metro's Strategic Plan to Advance Racial Equity, Diversity and Inclusion. Progress toward these objectives will be achieved advancing 18 strategies that have been identified as critical in the next five year. 43 supporting actions are the projects and tasks that ultimately compose "the work". Most of these actions will require project plans of their own, as well as the oversight of a project manager. Identified in this plan is the kickoff year proposed for each action.

These 43 actions represent the next five years of racial equity work for the OCC. While it is notable that some progress has already been made, it is more important to call out the vast amount of progress yet to be made. The publication of this Racial Equity Action Plan marks the embarkation of a transformational journey for the venue; the first phase of a new consideration of the work done at the Oregon Convention Center.



The Oregon Convention Center furthers racially equitable outcomes for our region so that all people thrive. We prioritize diversity, equity, and inclusion in all of our decision-making and create inclusive spaces for both internal and external stakeholders.

OBJECTIVE A1. The Oregon Convention Center utilizes its sphere of influence to advance racial equity.

Strategies	Supporting Actions	Project Lead	Implement By
A1.1 Develop meaningful opportunities to advance racial equity.	A1.1.1 Engage industry partners on equity best practices; co-create and share policies and procedures.	Equity & Belonging Program Manager	FY22
	A1.1.2 Publish an annual Equity Report, inclusive of progress updates, to be shared with internal and external stakeholders.	Equity & Belonging Program Manager	FY23
A1.2 Support Metro-wide efforts in the Northwest Region cohort of the Government Alliance on Race and Equity (GARE).	A1.2.1 Participate in regular meetings and workshops to strengthen the role of government in the advancement of racial equity.	Equity & Belonging Program Manager	FY20
	A1.2.2 Partner with the Metro DEI Team to create a Racial Equity Lens tool for the OCC.	Equity & Belonging Program Manager	FY22

OBJECTIVE B1. The Oregon Convention Center has strong relationships with, and fosters opportunities for, clients hosting diverse group events.

Strategies	Supporting Actions	Project Lead	Implement By
B1.1 Track the business of events that bring attendees of color to the venue.	B1.1.1 Develop an historic baseline trend and target goal for multi-cultural events.	Sales	FY21
	B1.1.2 Design and administer a survey for event planners to identify opportunities for improvement.	Events	FY22
B1.2 Provide the outreach and support necessary to increase the number of multi-cultural events.	B1.2.1 Design a pilot grant program, including target goals and an implementation strategy, to support events with a focus on communities of color.	Sales & Leadership Team	FY24
	B1.2.2 Track grant program return rates and collect feedback.	Sales	FY24
B1.3 Strengthen relationships with organizations that support communities of color in the region, with a focus on restoration and reduction of historical harms.	B1.3.1 Leverage the existing relationships of other Metro departments to help foster authentic partnerships.	Leadership Team	FY22
	B1.3.2 Expand avenues of community outreach, so as to broadcast meaningful job opportunities, upcoming events of interest and opportunities for learning.	Equity & Belonging Program Manager & OCC Managers	FY23
	B1.3.3 Investigate how OCC management can better support the needs of local community groups of color.	Leadership Team	FY24

OBJECTIVE C1. The Oregon Convention Center is equitable in its hiring practices.

Strategies	Supporting Actions	Project Lead	Implement By
C1.1 Assess current recruitment practices.	C1.1.1 With support from Metro HR, develop a racial diversity baseline for all OCC work teams. Identify areas of opportunity to increase equitable practices.	Equity & Belonging Program Manager & Metro HR	FY22
	C1.1.2 With Metro HR (Class/Comp) and OCC hiring managers, revisit job duties, minimum qualifications and prerequisites to eliminate equity gaps.	Equity & Belonging Program Manager & Metro HR	FY23
C1.2 Provide hiring managers additional support in order to increase equitable hiring outcomes.	C1.2.1 Survey hiring managers to prioritize where additional support is most needed.	Equity & Belonging Program Manager & Metro HR	FY22
	C1.2.2 Work with Metro HR to develop additional resources that increase equitable recruitment outcomes, including sample questions and interviewing best practices documents, for each OCC hiring manager.	Equity & Belonging Program Manager & Metro HR	FY23
	C1.2.3 Formalize measures of accountability by creating standing meetings between OCC hiring managers and Metro HR.	Equity & Belonging Program Manager & Metro HR	FY24

OBJECTIVE C2. The Oregon Convention Center has formal onboarding, training, professional development and performance review programs that support and improve retention of a racially diverse workforce.

Strategies	Supporting Actions	Project Lead	Implement By
<p>C2.1 Update the OCC onboarding program so that it exemplifies the brand, culture and inclusive values of the OCC, with a focus on employees of color.</p>	<p>C2.1.1 Create a system for effectively tracking employee onboarding.</p>	Equity & Belonging Program Manager	FY21
	<p>C2.1.2 With hiring managers, tailor onboarding content to meet the needs of specific work teams and positions.</p>	Equity & Belonging Program Manager	FY23
	<p>C2.1.3 Utilize Microsoft 365 to house equity-focused hiring documents and materials.</p>	Equity & Belonging Program Manager	FY21
<p>C2.2 Revisit the program for ongoing training and professional development of all OCC employees.</p>	<p>C2.2.1 Close the equity gap in training opportunities, with a focus on employees of color and variable-hour staff.</p>	Leadership Team & OCC Managers	FY24
	<p>C2.2.2 With Metro HR, design a training program that supports professional growth, and that keeps employees knowledgeable and engaged.</p>	Equity & Belonging Program Manager	FY25
<p>C2.3 Incorporate equity into regular interactions and touchpoints that employees have with the OCC and Metro.</p>	<p>C2.3.1 Design a phased approach to increase the focus on racial equity in employee performance reviews.</p>	Equity & Belonging Program Manager & Leadership Team	FY22
	<p>C2.3.2 Spotlight potential career pathways and opportunities for employees' professional advancement, with a priority on employees of color.</p>	OCC Managers	FY23

OBJECTIVE D1. The Oregon Convention Center is a welcoming space for all guests.

Strategies	Supporting Actions	Project Lead	Implement By
<p>D1.1 Provide annual equity and inclusion-focused trainings for all staff.</p>	<p>D1.1.1 Assess needs and opportunities for equity-focused professional development within specific work teams.</p>	<p>Equity & Belonging Program Manager</p>	<p>FY23</p>
	<p>D1.1.2 Partner with Metro HR and Metro DEI Teams to pilot equity-focused trainings tailored to managers and specific work teams (ex: trauma-informed care, cultural sensitivity)</p>	<p>Equity & Belonging Program Manager</p>	<p>FY24</p>
<p>D1.2 Authentically address the historical harms related to OCC’s location and status as a government entity.</p>	<p>D1.2.1 Develop a communication plan for the OCC Land Acknowledgment Statement so that it can be shared with all clients, staff and guests.</p>	<p>Equity & Belonging Program Manager & Metro DEI</p>	<p>FY22</p>
	<p>D1.2.2 Create a public-facing educational display on the history of the Albina neighborhood.</p>	<p>Equity & Belonging Program Manager</p>	<p>FY25</p>
<p>D1.3 Remove barriers to a safe, inclusive and welcoming space to all guests by providing access to restrooms for any person, regardless of sex, gender identity or gender expression.</p>	<p>D1.3.1 Convert OCC’s existing inventory of public-facing single-occupant restrooms to all-user for use by any person, regardless of sex, gender identity or gender expression, ensuring ADA compliance.</p>	<p>Senior Leadership Team & Metro DEI</p>	<p>FY22</p>
	<p>D1.3.2 Develop a plan to create all-user restrooms for use by any person, regardless of sex, gender identity or gender expression, ensuring ADA compliance including attendants or caregivers of a different gender identity of expression for future renovations when financially feasible.</p>	<p>Senior Leadership Team & Metro DEI</p>	<p>FY25</p>

OBJECTIVE D2. All employees of color at the Oregon Convention Center feel included, valued and empowered while at work.

Strategies	Supporting Actions	Project Lead	Implement By
D2.1 Advance equity by identifying opportunities to standardize regular work processes.	D2.1.1 Use an equity lens to assess and improve scheduling processes and work assignments, with a focus on employees of color.	Equity & Belonging Program Manager & OCC Managers	FY23
	D2.1.2 Update and formalize shift coverage practices to ensure equitable work assignments.	OCC Managers	FY23
D2.2 Create methods of authentic staff recognition and employee engagement events.	D2.2.1 Survey staff to determine preferred types of recognition and engagement.	Equity & Belonging Program Manager	FY22
	D2.2.2 Compose a team of employees to advise and oversee events designed for all-staff engagement and work recognition.	Equity & Belonging Program Manager	FY22

OBJECTIVE E1. The Oregon Convention Center advances racial equity with its procurement policy and processes.

Strategies	Supporting Actions	Project Lead	Implement By
E1.1 Create goals for, and work to increase, COBID* contracting and spending.	E1.1.1 Determine a current baseline of COBID contracting, by percent of contracts, amount awarded and amount spent.	Leadership Team	FY24
	E1.1.2 Create parity between the percentage of money awarded and the percentage of money spent on COBID contracts.	Leadership Team	FY24
E1.2 Review the current solicitation process for opportunities to increase equitable outcomes.	E1.2.1 Revisit the checklist for Equity Strategy Meetings held for formal contract solicitations.	Equity & Belonging Program Manager	FY25
	E1.2.2 Attend outreach events to broaden the network of local COBID businesses.	Equity & Belonging Program Manager	FY25

*State of Oregon's Certification Office of Business Inclusion and Diversity (COBID): a designation that identifies, minority-, woman- and veteran-owned businesses, as well as emerging small businesses.

OBJECTIVE E2. The Oregon Convention Center weaves racial equity throughout venue operations.

Strategies	Supporting Actions	Project Lead	Implement By
E2.1 Allocate the resources necessary for the advancement of racial equity.	E2.1.1 Approve an annual budget for racial equity work.	Leadership Team	FY22
	E2.1.2 Create a job description for, and hire, an Equity & Belonging Program Manager.	Leadership Team	FY21
	E2.1.3 Ensure that the OCC Equity Team has representation from every internal department, and that quarterly opportunities for equity engagement are offered to all employees.	Equity & Belonging Program Manager	FY22
	E2.1.4 Use an equity lens to study the potentially disparate effects of employee parking pass pay structures.	Equity & Belonging Program Manager & Guest Experience Manager	FY23
E2.2 Track and report on the advancement toward stated racial equity objectives.	E2.2.1 Determine a method for effectively tracking progress on the actions and strategies that advance OCC's racial equity objectives.	Equity & Belonging Program Manager	FY21
	E2.2.2 Regularly report progress and provide updates to all OCC staff.	Equity & Belonging Program Manager	FY22

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