

The logo for ORESN, consisting of the letters 'ORESN' in a bold, white, sans-serif font on a red rectangular background.

Oregon  
Convention  
Center



Advancing racial equity, diversity and inclusion at the Oregon Convention Center and in our communities.

# OCC Racial Equity Action Plan Progress Report

2022

[oregoncc.org](https://oregoncc.org)

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## Letter from Michelle Hedegard

I'm pleased to share our inaugural Equity & Belonging Report, outlining OCC's continued commitment to helping shape a better future within our walls and beyond.

The impact stories in this report highlight the short- and long-term initiatives and projects contributing to this work's outcomes. Their impact has already been felt in some cases, while others are longer-term investments. We remain committed to uplifting diversity, equity, and inclusion, including actions to support gender diversity. We acknowledge that we are in the early stages of our racial equity journey and will continue to learn, grow, and collect feedback, recognizing that we can and should do more.

As one of the largest event venues in the Pacific Northwest, we focus on creating an organizational culture that aligns closely with our mission and values, reflecting the unique and diverse community where we live and work. As we work to diversify our workforce further, foster a culture of belonging, and drive equitable change in our community, we expect our innovative and sustainable solutions to become even more dynamic and impactful.

The eight objectives outlined in our Racial Equity Action Plan are foundational to our journey. They will continue to evolve as we identify new initiatives and ideas to support our progress, efforts, and actions.

I am proud of our strides in the past two years, but strengthening equity and belonging is an ongoing effort that we are committed to integrating into our everyday actions.

As a public organization charged with serving the residents of our region through economic development and a place to gather, we are responsible for modeling the right behaviors and being better as a collective community. We will be transparent with our progress, and I invite all OCC employees, partners, and clients to engage and join our commitment to change. We are listening, learning, and working together to make a positive impact.

### **Michelle Hedegard**

Equity & Belonging Program Manager  
Oregon Convention Center

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## About this report

This report illustrates how we bring our mission to life through our business; it covers our Racial Equity Action Plan (REAP) activities, performance and approach in its first years of implementation (2019 - 2022), focusing on the issues we have determined to be of significant importance from a racial equity perspective balanced with our need to pivot and ability to navigate the devastating business impacts created by the global pandemic.

We have included Stories of Impact to illuminate how the Oregon Convention Center is making progress toward our commitments to advance racial equity where we work and play.

All reporting and performance data is limited to information provided by the Oregon Convention Center and Metro Regional Government.

Additional information about the Oregon Convention Center can be found on our website. For more information about us and our Racial Equity Action Plan, please visit [oregoncc.org/en/diversity-equity-inclusion](https://oregoncc.org/en/diversity-equity-inclusion) or contact:

### **Michelle Hedegard**

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## Background

The launch of our five-year Racial Equity Action Plan (REAP) collided with an unparalleled challenge to the Oregon Convention Center and the world with the COVID-19 pandemic. Despite its devastating and disparate impacts, we strengthened our resolve and recommitted ourselves to our core values.

By boldly pressing ahead with new initiatives, we found innovative ways to reinvent engagement and connection between our internal teams to reflect our unwavering commitment to promoting an organization where all people have equal and accessible opportunities to succeed and be heard.

In the summer of 2020, we crafted our Reimagined Opening & Innovation Strategy through a series of cross-departmental writing and feedback sessions, ensuring all team members had opportunities to contribute and influence the solution. Because of this approach, staff embraced our road map to reopening with confidence, and is an initiative of which we are all proud.

That fall, we launched the Deeper Discussion Series - Awakening to Action where information and group discussions centered on topics including Black Lives Matter, systemic racism, and privilege. Not only did these gatherings help build capacity for further racial equity literacy, but the team was able to connect on a deeper and more authentic emotional level.

We are committed to investing resources into the Racial Equity Action Plan. We will continue to engage OCC staff, business partners and the community as we expand and achieve these goals. Thank you for joining us in this process, and helping us build the thriving, diverse workforce that OCC and our community deserve.



## Lift Up All Voices

“Over my fifty-plus years of life, I finally understand what the Late Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. was communicating in his famous speech, “I Have a Dream.” It was all about change. The willingness to change yourself and change the world. Where everyone was welcome to have a seat at the table. I am thankful to work for an organization that is open to change and embraces all our differences. These discussions have challenged and transformed our team’s mindset and focus. Inclusion is always better than exclusion.”

—Nick Brown  
Public Safety Manager, OCC

“Being able to participate in the OCC Deeper Discussions series was very powerful for me. It is not easy to have these tough conversations with anyone, let alone co-workers who you may not know on a personal level. Hearing the personal stories that were shared gave me a deeper understanding of what people I work with every day have dealt with in the past and present related to racial equity. I have gained a greater understanding of systemic racism in our community and a deeper passion for helping be a catalyst for change.”

—Monica Pea, CMP, CGMP  
Sales Manager, OCC

# Updates on REAP actions

The 43 items outlined below represent actionable steps necessary to fulfill the equity action plan’s desired outcomes.

OCC has completed year three of the plan’s implementation. While some efforts were put on pause due to the COVID-19 health and economic crisis, many action items are in process or complete. This report details the status of all actions outlined below.

## Status of actions

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

| Action Title   | Status      | More information  |
|--|-------------|---|
| A1.1.1 Engage industry partners on equity best practices; co-create and share policies and procedures.                         | In progress | OCC worked with Travel Portland to develop a set of Sales & Services Core Initiatives as part of their partnership, including a diverse sales & services strategy, accessing diverse suppliers & vendors, and ongoing training (w/ a focus on hotel partners). Additionally, OCC and its Food & Beverage partner, Levy, connect quarterly to ensure DEI goal synergy, specifically targeting racial equity in the hiring and retaining staff and guest experience outcomes. |
| A1.1.2 Publish an annual report, inclusive of progress updates, to be shared with internal and external stakeholders.          | In progress | Due to the limited capacity of our team due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the publication of annual reports was suspended. This work restarted in 2022 with this first report.  |
| A1.2.1 Participate in regular meetings and workshops to strengthen the role of government in the advancement of racial equity. | Ongoing     | OCC consistently participates in meetings and workshops focused on advancing racial equity, including the annual GARE conference, monthly Metro Racial Equity Leadership table meetings, and workshops designed to target specific outcomes like the Results Based Accountability Workshop.<br><br>OCC employees regularly participate and contribute to Metro’s People of Color & Black Employee Resource Groups.  |
| A1.2.2 Partner with the Metro DEI Team to create a Racial Equity Lens tool for the OCC.  | Shifted     | With the development of Metro’s Racial Equity Framework and worksheet in 2021, OCC could reallocate resources to other priorities. By leveraging Metro’s framework to help ensure that a racial equity analysis is applied when decisions about budget and services are made, whether they’re around long-term planning, policy creation, program development, or resource allocation.  |

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

| Action Title  | Status      | More information  |
|---|-------------|---|
| B1.1.1 Develop a historic baseline trend and target goal for multi-cultural events.   | Completed   | OCC and our partner, Travel Portland, have worked to develop a historical baseline for diverse group events and are working in collaboration to increase the percentage of these groups who book business with OCC.   |
| B1.1.2 Design and administer a survey for event planners to identify opportunities for improvement.   | In progress | Completed in 2021, OCC designed a survey sent to diverse group clients upon completion of their event to gather insights to identify improvement opportunities specific to creating welcoming spaces for their attendees.   |
| 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.       | On hold     | Due to the extensive nature of this project, including resource allocation and large-scale business practice changes, this action is strategically planned for implementation in FY24.  |
| B1.2.2 Track grant program return rates and collect feedback.   | On hold     | As a progress tracking mechanism for this program (in B1.2.1), this action will be implemented following the launch of the program.   |
| B1.3.1 Leverage the existing relationships of other Metro departments to help foster authentic partnerships.  | In progress | This work is thriving and growing, with engagement increasing between OCC and departments across the agency. Recent examples include standing 1:1 meetings with Metro DEI, the work with Metro Training and Development for their role in OCC’s Digital Device Initiative, and OCC’s participation in cross-departmental groups, including the Impact Evaluation Steering Committee, Racial Equity Leadership Table, and the Department Employee Engagement Leaders team. |
| B1.3.2 Expand avenues of community outreach, so as to broadcast meaningful job opportunities, upcoming events of interest and opportunities for learning. | In progress | OCC continues to update its database of job opportunity broadcasting channels in addition to those traditionally suggested by Metro HR. Additionally, OCC leverages relationships with individuals with deep connections with underserved communities in the Portland Metro to share these opportunities. Our MERC leaders also share these opportunities to broadcast to their networks.   |
| B1.3.3 Investigate how OCC management can better support the needs of local Community Groups of Color.  | On hold     | Due to the effects of the public health crisis, resources needed to successfully investigate and plan for effective community engagement were re-prioritized to focus on OCC’s internal REAP goals.   |

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

| <b>Action Title</b>  | <b>Status</b> | <b>More information</b>  |
|--|---------------|--|
| 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.  | On hold       | Due to the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, OCC reimagined and restructured many of its divisions and work teams; giving these structural changes time to adjust, this work will restart in FY23. |
| C1.1.2 With Metro HR (Class/Comp) and OCC hiring managers, revisit job duties, minimum qualifications and prerequisites to eliminate equity gaps.  | In progress   | OCC hiring managers now include the Equity & Belonging Manager initially when recruiting and hiring to further review and examine for a more equitable process.                                    |
| C1.2.1 Survey hiring managers to prioritize where additional support is most needed.   | On hold       | Due to the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, OCC restructured many of its divisions and work teams; giving these structural changes time to adjust, this work will restart in FY23.                |
| 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. | In progress   | In collaboration with all department managers, OCC is working to create a process that supersedes Metro's current requirements.  |
| C1.2.3 Formalize measures of accountability by creating standing meetings between OCC hiring managers and Metro HR.  | Ongoing       | With the introduction of Metro's HR Business Partners, OCC added their HRBP to their Leadership Team, which includes a weekly meeting to share updates and information outcomes.                   |

**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.**

| <b>Action Title</b>  | <b>Status</b> | <b>More information</b>   |
|--|---------------|---|
| C2.1.1 Create a system for effectively tracking employee onboarding. | Ongoing       | OCC has leveraged the power of MS Teams for tracking employee onboarding through. A dashboard using the "Lists" application was created in MS Teams, giving managers an accurate and up-to-date view of where their employees are in their onboarding journey, accounting for all of the tasks along the way. |



**OBJECTIVE C2. continued**

| <b>Action Title</b>   | <b>Status</b>      | <b>More information</b>  |
|---|--------------------|--|
| <p>C2.1.2 With hiring managers, tailor onboarding content to meet the needs of specific work teams and positions.</p>                               | <p>In progress</p> | <p>As we continue to improve our newly designed Onboarding Process, we remain committed to delivering a holistic system that efficiently, effectively, and equitably serves both the employee and the hiring manager or supervisor.</p> <p>Our ecosystem of tools, roles, and best practices continue to evolve and transform to serve stakeholders better as we work to restructure our work teams.</p> |
| <p>C2.1.3 Utilize Microsoft 365 to house equity-focused hiring documents and materials.</p>   | <p>Ongoing</p>     | <p>OCC has been a pioneer within Metro in adopting Microsoft’s cloud-based environment for document storage, information sharing, and work collaboration. Our Equity &amp; Belonging department’s files and materials are available online, with accessibility given to contributors and partners within the agency.</p>   |
| <p>C2.2.1 Close the equity gap in training opportunities, with a focus on Employees of Color and variable-hour staff.</p>                           | <p>In progress</p> | <p>By implementing our Digital Device Initiative and dedicating resources to providing all OCC employees with email/network accounts and devices (computers or tablets), employees have the tools needed for up-skilling and career mobility opportunities.</p>  |
| <p>C2.2.2 With Metro HR, design a training program that supports professional growth, and that keeps employees knowledgeable and engaged.</p>       | <p>On hold</p>     | <p>Metro’s HR and Training and Development Teams are performing initial discovery into this work’s scope. OCC will support, contribute and collaborate to ensure alignment and implementation as it develops.</p>  |
| <p>C2.3.1 Design a phased approach to increase the focus on racial equity in employee performance reviews.</p>                                      | <p>On hold</p>     | <p>The performance review process is currently being redesigned by Metro. OCC has been an active partner in this process and will continue supporting, contributing, and collaborating to ensure implementation success.</p>   |
| <p>C2.3.2 Spotlight potential career pathways and opportunities for employees’ professional advancement, with a priority on employees of color.</p> | <p>In progress</p> | <p>OCC and Metro job opportunities are highlighted each week in OCC’s Weekly Wrap Up email communication. Additionally, OCC Managers regularly check-in with their team members on a one-on-one basis to share opportunities and root out potential barriers to opportunities for advancement.</p>   |

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

| <b>Action Title</b>  | <b>Status</b> | <b>More information</b>  |
|--|---------------|--|
| D1.1.1 Assess needs and opportunities for equity focused professional development within specific work teams.  | In progress   | OCC has been actively contributing to Metro’s project to address agency-wide professional development, highlighting gaps for its frontline teams and championing equitable professional development opportunities for all staff. |
| 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)   | In progress   | With Metro having designed a series of equity-focused training available, OCC is currently working on outlining specific curricula tailored to managers and work teams, as well as tracking and goal-setting for this focus.     |
| 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.   | On hold       | Metro’s task force of jurisdictional partners and sovereign Tribal governments is currently working to develop this work.  |
| D1.2.2 Create a public-facing educational display on the history of the Albina neighborhood.   | Not started   | Planning and developing this project includes resourcing for community engagement and would require additional FTE capacity to create, implement and manage. Discussions are underway to assess feasibility in years to come.    |
| 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.  | On hold       | Due to budget restrictions because of the effects of the pandemic, currently, OCC does not have the capital needed to invest in this large-scale project.  |
| 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. | On hold       | In the interim, OCC is working to install additional inclusive language signage for all gendered public restrooms that reads, “All are welcome to use the restroom that aligns with their gender identity or expression.”        |

**OBJECTIVE D2. All Employees of Color at the Oregon Convention Center feel included, valued and empowered.**

| Action Title   | Status      | More information  |
|--|-------------|---|
| D2.1.1 Use an equity lens to assess and improve scheduling processes and work assignments, with a focus on Employees of Color. | In progress | Focusing on the Setup Team, OCC's Director of Event Operations collected historic work assignment data and has developed a mechanism for supervisors to track and more equitably assign work, with focus on Employees of Color. This is an ongoing process.                         |
| D2.1.2 Update and formalize shift coverage practices to ensure equitable work assignments.                                     | In progress | With the initiative described above, the Setup Management Team now assigns tasks according to data from previous periods to ensure equitable distribution of work.  |
| D2.2.1 Survey staff to determine preferred types of recognition and engagement.  | In progress | Recognition and engagement preferences are collected through one-on-one conversations as well as digital surveys delivered via email. Once OCC's new Equity & Engagement Committee is formed, this group will synthesize the data and report out findings to inform further action. |
| D2.2.2 Compose a team of employees to advise and oversee events designed for all-staff engagement and work recognition.        | In progress | Since February of 2022, OCC has been working to form its first Equity & Engagement committee. Due to staff limitations, capacity for participation has been low, but as of August, 2022, interest has improved.   |

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

| Action Title  | Status   | More information  |
|---|----------|---|
| E1.1.1 Determine a current baseline of COBID contracting, by percent of contracts, amount awarded and amount spent. | Complete | <i>2021 Data</i><br>Total awards: \$3.1M<br>Total COBID- eligible awards: \$3M<br>COBID Awards: \$800,000<br>COBID Spent: \$0<br>Non COBID Awards: \$2.2M<br>Non COBID Spent: \$311,329   |
| E1.1.2 Create parity between the percentage of money awarded and the percentage of money spent on COBID contracts.  | On hold  | Due to the budget restriction effects of the pandemic, OCC has limited its contracting work to essential needs only. As business builds back, equity between contract awards and money spent on COBID contracts will come into focus. |

**OBJECTIVE E2. continued**

| <b>Action Title</b>  | <b>Status</b> | <b>More information</b>   |
|--|---------------|---|
| E1.2.1 Revisit the checklist for Equity Strategy Meetings held for formal contract solicitations..   | Ongoing       | OCC approaches every RFP with equity as a top-of-mind consideration before meetings are held to help the contract manager aim their scope and requirements toward a higher COBID response. In doing so, equity meetings likely already have a plan in place and formalize it in this setting                            |
| E1.2.2 Attend outreach events to broaden the network of local COBID businesses.  | Ongoing       | Each March OCC hosts and staffs a Metro small business open house. In 2021, due to COVID, this event was not canceled. In 2022 the event was held virtually with OCC representation.  |
| E2.1.1 Approve an annual budget for racial equity work.  | Ongoing       | A budget for the newly created Equity & Belonging program was developed and approved for the FY23 budget cycle.   |
| E2.1.2 Create a job description for, and hire, an Equity & Belonging Manager.  | Completed     | Despite significant staff reductions caused by the pandemic, the position of Equity & Belonging Manager was created and filled in October 2020, by transitioning existing staff to ensure progress and accountability towards our racial equity goals.  |
| 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. | In progress   | Recruitment for this team is ongoing with planned implementation by the end of 2022.  |
| E2.1.4 Use an equity lens to study the potentially disparate effects of employee parking pass pay structures.  | On hold       | Due to the effects of the COVID 19 pandemic, OCC reimaged and restructured many of its divisions and work teams. Giving these structural changes time to adjust, this work will restart beginning in FY23.  |
| E2.2.1 Determine a method for effectively tracking progress on the actions and strategies that advance OCC’s racial equity objectives.   | Ongoing       | OCC’s Racial Equity Action Plan is tracked through an online dashboard created in Microsoft Teams currently monitored and updated by the Equity & Belonging Manager which reflects progress status of each action item. Progress of this plan is accounted for during bi-weekly meetings with OCC’s Executive Director. |
| E2.2.2 Regularly report progress and provide updates to all OCC staff.   | Ongoing       | Communications through weekly emails and quarterly newsletters from the Executive Director are regularly provided to staff regarding REAP actions and objectives as they develop.   |

Stories  
of Impact

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## Investing in our commitments

In August 2020, a new position was created to develop, lead and implement an equity and belonging program. Reporting to the Executive Director, the Equity & Belonging Manager is responsible for advancing OCC's Racial Equity Action Plan, communications, employee experience, and overall performance monitoring of equity and belonging at OCC.

This role collaborates with Metro by developing and implementing agency-wide strategies, including membership of the Metro Racial Equity Leadership Team, Employee Engagement Department Leaders, the Impact Evaluation Steering Committee, and the Green Building Policy Racial Equity Team.

The Equity & Belonging Manager provides advice, guidance, and support as part of OCC's Senior Leadership Management Team on diversity, equity, inclusion, and workplace culture issues and leads efforts to develop awareness and cultural responsiveness among staff.

This role also ensures recruitment, hiring, retention, performance management, promotions, and other Metro HR policies and practices align with the OCC's Racial Equity Action Plan and brand values.

In September 2020, Michelle Hedegard transitioned her primary job duties from Assistant Director of Marketing to a work-out-of-class assignment as the new Equity & Belonging Program Manager. Her role was made permanent in September 2021.

## Creating an environment of belonging

As part of its Reimagine & Reopening strategy, beginning in the winter of 2020 OCC began developing an onboarding program for new and returning employees to provide the tools and information needed to be successful in their roles and to introduce or re-acclimate employees to OCC's culture with specific attention to onboarding in terms of racial equity.

The project team took time to consider reflective questions including what historic racial inequities were related to onboarding employees in the past and worked to critically assess bias and what was missing in prior processes. We provided opportunities to listen and engage with staff members in our decision making and included diverse perspectives along the way.

This program examined how to successfully acclimate and integrate new hires, returning employees, or current employees after being promoted or transferred into a new role. By assessing, defining and aligning the needs of the new hires with the culture and reinforcing OCC's mission and strategic priorities.

Where former processes of onboarding were reactionary at best, OCC's new approach outlined a proactive process intended to substantially improve an employee's ability to understand the culture, contribute to the team, develop meaningful relationships, understand the leadership team and, ultimately, perform at their best.

### **The program developed addressed the following five distinct parts of the onboarding journey:**

- **Preboarding:** An employee accepts the job offer and obtains the information needed for Day One.
- **Day One:** The first day on the job is a critical first impression
- **Week One:** Employees learn general knowledge about OCC and key policies (orientation)
- **Training:** One-month and three-month milestones
- **End of Probation and Performance:** Employees are making meaningful contributions

### **The materials produced to support the program include:**

- Employee Handbook
- Manager & Supervisor Onboarding Guide
- Employee Experience Onboarding Process Guide
- Digital Employee Onboarding Dashboard





## Resourcing for change

“Don’t tell me what you value, show me your budget, and I’ll tell you what you value.” — President Joe Biden.

Although OCC continues to rebuild from the devastating effects of the pandemic, it was crucial we take this meaningful step toward racial equity by creating a budget for the new Equity & Belonging Program.

Personnel Costs comprise 78% of the budget for two full-time positions. Materials & services account for the remaining 22% of the FY23 budget.

### FY23 Equity & Belonging Budget

#### *Personnel Services*

|                             |         |
|-----------------------------|---------|
| Reg Employees               | 167,183 |
| Fringe - Payroll Taxes      | 14,180  |
| Fringe - Retirement PERS    | 41,294  |
| Fringe - Health and Welfare | 34,512  |
| Fringe - Other Benefits     | 663     |
| Pension Oblig Bonds         | 5,684   |

**Total Personnel 263,516**

#### *Materials & Services*

|                          |        |
|--------------------------|--------|
| Meeting Expenditures     | 15,000 |
| Membership & Pro. Dues   | 28,100 |
| Sponsorship Expenditures | 3,250  |
| Staff Development        | 26,500 |

**Total Materials & Services 72,850**

**Total Budget 336,366**



## Strengthening the role of government in the advancement of racial equity

To help build capacity, develop further skills and approaches to strengthen racially equitable policies, strategies and actions, OCC attended Government Alliance on Race & Equity's (GARE) virtual *Foundations Workshops* in 2020 to gain knowledge in foundational concepts of racial equity and have the opportunity to practice using racial equity analysis as well as normalize conversations about race and racism.

In 2020 and 2021 OCC attended the virtual GARE's annual meetings and also hosted the in-person 2022 event. Alongside her Metro colleagues, OCC's Equity & Belonging Manager also served as a member of the host committee for the event.

This conference gathers hundreds of racial equity practitioners across the country who work in local, state and regional government to uplift best practices, celebrate victories, and share lessons learned from their work advancing racial equity in their jurisdictions.



### 2022 GARE Annual Meeting Key ideas discussed and lessons learned

Engagement is not only a strategy but should be a way of being, where community is centered in a process from the very beginning, and the engagement is authentic, transparent, and reciprocal.

Sharing space with other jurisdictions working towards racial equity is energizing, especially as we discuss continuing to foster a culture of belonging for community and staff.

Art reflects radical imaginings of a better future, and we should invoke storytelling and creativity in our community co-design efforts and equity spaces.

**The Government Alliance on Race & Equity is a national network of government working to achieve racial equity and advance opportunities for all.**

**GARE is a joint project of the Center for Social Inclusion (now a part of Race Forward) and the Haas Institute for a Fair and Inclusive Society at the University of California, Berkeley**

The U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services Naturalization Ceremony hosted in June of 2022 was categorized as “Government” however, the majority of the 500 attendees represented a vast array of cultural diversity.

Five hundred people were recognized as new U.S. Citizens during the ceremony, and organizers said it was the largest naturalization event ever held in Portland, a monumental and



*Aya Abdelli, 38, celebrates after becoming a U.S. Citizen at a naturalization ceremony at the Oregon Convention Center on Thurs., April 14, 2022. Abdelli's country of origin is Tunisia.*

*Photo by DAVE KILLEN*

## Developing baseline trends and creating target goals for diverse-group events.

Prior to the development of this REAP, we had limited data to capture diverse group event trends. This limited data showed that over the last 15 years, only 2% of our annual events had been made up of self-identified diverse group events.

Although the groups we host may have large representation of diverse attendees, by self-selecting their market segment from categories such as Government, Public Affairs, Culture, Trade & Commercial, etc., we had not historically captured their event in our data as falling under the umbrella of “diverse group.” By adding the new data point of “Event Market Segment” we will now be able to better define the demographics of these events and have better data, moving forward, that will allow us to tell a more robust story around the demographics of the audiences and communities we serve.

Each year, our sales team starts at 0% and builds the business. We first prioritize convention business into our calendar and then fill 18-months out with our local groups.

Currently, Travel Portland’s database of 9,714 accounts indicates 361 (around 4%) groups meet the MERC classification of a diverse group\*. We have set a goal to increase that percentage to 5% over the next 8 years:

- 2022 and 2025: 1% growth
- 2025 to 2027: 2% growth
- 2030: 5%

\* Diverse groups are defined as: Black or African American, Asian or Asian American, South Asian, Hispanic, Latino/a/x, Middle Eastern or North African, American Indian, Indigenous or Alaska Native, Pacific Islander or Native Hawaiian, Multiracial, LGBTQ+, People with Disabilities or other (culture or ethnicity not listed above)

## Identifying opportunities for improvement through client engagement

In addition to the efforts of identifying trends and setting goals for growth, OCC designed and implemented a survey for event planners to identify opportunities for improvement.

### Diverse Group Survey Questions

1. Do you think your attendees felt welcome at the Oregon Convention Center?
2. Did you feel that OCC was an accessible venue to all of your attendees?
3. Have you experienced any unwelcome conduct that was offensive, hurtful or discriminatory?
4. If you did experience harassment or racism, did you know where or how to file a complaint?
5. While attending your event do you feel that your unique background or experience was valued by the OCC staff?
6. Did you feel safe & supported by the OCC staff while at OCC?



# Closing the technology gap for frontline workers

As we continue to build back better, with improvements made to our workflows and communications, we are uniquely positioned to re-engineer a more inclusive, efficient and sustainable model that supports all employees.

In the past, many workers at OCC, specifically Utility Workers and Event Custodians, relied on paper resources and verbal instructions to perform much of their work throughout the day.

At a time when we were closed to events, and instead serving as a mass vaccination clinic, the Equity & Belonging Team met with small groups of these workers to get feedback and answer questions about using technology, including email and devices, in their day-to-day work and talk through any anticipated challenges or roadblocks .

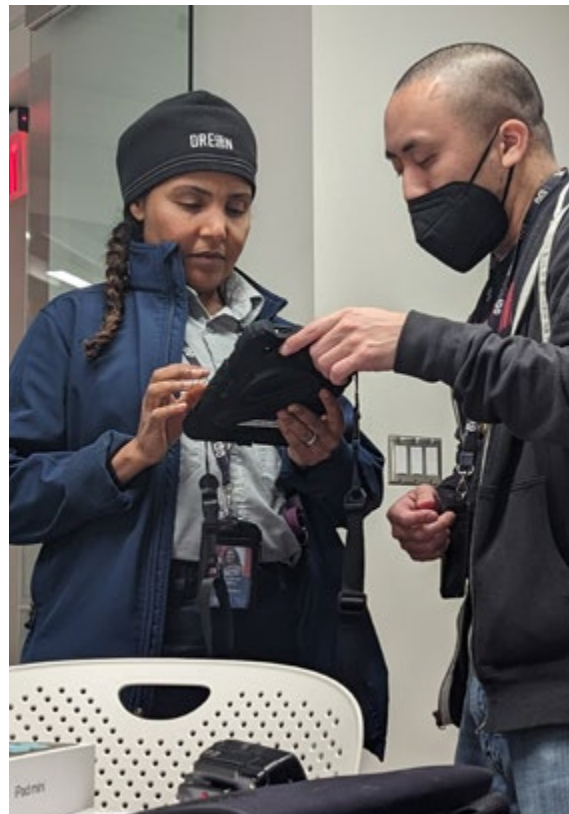
The team then connected with Metro's Training and Development team to begin crafting a training program specific to OCC's needs.

Through this Digital Device initiative, workers at OCC will have the hardware, software and training needed to access event information, efficiently execute work assignments, effectively communicate with individuals and groups within and outside of OCC; thereby equitably engaging with and contributing to our culture and mission.

## These solutions help deliver an equitable work experience for all employees.

Through the customized training program, this initiative boosts professional development and provides for potential career pathways and opportunities of all OCC employees and helps close the equity gap in training opportunities, with a focus on Employees of Color and variable-hour staff.

From a belonging aspect, this technology allows these workers to experience the interactions and touch-points that only desk-based employees have historically had at OCC and Metro.



# MOVING FORWARD

The results of this report are critical in informing our next steps so that we may engage in a strategic and collaborative process to prioritize both initial actions and long-term efforts for the implementation of work targeting our priorities.

As part of this process, the Oregon Convention Center will take an iterative, incremental, and inclusive approach to the subsequent work that follows.

Our team acknowledges that this journey will last for the lifespan of our organization—there is so much more that we can do and look forward to doing in the years to come. We will continue to report out on our progress towards our goals and invite our team, our community, and our clients to hold us accountable to these commitments.

For questions or to learn more, contact:

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