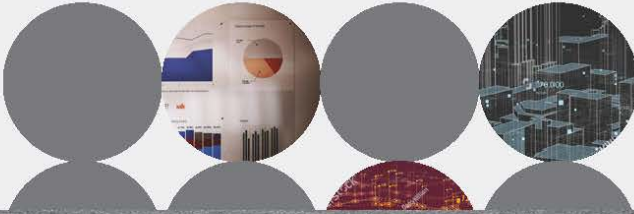


A partnership among Geisinger Commonwealth School of Medicine, Johnson College, Keystone College, Lackawanna College, Luzerne County Community College, Marywood University, Misericordia University, Penn State Scranton, Penn State Wilkes-Barre, The Wright Center for Graduate Medical Education, University of Scranton, Wilkes University, and the business community



THE INSTITUTE FOR PUBLIC POLICY & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



City of Scranton



**Diversity, Equity, and
Inclusion Plan
Findings and
Recommendations**

The Institute

Turning Information into Insight

The Institute is a nonprofit economic and social innovation research and policy organization dedicated to empowering business and community leaders with research-based strategies for informed decision-making. We conduct independent, non-biased research to identify the opportunities, issues, and challenges unique to the region and to find innovative solutions to help solve the problems facing our communities. The Institute also offers a wide array of research, consulting, and support services to help organizations boost productivity, increase profitability and be successful in their missions. The Institute is a partnership of 13 colleges and universities and the business community.

Community-Based Research

Community-based research is at the core of The Institute's mission. This work, funded by our academic partners, generous underwriters, and sponsors, is made available to organizations and communities needed reliable, objective data, research, and best practices to make more informed decisions.

Client Solutions

The Institute prepares studies, surveys, and conducts research for public, private, and nonprofit entities to identify strategies and solutions that facilitate decision-making and enhance growth, profitability, revitalization, and sustainability of their businesses and organizations.

The Institute Team

Teri Ooms, Executive Director
Andrew Chew, Director of Research
Dr. Jolene Carey-Pace, Research Analyst
Sarah Bender, Research Assistant
Jill Avery-Stoss, Director of Operations

Contents

- Introduction 4
- Research Methodology 4
- Executive Summary 4
- Community-Wide DEI Survey 5
- City of Scranton Employee DEI Survey 18
- Qualitative Interview Analysis 26
 - Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion 27
 - The Value of Focusing on DEI 29
 - City-Wide Experiences 32
 - Public Safety 34
 - Community Resources 35
 - Zoning and Land Use Practices 36
 - Transportation 37
 - City Planning, Purchasing, Procurement, and Contracting 38
 - Information Resources 38
 - Community Collaboration 38
 - Equity Commission 39
- National Research - Evidence-Based Programs and Case Studies 39
 - Official Statements and Support of Inclusion 39
 - DEI-Related Data Collection and Analysis 40
 - Community-Based Advisory Committee 40
 - Inclusive Public Engagement Initiatives 41
 - Inclusive Hiring and Contracting Policies 41
 - Strategic Plans 41
 - Implementing the Use of Equity Tools 42
 - Community Policing - Police and Criminal Justice Reform Initiatives 42
 - Community Equity in Procurement 43

Equity for those with Physical and Intellectual Disabilities	43
Additional Equity and Inclusion Policies	43
DEI Practices, Initiatives, and Service Recommendations	44
Community-Wide Recommendations	44
Equitable City Practices	49
City of Scranton Organizational Recommendations	52
Conclusions	54
References	55

Introduction

The following report is a synthesis of primary and secondary research related to diversity, equity, and inclusion for purposes of creating an equity plan in the City of Scranton as well as developing an equity commission. The result of this synthesis includes conclusions and recommendations to foster understanding of the support needed throughout the City to achieve the goals of a diverse, equitable, and inclusive City.

Research Methodology

As part of this evaluation, The Institute examined primary data as well as secondary data from various sources. Primary data includes community and employee surveys deployed by The Institute and semi-structured interviews conducted with multiple leaders of organizations across the City. Each section of this report contains sourced information.

Executive Summary

This report aims to create a deeper understanding of the support needed to build a diverse, equitable, and inclusive community. The following is a synthesis and evaluation of primary and secondary data used to assess initiatives required to support the City's vision.

This report represents the results of an online survey that assessed City employees' experiences pertaining to diversity, equity, and inclusion in the workplace. With an enhanced understanding of employees' experiences, the City can better steer its human resources policies and practices in a way that helps them address ongoing DEI-related challenges. An enhanced focus on DEI can bolster employee morale, retention, and productivity.

A community-wide survey also assessed the experiences and opinions of community members. Leaders across a diverse range of organizations were interviewed to more fully understand the challenges and needs of community members.

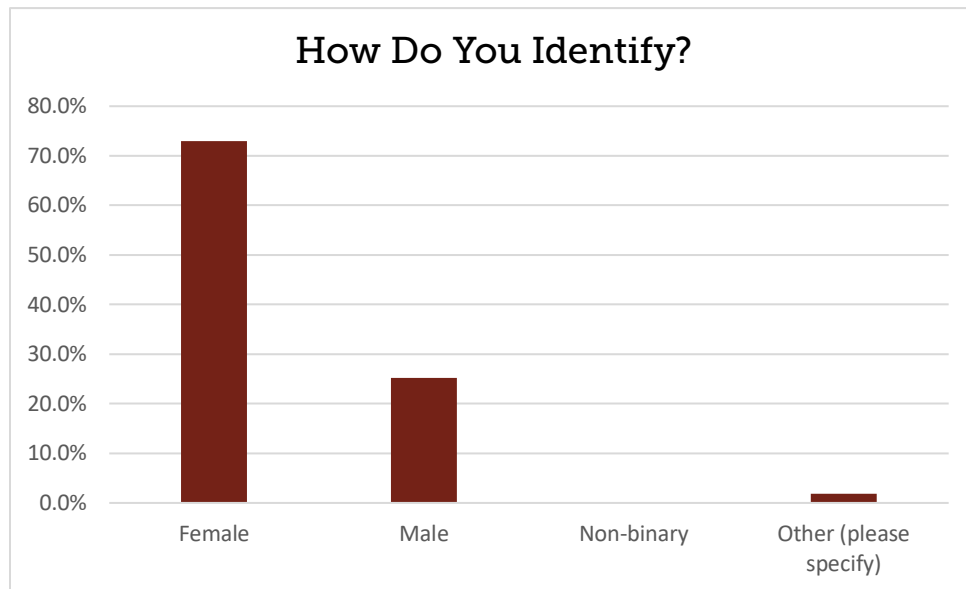
Recommendations address areas including, but not limited to, community engagement and relations, youth involvement, and DEI education and training. They touch on issues of zoning, housing, and transportation. Additionally, recommendations for the City of Scranton's internal use as an employer are included.

Programs and projects going forward should directly address a need or issue identified within this report and should identify the outcomes and impacts that will remain after their initial implementation phase. The case studies included in this report should be considered for referral to implementation.

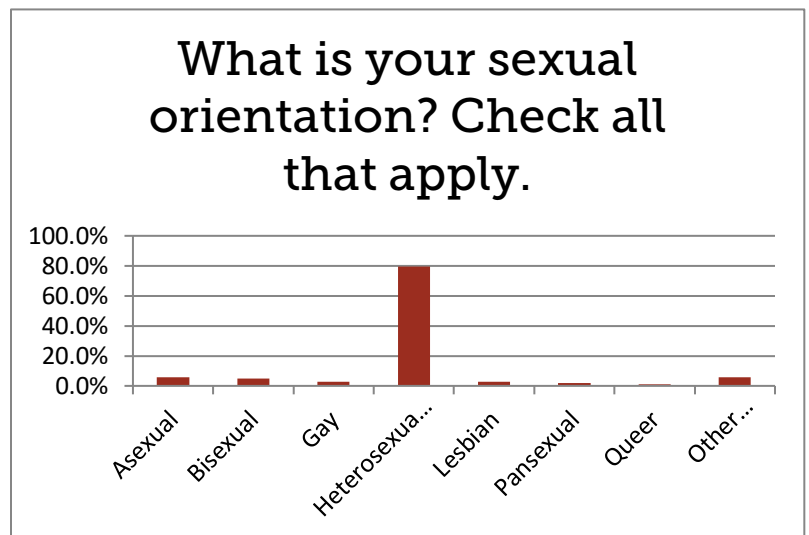
Community-Wide DEI Survey

Community feedback ensured that outreach engages all dimensions of diversity, intersectional perspectives, thoughts, and lived experiences to inform the design of the DEI plan.

A total of 109 community members participated in the community-wide survey. Of the 109 participants, approximately 73 percent identified as female, 25 percent as male, and nearly two percent indicated other.

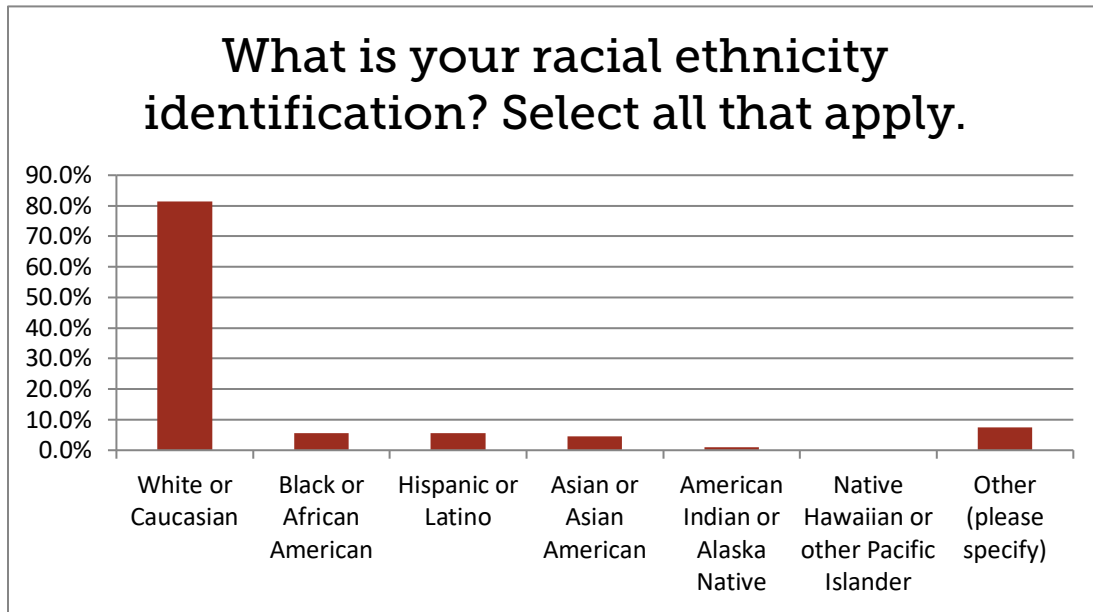


With regard to sexual orientation, 79 percent indicated they are heterosexual or straight, and approximately six percent identified themselves as asexual. Six percent described themselves as other, and five percent stated that they identified as bisexual. Three percent identified themselves as gay, another three percent as lesbian, almost two percent indicated they are pansexual, and almost one percent identified as queer. No participants indicated that they were transgender.



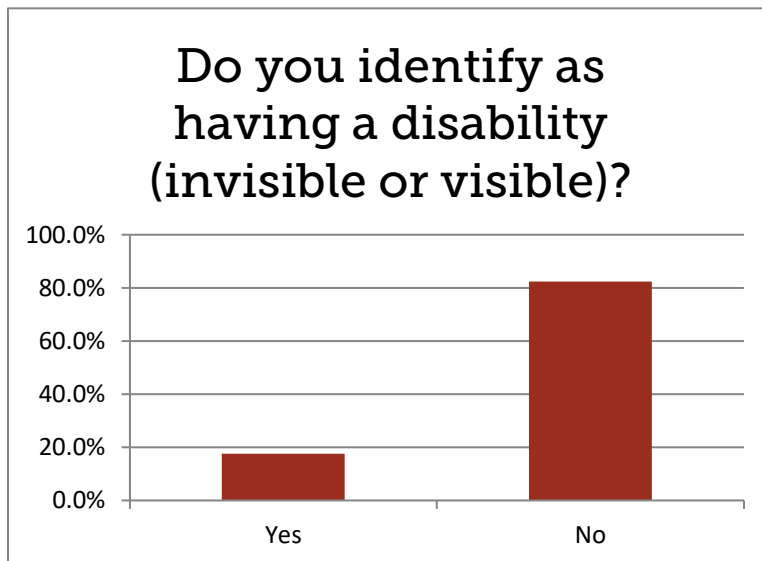
Approximately 81 percent of participants identified their racial ethnicity as white or Caucasian. Slightly over seven percent indicated they identify as a racial ethnicity other than one listed, with respondents noting European, South Asian, and Portuguese American identities. Almost six percent indicated they are Black or African American, and another six percent indicated they identify as Hispanic or Latino.

Nearly five percent of respondents identified as Asian or Asian-American, and almost one percent indicated they identify as American Indian or Alaska Native.

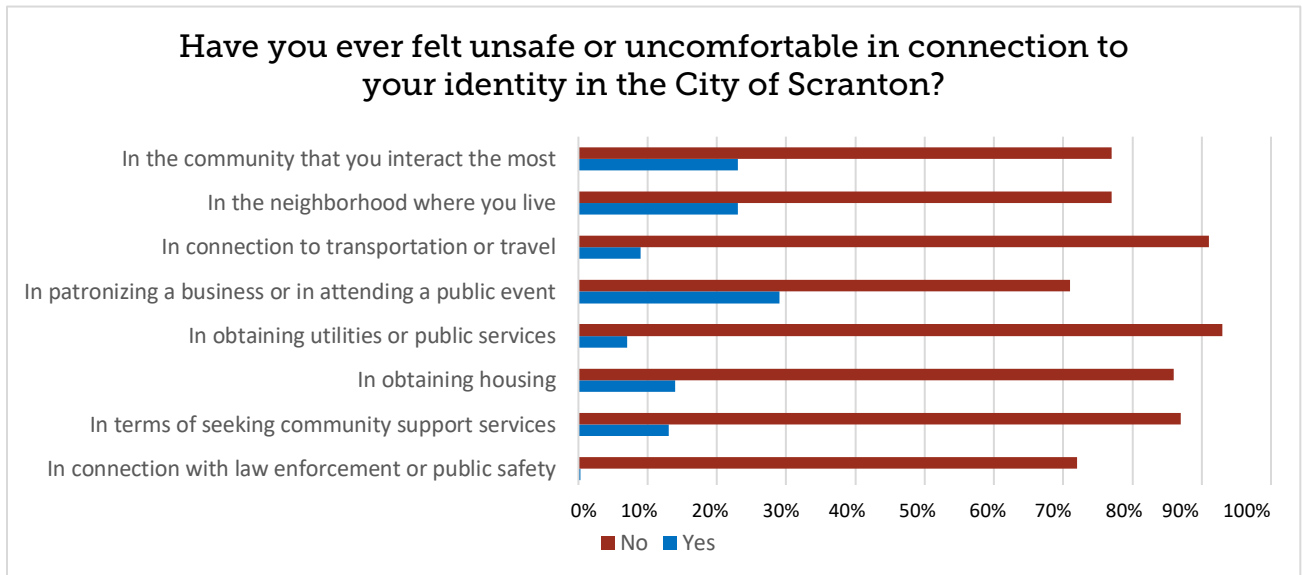


For purposes of the survey, disability was defined as any physical, mental, cognitive, or developmental condition that impairs, interferes with, or limits a person's ability to engage in certain tasks or actions or participate in typical daily activities and interactions.

When participants were asked if they identify as having a disability (invisible or visible), approximately 82 percent indicated no disability. And almost 18 percent indicated they do have a disability.



Survey participants were then prompted to identify if they have ever felt unsafe or uncomfortable in connection to their identities in the City of Scranton in various situations.



Twenty-eight percent of participants indicated that they have at some point felt unsafe or uncomfortable with law enforcement or public safety in connection to their identity. Of those that indicated yes, the following responses were offered:

“Women experiencing Domestic Violence are often labeled “crazy,” abusive, or simply do not get the response they need. This is exacerbated in cases of black and Latinx women. There is also a lack of interpreters for ESL residents.”

“Yes, especially for people with a history of substance use disorder or a past criminal record.”

“Yes, being targeted due to race.”

Yes, with regard to my diverse students.”

“Yes, law enforcement minimizes, and sometimes punishes, individuals identifying other than male or female. Law enforcement also lacks a proper response to violence against women or gender violence. (This is) most pronounced in cases of sexual abuse.”

“Yes, a Black friend of mine was unlawfully detained recently.”

“Yes, quite often. The officers have a superiority complex or could not be bothered to address issues.”

“Yes. I have a friend who is a black male. I got pulled over once with him in the car. The officer seemed more interested in him (who was just sitting there and had no legal issues) than with me, who he said, “sped up through a yellow light.” which I did not. I honestly think he pulled me over just to get a look at my friend.”

“Yes, I have an autistic adult daughter and have instances of police not understanding enough about her disability, and they have scared her.”

“Yes, because the time we reported harassment, the responding male officers asked if we provoked it.”

“I have witnessed challenges vicariously of patients with law enforcement related to their sexual orientation and also mental and behavioral health issues.”

“Yes, I've been treated harshly by law enforcement until a white friend comes up, and his demeanor changed.”

“Yes. During a domestic dispute where I was the victim of emotional and physical abuse, the police officer who responded to the call commented, “this is why white women shouldn't date black men.”

Thirteen percent of participants indicated that they have felt unsafe or uncomfortable in terms of seeking community support services in connection to their identity. Of those that indicated yes, the following comments were offered:

“Yes, due to language barriers, especially Spanish-speaking clients I have worked with in the past.”

“Yes, especially where language is a barrier.”

“Yes, lack of language access and lack of people of color in positions of power.”

“Yes, not having services for transgenders.”

“Yes (with regard to) my diverse students.”

“No but note that there are not many supports for the LGBTQ+ community in our city.”

“Yes, organizations making people feel you are just looking for a handout or leeching off the system because of their ethnicity.”

“Members of some communities have voiced concern to me about structural barriers (enrollment fees for online social service programming, for example) that may limit their opportunities for advancement and personal growth.”

“Lack of access to child-care assistance.”

“I think the biggest problem is not knowing what's available or hearing about a resource on the news once it has ended.”

“Many programs have restrictions and staff often seem unhelpful. Other than my experiences as a young mom, most interactions have been okay, but nothing to write home about.”

“Absolutely. Most non-profits completely stereotype their clientele. I have witnessed high-level employees of organizations such as United Neighborhood Centers mock and ridicule their clients. Completely despicable and unacceptable!”

“Yes. I have been informed that the color of my skin affects my eligibility. And since I'm Caucasian, I won't get any.”

Fourteen percent of participants indicated that they have felt unsafe or uncomfortable in terms of seeking obtaining housing in connection to their identity. Of those that indicated yes, the following comments were offered:

“Yes- observed a general discrimination/ stereotyping for low-income people trying to find housing; relying on stereotypes when evicting.”

“Yes (in connection with) my diverse students.”

“Yes, brown and black individuals, or poor individuals who have struggled economically.”

“Yes, landlords should have to be educated on people's rights and more education for renters. Many landlords openly refuse to rent to someone with a section-8 voucher, and they aren't supposed to do that.”

“Yes, not accepting section-8 vouchers.”

“Too many landlords making it harder by not accepting public assistance or Section-8. Higher than usual rent and unfair qualifications for consideration.”

“Yes, people saying apartments are rented when they are not.”

“I have heard of racist landlords, which wouldn't surprise me with all the slumlords that are allowed to exist in this city.”

“My child's spouse is Latino. When she went to look at an apartment with her brothers, the landlord was rude. When she went back with my white son, he was much nicer. They didn't choose to rent that apartment anyways.”

“I didn't tell my landlord I'm gay when I was applying for the apartment, and I haven't said anything since. I wouldn't be comfortable doing so. I'm actually afraid I would be asked to leave.”

“Yes, when going for a mortgage.”

“Housing is very challenging for people living in recovery.”

“When I was a teen, I was in foster care. This gave me a deep sense of the importance of home. I was denied housing by a landlord once due to my husband and I being separated. I am fortunate to have owned my home for the last eight years.”

Concerning feeling safe and comfortable in obtaining utilities or public services, 93 percent indicated they felt safe, and only seven percent stated that they felt unsafe or uncomfortable seeking utilities or public services.

Twenty-nine percent of participants indicated that they felt unsafe or uncomfortable when patronizing a business or attending a public event in connection to their identity, and those that are instructors spoke to their students' feelings of uncomfortableness. Of those that indicated yes, they felt unsafe, these feelings were related to race, sexuality, ability, and criminal activity. The following comments were offered:

"I have been treated unfairly and made to feel unwelcome only recently, in businesses run by people who weren't a similar in race to me. These subjects should matter for everyone. Not just the Black or Latino community new to our area."

"Yes, my diverse students (feel unsafe or comfortable)."

"My students of color do not feel comfortable in local businesses."

"Yes, I have heard many stories about BIPOC being followed around in local stores."

"Yes, my daughter (autism) receives negative comments and mean looks in public settings."

"There were people who were protesting at a peaceful BLM event in June 2020."

"Yes. I have seen store employees follow and watch people of color while they are shopping on several occasions. It isn't as frequent as it had been during my childhood, but it is still noticeable."

"If there's ultra-conservative messaging displayed in a business or in relation to a public event, I usually feel uncomfortable and choose not to patronize that business."

Twenty-three percent of participants indicated that they have felt unsafe or uncomfortable in the neighborhood where they live in connection to their identity, with participants offering the following:

"Due to some of the recent transplants to Scranton and the behavior they bring with them, some parts of my neighborhood have become rundown, dirty, and criminalized."

"Yes, any race other than Caucasian is treated differently in the small towns in the area."

"I was uncomfortable putting out a rainbow flag during pride month this year, but I did it anyway. I had no repercussions."

"When Scranton police refer to it as a ghetto, I guess one could feel uncomfortable at the very least."

"Yes, we had to move because of racist and homophobic threats."

"Yes. I have had a home invasion in my home because the streets are full of drug addicts."

Twenty-three percent of participants also indicated that they have felt unsafe or uncomfortable in the community where they interact the most in connection to their identity. Of those that indicated yes, they felt unsafe, these feelings were related to race, gender identity, and criminal activity. The following comments were offered:

"The entire City of Scranton, along with many other communities, suffers from a willful disregard for negative behaviors and practices."

“Yes, (with regard to) my diverse students.”

“Yes, my son is transgender and receives hateful comments.”

“Yes, my workplace is in Southside and at times can be sketchy.”

“There is no community! That's the problem in most of Scranton.”

“Yes, our community used to be safe; now it's full of drug dealers and gang members.”

When asked if participants have ever experienced discrimination based on one or more aspects of their identities, many respondents who identified as female mentioned they have experienced discrimination walking along the streets and as professionals in the workplace, such as being denied a voice or being excluded, getting paid less, and not allowed the same rights as males. Other respondents also faced discrimination based on age, gender preference, race, religion, sexual orientation, visible disabilities and medical issues (epileptic), immigration status, and hair color. Different examples of what residents have come across are threats of intimidation because of race, being insulted and treated differently, and receiving a lower salary than was initially presented. Others stated they had been followed by cops and others because of the color of their skin, some local vendors refused to work with a same-sex couple, a Hispanic woman was talked down to and excluded, and many faced sexual harassment.

Participants were asked if they feel that the City of Scranton is open to hearing concerns shared by their community/identifying affiliations. The respondents who answered affirmatively specified they could communicate with the mayor and city council members or any other public officials at council meetings as some indicated the new administration and officials are more open-minded. Others said they communicate their concerns by contacting 311 or police stations, organizations they work for that are connected to city officials, anonymous reporting, working through neighborhood associations, and in-person at community events. They also mentioned that this survey platform would help communicate concerns and that they use newspapers, TVs, church bulletins, phones, and the internet.

Respondents who answered ‘no’ shared various ideas of how the City of Scranton can better connect with the community, such as community roundtables and focus groups, private surveys/suggestion boxes that are not online, and holding town hall meetings where their concerns are addressed. Individuals with diverse backgrounds should be in city positions rather than families who have had authority and power for generations. Others shared that the public requires city officials who they know and trust. The city should put efforts into reaching low-income communities, have more diverse events, implement communication courses for law enforcement, and have easier online methods to navigate various websites. One respondent included that it would be helpful to hold monthly meetings at designated times and advertise them to all local households. Another would like to be contacted back if their concerns are being put into action.

Additionally, it would be beneficial to hire employees from different backgrounds and train staff on implicit bias and identity-related aggressions. Respondents also mentioned that the City of Scranton can better connect and support small organizations making a difference. Another way to find stronger connections is to require local TV stations to have a weekly talkback section where callers can share concerns and then have City officials provide what solutions were administered.

Many respondents relayed that it is difficult to know where to go and who they should contact to communicate concerns that will be put into action. The process of communicating concerns to local officials should be simpler so the experience for all residents is efficient and they feel welcome to share their thoughts.

Survey respondents were asked if they are aware of any organizations or services that currently support their needs around equity, diversity, and accessibility and to identify these supports. The organizations that the participants listed appear alphabetically below.

- Albright Memorial Library
- Area Agency on Aging (over 55)
- Black Scranton Project
- Catherine McCauley
- Center for Independent Living
- Community Justice Center
- Greenhouse Project
- Immigration Inclusion Committee
- Lackawanna College/The University of Scranton/Marywood University
- Lackawanna County Committee on Disability
- Martin Luther King Commission
- Moses Taylor Foundation
- NAACP Lackawanna County Branch
- NeighborWorks NEPA
- NEPA Rainbow Alliance/ NEPA Pride/NEPA Gay Straight Alliance
- NEPA Stands Up
- NEPA Youth Shelter
- Our City Too
- Outreach Center for Community Engagement
- Recovery Bank
- Respondent's Employers and Colleges
- Scranton Counseling Center
- Scranton Fringe Festival
- St. Francis Kitchen
- St. Luke's Church
- The Wright Center
- United Neighborhood Centers of NEPA
- Women's Resource Center

Participants were asked if they feel that barriers exist in accessing resources by the City of Scranton. The various barriers in Scranton listed by respondents involve transportation, language/communication, education, employee burnout, race/gender and culture, affordable housing, internet, handicapped accessibility, awareness of resources, and social and economic problems. A few respondents noted that transportation barriers have become prevalent because there is insufficient affordable public transportation to access resources. Specifically, one respondent stated that “public transportation is desperately lacking and places a burden that is insurmountable to some when trying to access healthcare, social services, and other resources, especially elderly community members.”

Language barriers exist in the city because there are few interpreters and staff who can communicate in various languages, and there is a lack of communication between members of the community who are different.

One respondent said that they are not provided materials and signage in multiple languages, making paperwork difficult to complete.

Examples of education barriers include lower education levels and insufficient support or access to resources. Access to healthcare and social services for different race, genders, and cultures have been barriers. Residents have found that there is a high rate of poverty and not enough affordable housing. Residents with fewer resources lack access to food, support, and activities for children and face employment issues. Internet or broadband connection have been difficult for some, and methods to share concerns online are difficult to navigate. Another person indicated the city website is not user-friendly.

Additionally, many city-owned buildings, properties, streets, and parking spaces/meter systems are not handicapped accessible. Other barriers mentioned are that the homeless population does not have access to different resources, enforcement of zoning laws is lacking, and implicit bias is prevalent. For some, it is daunting to access city resources through the sheriff's office. There are fewer opportunities for residents to improve their living conditions aside from food stamps and food banks, and young adults should have more ways to show their skills and leadership. The city should be more “hands-on” and talk directly to residents.

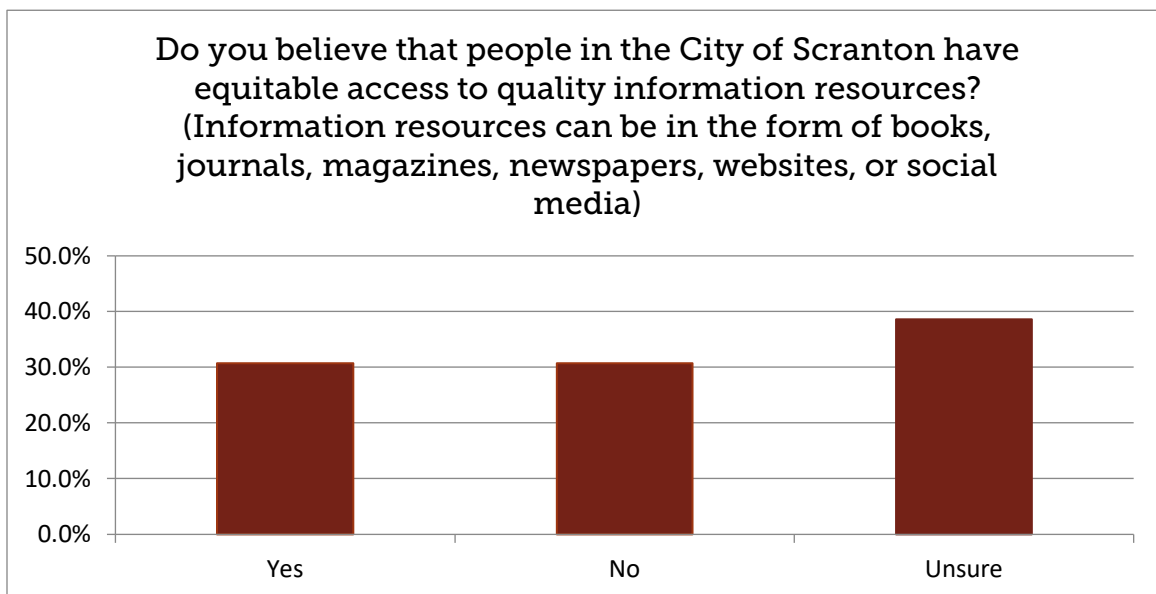
Community survey participants were asked whether they or anyone they know in their community experienced exclusionary housing or land use practices and/or were not able to access safe and secure housing. The majority of the respondents answered that they or others they know in the community had not experienced exclusionary housing or land practices in accessing safe and secure housing. The respondents who have experienced exclusionary housing or land practices explained that there are not enough low-income housing and zoning options to meet needs, cited difficulty in finding safe/secure rental properties within the guidelines, and referenced lack of transportation to reach jobs and access resources. One respondent stated that a landlord would almost force tenants to move out and threatened to file a lawsuit. Abusive landlords have told potential renters that they were too old to rent an apartment. Others have been turned away from housing due to poor credit history or involvement with the criminal justice system. Other housing problems that arose for individuals included lack of drinking water, water running through the building, dirty living conditions, barriers in the condemnation housing process, licensing practices that are difficult for contractors, absentee landlords, and lack of middle housing options. Currently, private landlords are found to be listing high prices and require large deposits for those they consider unacceptable applicants. Many available homes are empty, which

impacts equitable, fair housing. Also, the community needs more homeless shelters, and present community services operate with overworked housing counselors and lack management support. Lastly, respondents have shared issues in which they cannot buy land because the tax office does not have open repository sales, and public housing is not disabled-accessible.

Survey participants were also asked if the City does enough to achieve equity through City planning, purchasing, procurement, and contracting. A few respondents agreed that the city does enough to achieve equity and potentially can see planning, purchasing, and contracting efforts through news outlets and improvements to pools and roads. One individual commented that there are current partnerships with community organizations committed to housing market equity. The majority of the respondents did not agree that the city is doing enough to achieve equity and suggested various changes to these practices. The changes should include better policing and law enforcement, better awareness/accessibility of information so they can get feedback on what the city is implementing, more cultural days, conversations about inclusiveness and diversity, lower taxes, and making the city more appealing.

Additionally, the area's cost of living is high, and residents don't make enough to improve infrastructure. Planning efforts involving resident engagement is limited/not inclusive because not everyone can attend different public meetings without transportation, so practices should be communicated on social media. Respondents also suggested using community member-based committees where every population is represented, as well as following what progressive cities are implementing (programming that addresses healthcare and economic barriers to services for individuals dealing with substance use and addiction and enhanced mental health services due to COVID-19 pandemic). One individual does not see equity in the stakeholders that are utilized for project feedback and direction, and another stated there should be more low-income housing. Some respondents are not aware of what the City does to achieve equity and feel that it is essential for officials to share how residents can participate and share their concerns.

Community members were asked if they feel there is equitable access to community resources in the City of Scranton. Approximately 31 percent indicated yes, while 31 percent also indicated no, and 38 percent were unsure.



The respondents who agreed they feel like there is equitable access to community resources noted pop-up city halls and an improved website. Although finding services and figuring out the easiest way to access this information is difficult, many additional community resources are needed for these respondents. Examples of resources include transportation that is regular, affordable, and accessible (Lackawanna transit needs more buses and times offered); safe and affordable housing along with low-income housing (to reduce poverty); childcare; and access to affordable healthy foods. It would also be necessary to have interpreters for ESL residents and alleviate language and cultural barriers; access to media; resources for the transgender, elderly, and disabled communities; equal access to resources; mental health services; and centralized information.

The City of Scranton could also implement more technology, communication, and visibility options for every person; offer summer activities that low-income families can afford; and even bring resources to underserved communities, so they don't have to keep searching. Offices and employees should be available to assist residents with questions about how they find different resources, and it would be useful for the Chamber of Commerce to offer directions on how individuals can start their own business.

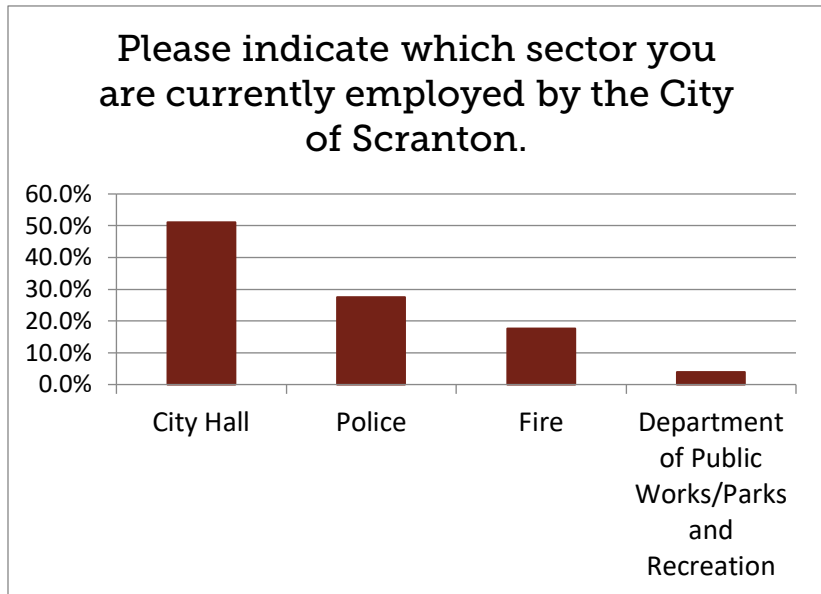
Overall, survey respondents shared mixed reviews concerning diversity, equity, and inclusion in the City of Scranton. They noted improvements as well. One individual discussed discrimination in the workplace and city union positions. Another mentioned in their experiences that the City was open-minded and welcoming to minorities. Other responses included that the City is embracing diversity, such as electing the first female mayor, but some witness a lack of diversity in government and committee employment. Different recommendations include holding events that celebrate and embrace all cultures, supporting more cultural resources or programs, subsidizing incentives and valuable services to hire bilingual employees, and having collective leadership to make changes. Other responses involve need for equitable workforce development and educational resources for younger students and public education regarding where people can express their concerns, such as flyers in food pantries or doctor offices and more community outreach. Additionally, community organizations, including the Wright Center, University of Scranton, and other local colleges, should work together. The city should have more table discussions and protect homeowners. More parks and lights should be added to the Lackawanna walkway. Some respondents relayed that they do not actively live in the city, so they did not comment on diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts.

City of Scranton Employee DEI Survey

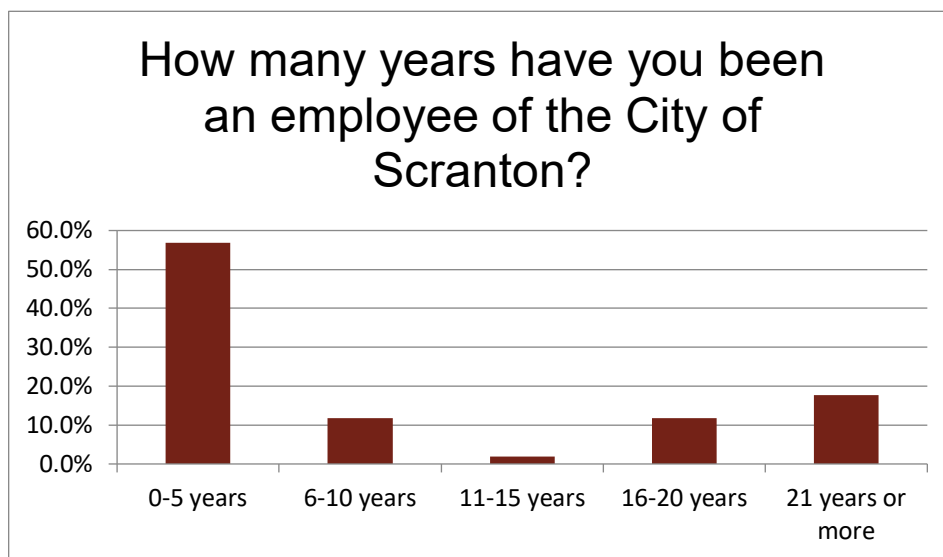
A needs survey for City of Scranton employees was deployed. Fifty-three employees participated in the confidential survey. Their responses represent a starting point for determining what is needed to create a more inclusive city and workplace, along with identifying challenges and realizing where improvement is required internally.

It is vital to remain intentional about hiring practices to provide a diverse workforce, and to incorporate diversity and inclusion across all practices so that it is reflected as a priority across the community.

Approximately 51 percent of participants identified as City Hall employees. Twenty-seven percent were from the police force and 18 percent from the fire department. Roughly four percent work in the Department of Public Works/Parks and Recreation.



The majority of respondents (57 percent) have been employees of the City of Scranton between 0-5 years. Just over 17 percent indicated that they have been employees of the City for 21 years or more. Twelve percent of respondents indicated they had been employees for 6-10 years and another 12 percent indicated they had been employees of the City for 16-20 years. Only two percent stated that they had been employees for 11-15 years.

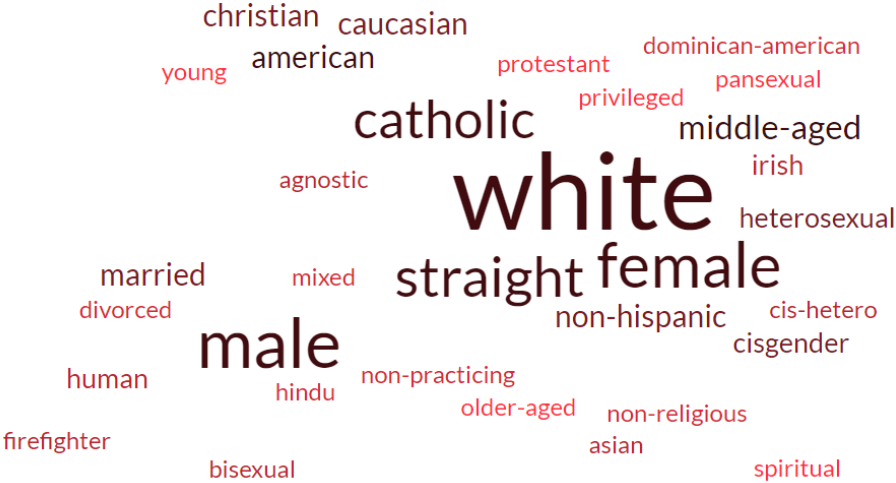




Respondents defined inclusion as giving equal access and involvement to groups with various resources and opportunities regardless of their backgrounds, appearance, and differences. It was also described as “eliminating physical, policy, and attitude barriers that make participation inaccessible to people with disability, disadvantage, etc.,” and as supporting, respecting, treating, welcoming, and accepting everyone. Respondents stated that blending all voices and input is meaningful for inclusion and belonging. They mentioned that it is vital to encourage others to be part of the conversation and to verify they have access to all information with complete transparency. Inclusion also means ensuring that no one feels left out and that all have equal representation. Inclusion requires a shared commitment to kindness and acceptance in all cultures. Respondents stated that everyone should be given access to participate. For example, it would be helpful to have fair hiring, promotions, and involvement using the bottom-up approach so not just the head of a group is making all the decisions. Additionally, inclusion means providing equal access to valuable resources to groups that might already be excluded or marginalized. Below is a world cloud depicting the major themes of the definition of inclusion.

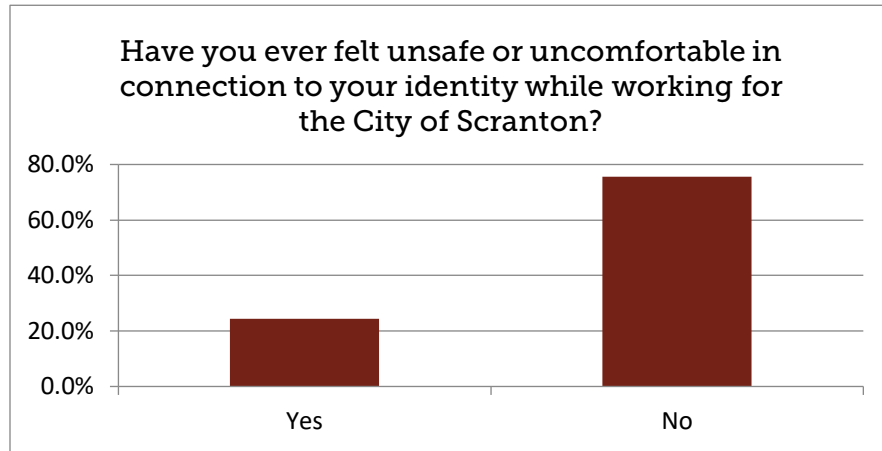


Employees were asked to describe themselves. Below is a word cloud representing the diversity of responses from City employees. While most participants identified as white, straight, and female or male, there was diverse representation, as depicted in the word cloud below, regarding race, ethnicity, religion, sexuality, and gender identity.



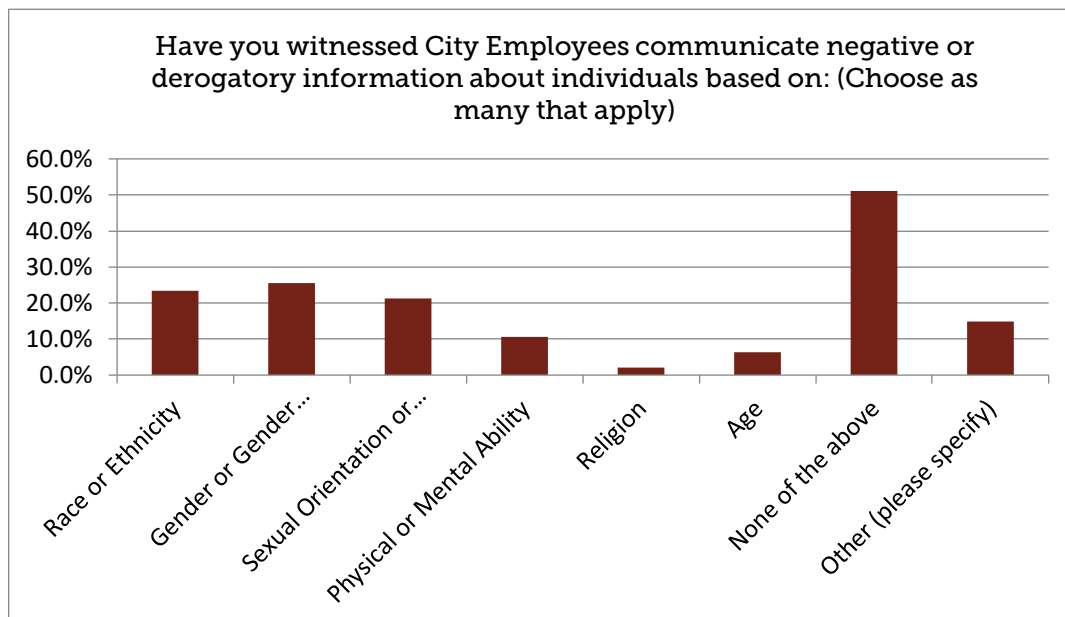
Employees were also asked what value they felt the City of Scranton, as an employer, would gain from focusing on the issues of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion. Respondents described a better reflection of various identities to allow for broader positive cooperation of the public, and to allow for council or the administration to identify needs of the under-deserved and decide best ways to allocate funds. Focusing on these issues will bring a wide range of talent and training, add outreach opportunities for diverse communities, create inclusive and enjoyable work environments for people of all backgrounds, and create more accountability and better representation. Further, the city will gain an understanding of the issues, wants, and needs of its citizens while receiving equal input, transparency, and the constant communication of information. Many respondents wrote that the workforce would become more diverse, which could lead to equitable policies and procedures to show empowerment of all citizens with less discrimination and harassment. All these voices will generate more ideas so that goals will be reached quickly. The city will also gain professionalism and adaptability, increased movement from young citizens, authenticity and trust in government, growth in quality of life and culture, fresh perspectives and ideas, attainable goals, and a government that serves all citizens and neighborhoods. Focusing on these issues will create a happier work environment, increase productivity, and contribute to knowledge about how to speak to, respect, consider, and understand various perspectives. Making the city more enticing is essential as the population is constantly changing. One respondent indicated that workplace departments should not allow or tolerate bullying. Lastly, another respondent communicated that all residents deserve equal chances and opportunities to find work and live, so allowing people to live outside the city will attract diverse employees.

When employees were asked if they have ever felt unsafe or uncomfortable in connection to their identities while working in the City of Scranton, 24.49 percent indicated ‘yes.’

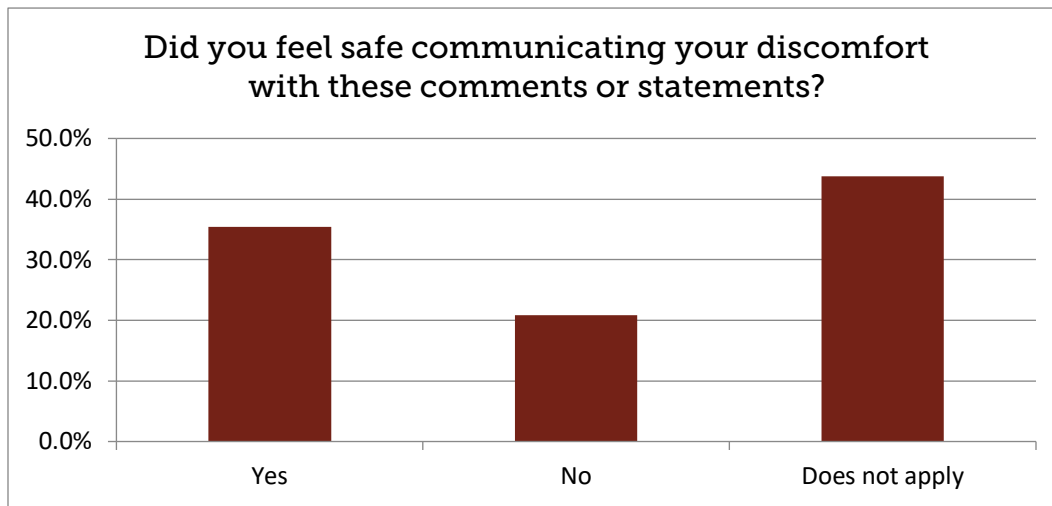


Just over 25 percent of employees indicated that they have witnessed City employees communicate negative or derogatory information about individuals based on their gender or gender identification. Slightly over 23 percent said they witnessed City employees communicate negative or derogatory information about individuals based on race or ethnicity. Just over 21 percent have witnessed City employees communicate negative or derogatory information about individuals based on sexual or relationship orientation.

Almost 11 percent witnessed City employees communicate negative or derogatory information about individuals based on physical or mental ability. Just over six percent indicated they have witnessed City employees communicate negative or derogatory information about individuals based on their age. Approximately two percent have witnessed City employees communicate negative or derogatory information about individuals based on their religion. The majority indicating “other offered comments about not being native to Scranton, comments based on perceived ability or competence, and identity.



When employees were asked if they felt safe communicating their discomfort about these comments or statements, 35.42 percent indicated 'yes,' and 20.83 percent stated 'no.' The rest of the respondents chose 'Does not apply.'

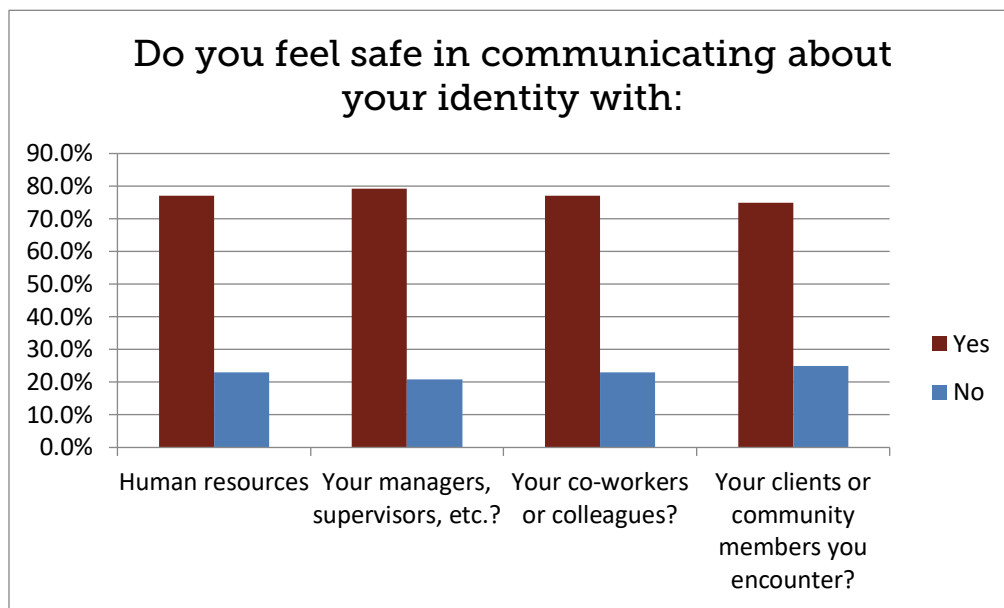


Employees were asked if they had ever experienced discrimination based on one or more aspects of their identities while working for the City of Scranton. The majority of respondents have not experienced such discrimination while working for the city. One respondent has not worked long enough in the area to know if there has been discrimination and others are not aware of any instances. Some respondents have experienced discrimination because of their sex, such as a supervisor making sexist and rude remarks even around other employees. Another respondent has faced ageism as they were passed over for a promotion and was labeled as an “outsider” because they were not born in this city. Instead of facing discrimination in the workplace, one respondent mentioned a public backlash. A police officer indicated they face discrimination each day but accepts that it comes with the position and mentioned even though society is good, they mostly face the bad parts. Another individual has dealt with angry individuals during discussions on residency in the city. Another respondent does not live in Pennsylvania and only comes for work but feels welcomed.

Survey participants were then asked if they were aware of others who have faced discrimination, harassment, or negative interactions with their self-identification. Overall, a slight majority responded they were not aware of others who have faced discrimination, harassment, or negative interactions in connection with their self-identification. Some respondents who answered 'yes' explained that six years ago, they witnessed corporals saying negative phrases about African Americans and a Sergeant who spoke harshly about a lesbian subordinate, and now both are not employed. Other respondents know members of the LGBTQ community have faced issues, employees have continuously made racist comments about other city employees, and employees in their workplaces have faced harassment. Additionally, a respondent pointed out the department they work at is not genuinely diverse and wants to better address the female workers' needs. Women-identifying staffers have also faced issues and microaggressions in other workplace environments. For instance, the respondent witnesses people being interrupted, talked down to, judged about how they could maintain a full-time job while caring for

children, and called “young lady.” Furthermore, city staff who have the right intentions with their actions still struggle to use the correct pronouns.

Employees were asked to indicate whether they feel safe communicating about their identities at work. Most employees feel safe regarding communication with human resources, their managers, co-workers, and clients. In each of those areas, however, approximately 20 to 25 percent indicated that they do not feel safe communicating about their identities in the work environment.



Employees were asked to describe what would need to change for them to feel safe communicating their needs around their identities to human resources, their managers, coworkers, clients, etc. In response, they referenced trust, a more personable and approachable environment, and desire for others to know how to handle certain situations appropriately. They also said they want human resources to be more organized, supportive, and responsive to inquiries. They would like for employees to be allowed to live outside the City of Scranton as well. Respondents then stated that the changes they want to see for employers/managers/supervisors include a trusting and confidential or anonymous reporting system, equal treatment of employees, regard for employees' best interests, and efforts for more team interactions and bonding with superiors. Employees explained that they also need to eliminate the fear of reprisal and retaliation, hire managers and directors who know what to do, allow employees to live outside the city, and handle disputes between the parties involved first before sharing with others. Changes that should be made to colleague behaviors surrounding respondents' identities involve trust, open-mindedness, and restraint from retaliation and bullying. Coworkers and colleagues should also have others' best interests in mind and share their disapprovals kindly. Lastly, clients and community members in the area should be trusting, kind, and respectful. One person wants to know that even the mayor's office supports them in being transparent and honest about their identity. Others indicated that their identities are none of the clients' and community members' business, understanding diversity is beneficial, and “nothing can be changed unless people change their perspective on race/gender/sexual orientation.”

Employees were asked to describe whether they believe barriers exist in the City of Scranton as an employer, which hinder equity, diversity, and inclusivity for all who work for them. One respondent agreed there are no barriers that exist and explained that they had seen testing pools in their civil service exams, and some noted progress in the city to become equitable, diverse, and inclusive. Although many individuals do not believe barriers exist in the city as an employer, those who agree stated that public views can be divisive and discouraging to employees who deal with them. Some members of the public have been racist and prejudicial to the LGBTQ community, but such attitudes have improved in recent years.

Other identified barriers consist of residency and living restrictions, nepotism, local cultural expectations (the idea that one must come from a specific background and know others to obtain a job), lack of minority representation, lack of diversity in the workforce, and preconceived conceptions and microaggressions about diverse populations. Additional challenges include a lack of communication and cooperation, inability to move to higher positions in occupations, confidentiality issues, and inability to report equal opportunity problems. It would help if the city dropped the residency clause so citizens don't feel forced to live in Scranton. Another city employee suggested that citizens should not feel like they must live in city limits in order to qualify for positions that could benefit their home lives and mental health. Respondents added that removing the residency requirement would facilitate equity and enable diverse populations to work and contribute to the city. Also, a respondent stated that employees should have diversity, equity, and inclusivity training and learn how to foster an environment that is welcoming to LGBTQ+ coworkers, and that city documents should be rewritten to remove gendered language. Employees said all parts of the community should be represented in employee recruitment efforts.

Finally, employees were asked what else they would like to share about the City of Scranton as an employer as it moves forward with its equity plan. One respondent indicated that the equity plan is progressive and imperative to the area's success. Many individuals would like the City of Scranton to have monthly or frequent required training from employers, an equal input/bottom-up approach in the workforce, open communication of information with no last-minute surprises, removal of the residency clause, commitment to hiring the best and qualified employees for the job regardless of their identities, and willingness "stay the path and resist the status quo." They also said the city should be bold and show support, housing should not start at a full rate, and that individuals should be held accountable through defined expectations. They indicated that people in some city positions only look out for themselves, so all employees should be consulted about plans to ensure that everyone is comfortable prior to implementation of action. Ageism in the workplace and the community affects how people are treated as well. One individual noted that rooming houses should not be shut down, and that officials should focus on cleaning bedbugs and provide drug treatments and urgent care centers within walking distance. They also noted that removing the rule of three will show that employers believe in their workers and won't deny employment or skip promotions without explanation. Many added that they should not be told where to live due to their careers, so they could feel like they chose to serve and protect Scranton. Individuals want to make sure this equity plan is not forgotten because leadership sometimes does not follow through with promises; one person mentioned the new administration is moving in the right direction and should work with others to achieve goals.

Qualitative Interview Analysis

The process of community interviews is of as equal importance as the resulting analysis and recommendations. Narratives from the community members provide valuable insight into what is working or not working in the City, and which inequities are at play. To truly understand what the members of the City of Scranton need, the voices of community members must be included in processes. Their lived experiences, including specific barriers and disparities, should be considered when addressing access and opportunities. These interviews should be used as an accountability tool when tackling community needs and community decision-making.

What follows is a synthesis of the experiences, beliefs, thoughts, and attitudes detailed throughout the interviews, with recommendations to follow. The interviews spanned 20 organizations and 22 participants from a diverse range of backgrounds. The word cloud below is a depiction of the identities represented throughout the interview process.

A word cloud is a visual representation of words that highlights words or phrases used in response to a question. In this case, the word cloud below is a depiction of the various identities volunteered by participants throughout the interview process. Most participants described themselves as Caucasian or white, male or female, and straight. Across the interviews, though, there was representation from various races, ethnicities, religions, and gender and sexual identities. Among those that identified as Caucasian or white and male or female, they are leaders of organizations that serve and support diverse groups of community members with regard to socio-economic status, race, ethnicity, religion, ability, gender, and sexual identity.



While some participants consider themselves community leaders for those who share similar self-identity, most consider themselves community leaders, mentors, and voices for those within the communities they serve.

Due to the leadership positions of the participants, most have worked to improve issues connected to equity, diversity, and inclusion within their self-identified communities or the communities they serve through their work.

The majority of participants expressed experiencing some type of discrimination, unfairness, or negative or adverse treatment based on one or more aspects of their backgrounds. Participants discussed discrimination based on sexuality, gender, race, ethnicity, religion, language barriers, and age. Most participants pointed out discrimination based on race, gender, and sexual identity.

Many participants also reported knowledge of others who have experienced discrimination, unfairness, negativity, or adverse treatment based on one or more aspects of their backgrounds.



Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

Participants were asked to provide their personal definitions of diversity, equity, and inclusion and what those words mean to them. Although each definition was different and personal to each participant, common themes emerged from the comments. Below are examples of responses from a variety of participants.

Diversity

Participants generally agreed that diversity encompasses respect for individuals, their different backgrounds, various intersections of people, lived experiences, and different perspectives. Below is a sample of how individuals described diversity.

- “Respecting the various backgrounds that everyone comes from.”
- “Intersections of people - Everyone's experiences, everyone's background, everybody's knowledge.”
- “The various degrees of lived experiences of people whose ideas or thoughts can shape the discussion.”
- “Having different lived experiences, places, events, celebrations in their lives. That you don't look exactly like the person sitting right next to you.”
- “The differences in how each of us lives our lives are a little different.”
- “Multiple viewpoints and perspectives.”
- “The unique differences you bring to the table....even within one group, there's so many different people.”
- “Diversity is everyone not being exactly the same, having different viewpoints, coming from different backgrounds, different ethnic groups, different racial groups, different genders.”
- “Sharing all your rich expertise and viewpoints to contribute to a broader society, a stronger society.”
- “Respect, awareness.”
- “Giving the community a chance to have representation, whether that be from race or sexual orientation, or ethnicity.”

It is important to note that the definition for the majority of participants lacked the inclusion of ability, physical, intellectual, and age, other than those participants who deal directly with or identify with those populations.

Equity

Participants all had a similar vision of equity and differentiated equity from equality. Most participants described equity as having access to the necessary resources and providing people with what they need in terms of resources based on where they are at. Below is a sample of how individuals described equity.

- “Making sure that everyone has what they need unique to their situation.”
- “We all come to the table with different experiences, different backgrounds, and different needs. So, I think equity is making sure we're meeting people where they are and providing services on that level.”
- “All of our students should have access to the same resources. Some students have a lot more social currency than others (ex., Internships, and connections). Other students don't have that. At the college, really look for those gaps in the students and try to bridge that gap.” (*Academic representative*)
- “Understanding that people have different needs at different times...it's different than equality.”
- “Giving, allowing, or finding accommodations for individuals or groups of people when they need it and the types of things they need versus giving everybody the same thing at the same time.”
- “For me, it is that an individual has the right to achieve, to obtain healthcare in the way they would like to receive care...that the level of care across the spectrum is consistent so that evidence-based practice applications, what we do, and how we do it is a consistent approach...and care is delivered without bias.”
- “It's not just access to the same resources. It's using those resources, feeling like you have a right to use the same resources as somebody else. And not feeling or not being made to feel as if you are a burden on society or the City.”
- “Identifying barriers to people having opportunities....who's being left behind...who needs a helping hand to get access to the same opportunities that others may have.”
- “Diversity and inclusion together can lead to equity.”
- “Equity is recognizing that there are issues and challenges and things that impact various individuals....their background and things in history that caused people to not always be on the same level playing field, no matter what they do and where they started from.”
- “Places, spaces, and opportunities are available to everybody...and not only available but that people feel comfortable participating.”
- “Giving people the resources that they need. Whether that is the same resources that you have or more in order to succeed or get to the same playing field as anyone else.”
- “By meeting people where they are.”

Inclusion

Participants all had a similar view of inclusion in that it means being respectful and intentional in their actions, having representation, and bringing people together from all backgrounds. Below is a sample of how individuals described diversity.

- “Room for everyone at the table.”
- “Trying to bring in people that don't share the same background, don't have the same experiences...really giving other communities a chance to have representation, whether that be from race or sexual orientation, or ethnicity.”
- “Feeling and creating a space that feels safe and welcoming where people can speak freely and have the same privileges and rights.”

- “Being respectful and welcoming people to the table...making sure people can be their true selves and that they’re safe...thriving in the community.”
- “Actively making sure that all voices are represented at the table...holding space for voices that are missing and gathering representation for those voices.”
- “Embracing...listening...seeing their value, even if they are a little different or have a different opinion.”
- “Opening the door and saying ‘everybody out there, come in.’”
- “Being intentional.”
- “Inclusion is kind of an action verb...how do you look at inclusion in an intentional way, an action-oriented way when you’re looking at issues of diversity...who isn’t represented...who’s being left behind...who needs an opportunity...and what are we going to do about it? What is the action associated with making sure people are including and have those opportunities.”
- “Inclusion really means having a valuable and meaningful place at the table, not just having a presence, but having a meaningful presence and being able to participate in a meaningful way.
- “Inclusion means actively proactively seeking opportunities...strategies to intentionally make sure that people of diverse communities, backgrounds, abilities, races, and genders at the table are part of the broader community, the broader goal, the broader strategy, whether it means bringing them to your table, whether it means going to their table.”

The participants generally agreed that the City of Scranton is open to concerns shared by their community and/or affiliations. Participants acknowledged the current administration’s effort to “seek voices from all of Scranton and reach out to different community members...holding space,” and noted that “Scranton has definitely evolved.” Another participant cited a “significant shift,” adding that “the current administration is very open-minded, and looking for opportunities to be more inclusive, champion diversity, and have equity at the forefront of the City’s efforts.”

Some participants expressed that they are not aware of specific opportunities to provide feedback. Another participant added that “opportunities for conversation and having a dialogue are always good...Education and understanding are what can combat discrimination and phobias that people may carry with them.”

Another participant noted that there are pockets of communities that are overlooked, such as the South Asian community, and that if “there are outlets that they could be reached to gain their opinion, I feel like they might be responsive.”

The Value of Focusing on DEI

Participants were asked what value the City of Scranton will gain by focusing on diversity, equity, and inclusion issues. All participants agreed that there is some value, whether it be a more unified community, economic benefit, or increased safety.

In particular, participants felt it is important to create relationships so that the community can grow and become a model for the surrounding areas. One participant is optimistic that Mayor Cagnetti has already reached out to the Black and Hispanic communities.

Participants expressed that if the City of Scranton successfully creates a diverse, equitable, and inclusive government, a more loving community will result. Engagement from people of different backgrounds, perspectives, and genders will contribute to the greater good and ultimately lead to a positive vision of the City.

“I THINK IT WILL HELP THE CITY BECOME A THRIVING AND ROBUST COMMUNITY FOR THE FUTURE WHERE PEOPLE WANT TO LIVE AND WORK AND RAISE FAMILIES AND GATHER, KNOWING THAT THEY ARE WELCOMED AND ACCEPTED...[THE CITY] WILL BLOSSOM FOR MORE PEOPLE TO STAY OR MORE PEOPLE TO COME IN.”

One participant explained that the role of the city government is to advance opportunities for people to live, work, and play in a safe and affordable place – and that there is a lot to be gained from pursuing and including voices from everyone who lives in the City.

Most participants noted that there would be a tremendous economic benefit to pursuing issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion. The outcomes could include greater equity concerning incomes, jobs, and opportunities, with a participant describing the concept as “economic fairness.”

Another economic benefit would involve an image of the City of Scranton as a desirable place to live if it is regarded as diverse and welcoming, ultimately attracting more people and businesses. Participants noted that focusing on DEI would create a “stronger, more advanced Scranton,” a “stronger economy,” create a stronger “cultural center,” and create a “more engaged civic community, a feeling that people are welcome, that the people, and a government that is more representative of the people it serves.” One participant offered that an equitable and diverse community “creates more opportunity for its members and trickles into a safer and respectful community.”

Most participants indicated that the City has improved in terms of building a diverse, equitable, and inclusive place. Many noted that the current administration is doing a better job than any in the past and is taking the right steps. They mentioned that there are other ways to improve, however, and that the City does not have a choice but to do so. The administration and community have to learn and grow.

“THERE’S A LONG ROAD TO GO BECAUSE THERE’S A LONG-STANDING HISTORY OF NOT BEING VERY INTENTIONAL AND INCLUSIVE. AND SO, IT’S A PROCESS THAT NEEDS TO TRULY BE GIVEN TIME TO GO THROUGH....I THINK THE INTENT IS THERE. I THINK THE WILL IS THERE TO MOVE IN THAT DIRECTION. THERE’S GOING TO BE THE NEED FOR RELATIONSHIPS TO BE BUILT AND THAT’S GOING TO TAKE TIME, TO GET PEOPLE TO TRUST THAT THERE’S AN OPENNESS AND A WILLINGNESS TO INCLUDE ALL DIFFERENT TYPES OF VOICES.”

Several participants expressed that Mayor Cagnetti is a strong advocate for improving equity, diversity, and inclusion. Others stated that what the City is doing in terms of DEI “could be a little louder.” When participants were asked if they feel that the City of Scranton values diversity, most answered affirmatively. As far as the community is concerned, there is an improvement, and “people are starting to be a little more open-minded.” Nonetheless, one participant stated that “those that traditionally lived here are frightened of those who are different and diverse.” Others noted that the City has had more discussions and has been making “informed decisions” with regard to DEI.

Participants noted that although the administration values diversity, “the area can sometimes be a little slow to change based on demographics and age.” Another participant indicated, “If there were more awareness [about diversity, equity, and inclusion], then I think there would be a willingness.”

“AS IN ANY SMALL TO MEDIUM LEGACY CITY, PEOPLE NEED TO EMBRACE POSITIVE CHANGE.”

In addition, a participant expressed that they feel “key parts of the administration value diversity, but whether or not everyone does is another question.” Others noted that seeing representation working within City Hall has been “very positive.”

Another participant noted that they “think the [City] values diversity...I think the City themselves are okay with diversity...but I don’t think the governing body is 100 percent completely ready for change...I think they value the culture. I think the city is okay with diversity, but I don't think the governing body is completely 100% ready for change. I'm sure having a woman as mayor has been a big step for everyone. It's still a struggle, from what I'm hearing.”

One participant stated, "I feel like the people who are leaving are leaving because it's not as diverse as it should be. So, when young people leave, they're leaving for more culture, they're going to a bigger city." Noting the economic impact of diversity, logic follows that the more the City includes culture and increases diversity, the more people will stay, which will strengthen the economy.

When participants were asked if they feel that the City of Scranton encourages inclusivity, participants' responses were mixed, with several noting “Yes and no,” “Yes, better than before,” and “Yes, in some regards.”

“I THINK LOCAL POLITICS COULD BE A MORE DIVERSE PLACE...THAT WOULD BE NICE...IT'S KIND OF ENTRENCHED IN THAT VERY OLD, WHITE KIND OF TRADITION...SO THAT'S AN AREA THAT COULD DEFINITELY IMPROVE.”

Academic representatives generally feel that inclusivity will grow from the colleges, and “if those people decide to stay in the city, it's going to spill out of our colleges, if our colleges are promoting that atmosphere or equity and inclusion.”

Participants did note that the City does a good job of recognizing events, such as “black history month and pride month, and flying flags at City Hall.”

Another noted, “I think there's a lot of individual effort, rather than the City itself doing a lot of that...I still cannot imagine if I ever had a family of my own, raising my own kids in the City because I feel like it would be very narrow in the sense of just what I've seen from other diverse and inclusive cities...it would not be fair for my future kids to not have the same experiences as other people who are living somewhere else would.”

One participant expressed that they believe the City encourages inclusivity, and that “inclusivity is something that is an effort and inclusivity can mean disability inclusivity. It can mean just getting people comfortable that their voices are recognized” and that “to implement it so that people feel encouraged, and what that looks like is challenging.”

Another participant noted that the City encourages inclusivity, but it “could be louder for the rest of the community,” and one participant stated that “there’s a little bit more that needs to be done among some other populations within the City.”

Individuals also generally felt that the City of Scranton promotes equity but that there are areas where equity could be bolstered. One person stated that “we see a lot of insecurities related to that food. Insecurity from the socio-economic determinants of health perspective, we do see many challenges. You know, can't afford a car seat, or it's a choice between medication and food.”

Another participant stated, "I think there is a movement to promote equity for all of the residents in the City, and that happens in terms of open communication, removing language barriers....reaching out to the Spanish-speaking communities....I think it is promising....the more intentional the City government can be about reaching those people and those populations and removing barriers, I think we're going to continue on this path."

One participant noted, “I think there’s an effort being made, but I don’t know how intentional it is....I think the City definitely promotes equity and wants to promote equity....it comes back to making sure that people are engaged that represent diverse communities....to make sure that those voices are integral in the planning of these things...so, as long as that’s part of the goal and is being accomplished, I think they’re promoting equity.”

Most participants identified transportation as an equity issue in the City. Transportation will be discussed separately below, and in the Recommendations section.

With regard to promoting equity, one participant expressed, “I do think that they face challenges from voices that don't truly understand what equity is. I don't think we're in any way as a city unique in that respect; it's a constant educational effort to educate people about what equity is and that certain barriers exist that prevent people from getting to the point that there is true equity.” Another participant stated that “promoting [equity] and doing it may be two different things...I’m not saying they don’t do it, but do I see outward signs? I’m not saying it’s not done internally.”

City-Wide Experiences

In the neighborhood where you live

Most participants indicated that they feel safe and supported regarding their identities and being their authentic selves in their neighborhoods. Several noted that they also understand their privilege and the neighborhoods where they live. Others indicated that they live in a community with others who share a similar self-identity and that it is a “comfort zone” for them.

Some participants indicated that it would be helpful to have conversations within communities and have law enforcement go out and make connections with people living in the neighborhoods, letting community members know law enforcement is there to help in any way, noting that doing so “could go a long way with communities.”

Two participants mentioned the need for greater public awareness of situations in schools, such as bullying, stating that “it’s still happening on such a severe level” and “no one does anything about it...no one tries to fix the situation or make it better prior to anything happening to the child...And I think that it’s shocking and alarming when we hear these stories because you have these adults, who are supposed to be trusted with these parents’ kids. And when situations like this happen, and they try to make it

better, they're kind of brushed off in a way in that their situations are not taken seriously at all...and [the community] never even knows it has happened within the schools [referring to a child hurting themselves or committing suicide].

In the City of Scranton, overall

Generally, participants feel safe and supported with regard to their identities in the City overall. Still, participants noted, "hearing stories of people who have been verbally harassed or taken advantage of because of the way they look or because they might not speak English very well...there are pockets that are a little uncomfortable."

In connection with law enforcement or public safety

Overall, most participants felt safe in connection with law enforcement or public safety and expressed that they have positive relationships with law enforcement, but several described negative encounters with law enforcement in the communities that they serve.

One academic representative noted that among the Black and Latino students, "there is a lack of trust, and it's not only with the City of Scranton police department, but it's also with our own [school] police department." They explained that "additional outreach to students from the Scranton police department may be helpful," and noted that some students who report sexual harassment or sexual assault "don't necessarily feel heard...this is what our students are perceiving."

"OUR KIDS HAVE NO LOVE LOST FOR THE POLICE. THEY DON'T CALL THEM IF THEY NEED HELP BECAUSE THEY DON'T BELIEVE THAT THEY'RE GOING TO GET SERVICE. THEY DON'T BELIEVE THAT THEY'RE GOING TO GET TREATED RESPECTFULLY."

The academic representative also spoke to experiences of Latinx males and females, indicating that they have "felt targeted when they are downtown, or they have been pulled over." Another academic representative included an example of a comment by a law enforcement member toward them - "You don't look, Brown, you look Italian."

In terms of seeking community support services

The majority of participants indicated they feel safe and supported regarding their identities in terms of seeking community support services. A few noted that they could not speak to this because they have not had to seek community support services. Some participants did note there are community members who have difficulty seeking and navigating community support services.

Some participants noted that community members will be hesitant to seek resources if they are not comfortable or have a fear of stereotyping, and "maybe won't get the resources even if a free resource is available."

"IF YOU KNOW THE LANGUAGE, IF YOU DON'T HAVE ANY OTHER BARRIERS, IF YOU HAVE TRANSPORTATION, YOU CAN JUST GO RIGHT TO THE RESOURCE TO GET WHAT YOU NEED, BUT THERE'S A LOT OF PIECES THAT ARE MISSING IN ORDER FOR SOMEBODY TO GET THOSE RESOURCES."

Additionally, participants mentioned that new immigrant communities struggle with these connections and face challenges with language barriers.

In obtaining housing, utilities, or public services

Most participants expressed that they feel safe and supported when obtaining housing, utilities, or public services, but participants also described negative experiences and challenges of those within the communities that they serve. According to one person, for example, “I’ve heard individual stories of people feeling that they were being discriminated against and the landlords would not rent to them...it is a major situation across different groups, including black, indigenous people of color, whether its immigrants, or whether it’s people returning from prison.”

A participant who identifies as Indian stated, “I don’t think my parents ever even really understood the Housing Authority, how can they help you. Public Works, same thing...not a lot of people know what’s available to them until you seek it out. It speaks to the barriers of housing, and if you don’t understand certain things, you don’t get them.”

In patronizing a business or in attending a public event

The majority of participants indicated they feel safe and supported with regard to their identities when patronizing businesses and attending public events. A few that stated that their sense of security depends on the business or event. One participant described the experiences of students they serve, noting that there have been a couple of bars and restaurants where people reported experienced discrimination.

In connection to transportation or travel

Several participants stated that they could not speak to issues of transportation or travel because they do not use public transportation, but most noted that there is room for improvement with regard to transportation and feeling safe. One interviewee said, “transportation has key equity issues at its core.” Transportation is discussed in greater detail below with regard to issues and recommendations.

In obtaining work or seeking employment

Nearly all participants indicated that they feel safe and supported, with a few indicating that their sense of security depends on the job and/or business at hand.

Public Safety

While some agreed that their neighborhoods and the City of Scranton overall have the conditions needed to be safe, most offered alternative thoughts and had various suggestions, which are listed below.

Some participants would like to see more funding for social programs, which they believe will in turn reduce crime and create a safer community. According to one, “I would like to see funding go towards social programs, reducing poverty and homelessness and food insecurity. So, I would never want to see more policing, but think if the city was to spend more on those kinds of things, I think that would ultimately create a safer environment, where we may not need to rely on the police for certain aspects of public safety, and public health, and those kinds of scenarios.”

Academic representatives noted that not all students of color feel safe in the City of Scranton. Academic representatives also suggested developing trust and relationships with minorities while they are children and intentionally creating opportunities for this to occur. Another participant noted that there is a fear of law enforcement among many children of color.

Several participants referenced the generational cycle of individuals living in public housing, dealing with domestic violence and crime, and lacking opportunities to break out of the cycle.

One participant noted regarding the older population of Scranton, that law enforcement is not educated on areas such as dementia or mental health and does not grasp why an older person might pull a fire alarm or do something they should not do. They stated that the older populations' interactions with law enforcement are "not always the best."

Other participants confirmed that they are aware of others who do not feel safe in the community because they have experienced discrimination due to skin color, sexuality, race, or sexual orientation. Some participants know people are afraid to be themselves and feel safe only in numbers. Others indicated that they do not necessarily feel safe because of illegal activities they have witnessed, such as drug dealing in neighborhoods.



"I THINK THERE'S PROBABLY STILL PLACES WHERE PEOPLE DON'T FEEL COMFORTABLE IN THEIR OWN SKIN WALKING DOWN THE STREET OR SPEAKING THEIR NATIVE LANGUAGE. I THINK THERE'S SOME WORK FOR THEM TO FEEL SUPPORTED AND SAFE."

One participant offered that the prison population returning to the community does not always feel safe, and that it is crucial to create welcoming environments. People exiting prison often face challenges regarding lack of interpersonal relationship skills and access to employment.

Participants agreed that building and supporting relationships between the community and law enforcement is essential, some noting that public safety in the nation is challenged.

Community Resources

Interview participants generally agreed that access to community resources could be more equitable. Some participants agreed that there is room for more social programs, while others said that Scranton is rich in resources, but there is not enough knowledge about what they are and how to access them.

Other participants added that there is need for services to the elderly population, and specifically more community involvement with the older populations. Participants added that it would be beneficial to educate the older populations about the resources are available to them in terms of extra assistance or public transportation.



"I CAN'T IMAGINE THAT I COULD EVER SAY YES, THERE'S EQUITABLE ACCESS TO COMMUNITY RESOURCES. I THINK THAT PEOPLE DON'T ACKNOWLEDGE THAT EQUITY ISSUES EXIST AND NEED WORK. SO, I THINK THERE'S ALWAYS AN EFFORT THAT NEEDS TO BE MADE IN THAT."

One participant suggested that there should be a way, other than 911, to contact somebody if they have a problem or an issue in their neighborhood and need to have a conversation about why they are concerned.

Several participants also added that support within the schools should be bolstered, and community resources for bullying outside the school system should be available where students and parents can go for help.

Participants also indicated a need to integrate the immigrant population into the community, by helping them understand what resources are available and connecting them with resources that would benefit them. Additionally, participants noted necessity for interpreters within communities that have language barriers in order to get messages across “correctly and impactfully.”

Zoning and Land Use Practices

Interview participants were also asked about zoning and land use practices in the City of Scranton, and whether they believe the practices are equitable. Most participants indicated that they were not familiar enough with the City's zoning and land use practices to comment, but others did have thoughts on the subject.

“RESOURCES NEED TO BE DIRECTED STRATEGICALLY AND INNOVATIVELY TO DIVERSE COMMUNITIES.”

One participant noted that people often use racially coded language when talking about the West Side and South Side and often say that they are dangerous neighborhoods, with the implication being that it is not a majority white area and unsafe as a result. They said, “we see the effects of housing availability of affordable housing; redlining is reflected in those attitudes.” When people have assumptions about an area of town, there are “long-reaching effects with regard to policies and transportation.”

“I ALWAYS FEEL LIKE IT’S HARD FOR THOSE NON-TRADITIONAL ISSUES TO GET RECOGNIZED WITH ZONING.”

Another participant noted zoning issues concerning the need for a homeless shelter, indicating that “as many times as the City tries to make progress, often our neighbors just will not let it happen. Wilkes-Barre does a better job of homelessness than other cities.”


One participant spoke about regional land use, noting that, “There definitely needs to be updated zoning and land use policies in the City. I think there's been an effort for a long time to make the city part of a larger regional land use plan, and the City has not gotten there. I believe that that is something that needs to be addressed.”

Participants discussed zoning and land use concerning housing equity. One participant stated, “I believe we have work to do in making sure that additional development takes housing equity and issues of race into account. Displacement and gentrification can be a considerable outcome of that. While we need to encourage economic advancement and development, those intentional efforts have to be in place to make sure that zoning is reflective of displacement and gentrification in the future.” Adding that, the City needs to look at other models in other regions that have addressed these issues before development to ensure development remains as equitable as possible.

Transportation

Interview participants were asked to discuss whether they believe the COLTS bus service in the City of Scranton is equitable. The majority of participants agreed that the COLTS bus service is not equitable. Anecdotes offered by the participants are included below.

The majority of participants spoke about the limited availability of the COLTS bus service, one participant noting that the people who need it most have limited use of it for shopping and employment. “They need to have bus service until midnight so people can get jobs and be able to get home after work. If you miss one bus, it’s a whole hour before another bus comes by. And in some places, they don’t even have bus service.”



“THERE’S DEFINITELY EQUITY LACKING ALL AROUND BECAUSE REALLY THIS IS THE ONLY OPTION FOR PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION. THERE ARE NOT ENOUGH ROUTES, STOPS, AND TIMES OF SERVICE.”

Participants noted challenges of working certain jobs due to scheduling and timing of the routes. This also impacts other issues related to family and childcare. One person brought up the dignity issue of waiting for the bus, being cognizant of appropriate bus shelters that make it comfortable for people, and ensuring there is Wi-Fi on buses “so that people can at least accomplish other things while they are waiting.”

A participant pointed out that schedules are difficult to locate, while academic representatives noted that transportation is a huge issue for students and that students could be better served if they had better access to bussing. There are not enough routes to meet peoples’ needs. One interview participant noted that when they started college, they had no way to get to their university, so they had to rely on a bus, but there was no real stop or sidewalk, and they had to walk the rest of the way to campus. Another academic representative reported that they buy a good amount of bus passes for their students because they have no way to get to campus, but it does not go that far.

Participants offered that additional research needs to be completed regarding the bus system to determine if it is convenient and affordable to be more helpful for secondary and post-secondary students as well as other specific age groups that use public transportation. Other thoughts included adding routes and extending hours that would increase usage or facilitate better service for public transportation users.

City Planning, Purchasing, Procurement, and Contracting

When interview participants were asked if they thought the City does enough to achieve equity through City planning, purchasing, procurement, and contracting, most participants indicated that they were not sure and could not speak to this topic.

The few who did address this topic offered that there could be more room for transparency, especially around process and planning, noting that people should know what's happening, what is on the City's agenda, and have opportunity for public comments and input around policies and plans. They do not believe this information is widely published. Another participant offered that when announcements are made with regard to the opportunity for public comments, the announcement is likely in a newspaper that has paid subscribers.

Information Resources

Participants were asked to comment on whether they believe that people in the City of Scranton have equitable access to quality information. Generally, participants agreed that there is equitable access, but not without hurdles that need to be addressed.

Interview participants reported that the community would be better served if more informational sources were presented in Spanish and other languages representative of people in the City, ultimately improving access.


Concerning access to computers and the internet, participants noted that "those who are able to afford better data plans have better access and opportunities than those who don't and are reliant on libraries or other public places with Wi-Fi." The necessity of having to travel to the public library to use a computer is connected to other issues, including the availability of public transportation to a library and understanding of how to access information on the internet.



"I DON'T THINK THAT THERE IS AN EQUITABLE DISTRIBUTION OF PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENTS."

Community Collaboration

Every participant throughout the interviews indicated that they are already encouraged to support the City of Scranton in working toward an equitable, accessible, and diverse City. It was important to the participants that the City's DEI efforts align with their organization's values and priorities and that the City take the time to understand the various diverse agencies and communities.



"I THINK THE NUMBER ONE THING FOR DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION TO BE SUCCESSFUL IS PEOPLE NEED TO MEET OTHER PEOPLE THAT AREN'T LIKE THEM. I THINK WE ALL GET TRAPPED IN OUR OWN BUBBLE, AND THAT'S WHERE WE'RE COMFORTABLE. AND I THINK IT WE COULD PUSH PEOPLE OUT INTO THESE EVENTS AND INTO THESE ORGANIZATIONS WHERE THEY CAN MEET OTHER PEOPLE, I THINK THAT WOULD BE A HUGE STEP."

Academic representatives added that they would like to see opportunities for their diverse college communities to volunteer at city events and participate in service projects that get the students, staff, and faculty in the community.

Participants noted that including a diverse population in the process is important and that just having allies is not enough. The participants all noted that the only barrier to collaboration is structural – a lack of time and staff.

Equity Commission

Overall, people were interested in participating in the Equity Commission, depending on what is involved with regard to commitments and schedules. Participants added that the Commission should be mindful of the time and modality of meetings and have a remote option for meetings. Some participants also offered additional names as suggestions for participation in the Equity Commission. This list will be provided as a separate document.

National Research – Evidence-Based Programs and Case Studies

Below is a catalog of evidence-based programs and case studies that have addressed the promotion of diversity, equity, and inclusion in a variety of ways. Each is unique and tailored to the specific needs of each community.

Washington State- The **Washington State Office of Equity** was formed with the passage of [E2SHB 1783](#) in 2020. The [Task Force Proposal](#) defines Diversity, Equity, and inclusion in the following ways:

- Diversity "describes the presence of differences within a given setting, collective, or group."
- Equity is the process of "developing, strengthening, and supporting policies and procedures that distribute and prioritize resources to those who have been historically and currently marginalized."
- Inclusion is "intentionally designed, active, and ongoing engagement with people that ensures opportunities and pathways for participation in all aspects of group, organization, or community, including decision-making processes."

Washington communities are composed of a broad diversity of residents, including non-English speaking residents and populations from many racial, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds. Many jurisdictions actively work to celebrate their multi-ethnic heritage and to ensure that diverse communities are well-represented in policy discussions. A more complex definition of inclusive communities includes elements such as helping people thrive by encouraging civility, combating racism, welcoming and celebrating diversity, promoting safe and affordable housing, enabling participation in community services and local government, supporting fairness in access to justice and services, reducing violence, supporting social justice, encouraging awareness and understanding of opportunities/limitations, making residents aware of human rights commissions, and working for a more sustainable community for all residents.

Official Statements in Support of Inclusion

Another initial step in establishing an inclusive community is making an official statement to reinforce a commitment to acceptance, equal treatment, and safety for everyone.

- **Everett [Community Engagement and Inclusion Mayoral Directive](#)** (2018) — Directive to coordinate with neighborhood and community groups and schools to increase community engagement; diversify the city workforce; enhance access to and information about city governments; improve customer service; and provide new youth engagement opportunities.

- **King County** [Board of Health Resolution No. 20-08](#) (2020) — Declares Racism a public health crisis; commits to assessing, revising, and writing its guiding documents and its policies with a racial justice and equity lens, including the Board of Health Code and annual work plan.
- **Issaquah** [Resolution No. 2020-08](#) (2020)— Adopts statement rejecting racially-based bias, harassment, and hate crimes due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- **Jefferson County** [Board of Health Resolution No. 65-20](#) (2020) — Action items are preceded by an extensive findings, facts, statements, and good faith beliefs section that begins with a Land Acknowledgement statement and explanation of the choice of terminology used.
- **Shoreline** [Resolution No. 467](#) (2020) — Outlines efforts the City will make to address persistent Racism and work towards becoming an anti-racist community.
- **Tacoma** [Resolution No. 40622](#) (2020) — Directs the city manager to keep anti-racism as a top priority in the process of budget development and prioritize anti-racism in the planning of an economic recovery strategy following COVID-19 and in the evaluation of new policies and programs, as well as existing services.
- **Tumwater** [Resolution NO. R2017-004](#) — Prohibits inquiries into citizenship as a prerequisite for receiving city services, except where required by state, federal, or international law. Encourages dialogue between city employees and city residents who may be affected by federal enforcement of federal immigration laws.

DEI-Related Data Collection and Analysis

Data collection and analysis are critical for determining what challenges a local government chooses to tackle with a DEI initiative and measuring any potential success in the community and within the local government.

- **Snohomish County** [Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Assessment](#) (2019) — Identifies successful DEI practices that can be replicated countywide; Offers recommendations on where continued Diversity, Equity, and inclusion work is needed.
- **Tacoma** [Equity Index](#) — Used by city staff, community members, partners, and other decision-makers to ensure that the City is making data-informed decisions that improve access to opportunity for all Tacoma residents.
- **Yakima** [Equity Study](#) (2016) — Addresses the distribution of resources and investments across several city districts.

Community-Based Advisory Committees

Below are examples of programs that focus on building bridges with local communities. This includes the development of advisory committees, commissions, and task forces to build awareness and provide guidance on policy choices.

- **College Place** [Diversity and Inclusion Advisory Board](#) — Advises the City on Diversity and equity strategies and strengthens connections among diverse groups and with the City. They were formed under [Chapter 2.60](#) of the municipal code.
- **Federal Way** [Diversity Commission](#) — Advises the council on policy matters involving the community's cultural and ethnic differences, ensuring that these differences are considered in the decision-making process. [Ch. 2.65 FWMC](#) addresses the Commission's formation.
- **Pasco** [Inclusion, Diversity and Equity Commission](#) — Assists the council in promoting inclusion in Pasco by conducting public hearings, identifying means to promote and embrace diversity and inclusion, and making recommendations. See also: [Resolution 3820](#)

- [Wenatchee Advisory Council on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion](#) — Tasked with carrying out annual public events, ongoing community meetings, and training opportunities; Established in [Chapter 1.50 WMC](#).

Inclusive Public Engagement Initiatives

Below are examples of community-focused programs to transform local government outreach and service delivery to the broader community. This includes specific outreach strategies, plans, or policies.

- **Bellevue** [Diversity Advantage Initiative](#) — The City adopted its [Diversity Advantage Plan](#) in 2014 and since provided a range of services for its growing, multicultural population.
- **Everett** [Mayoral Directive: Community Engagement and Inclusion](#) (2018) — Outlines initiatives to increase community engagement, particularly with underrepresented community members and young people, and improve access to city government.
- **Shoreline** [Diversity & Inclusion Program](#) — Focuses on increasing the capacity of city staff to promote service equity and inclusion, increasing access to city information and services by diverse communities, and increasing support for diverse communities.
- **Tacoma** [IT Strategic Plan](#) (2017) — Addresses key information technology goals, including a focus on digital citizen engagement and Equity in access to digital services.

Inclusive Hiring and Contracting Policies

Hiring and contracting policies are a necessary focus of attention when addressing long-term structural issues resulting in people's disenfranchisement due to race, ethnicity, ability, or sexual orientation.

For additional information on the hiring process, including anti-discrimination laws and questions that can and cannot be asked of job applicants, see the MRSC page on [Hiring Procedures](#).

- **Renton** [HR Inclusion Tactical Plan](#) — An overview of the City's plan to improve access to city employment for members of communities under-represented in the City.
- **Seattle Public Utilities Women and Minority-Owned Business Enterprise Program** — Supports the inclusion of WMBE (women- and minority-owned businesses) on city contracts. Each department establishes plans and annual voluntary goals for WMBE inclusion in consulting purchasing contracts.
- **Tacoma** [Handbook for Recruiting, Hiring & Retention](#) (2015) — Provides context for hiring and a business case for racial Equity, policy guidance, and specific steps staff can take to achieve the City's equity and empowerment framework goals.
- **Washington State Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Council** — Situated in the Office of Financial Management, this initiative serves as the state's workforce DEI advisory and coordinating group; Leads, supports and promotes strategic DEI efforts across state government focusing on the state's internal workforce. Sample documents include [suggested quantitative and qualitative measurements](#) to track progress on diversity initiatives, [model workplace policies](#), and [employee lifecycle best practices](#).
- **California Strategic Growth Council** [Racial Equity Action Plan](#) (2019) — Page 3 discusses operations, including organizational culture, staff diversity, and internship/student-assistant programs, while page 4 discusses contracting opportunities

Strategic Plans

Below are examples of strategic plans focused on or addressing DEI in local government operations

- **Clark County** [Community Services Strategic Plan 2017-2022](#) — Provides an overview of the county's human service goals and strategies in delivering housing, health, behavioral health, economic well-being, and educational services.
- **King County**
 - [Equal Employment Opportunity/Affirmative Action Plan 2018-2021](#) — Details the county's goals, strategies, measures of success, and program success to date.
 - [Equity and Social Justice Strategic Plan 2016-2022](#) — Develops guiding policies that extend to county government and county/community partnerships.
- **Seattle** [Equitable Development: Financial Investment Strategy](#) (2016) — Identifies key initiatives the City is undertaking toward racial Equity and provides a more detailed work plan for equitable development projects.

Implement Use of Equity Tools

Below are examples of equity tools in use in Washington State. The [Government Alliance on Race & Equity](#) (GARE) offers a basic [Racial Equity Toolkit](#) that local governments can modify.

- **Renton** [Equity Lens](#) — A summary of the tool and goals for its use, along with situations in which it was employed.
- **Seattle** [Racial Equity Tool Kit](#) — Includes worksheets, data sources, and goals.
- **Seattle Public Utilities** [Equity Planning Toolkit](#) — Provides a variety of tools, including a stakeholder analysis worksheet, guidance on developing an inclusive outreach and public engagement plan, and a master comprehensive plan.
- **Seattle Housing Authority** [race and social justice guiding questions](#) — Used when making a decision about where to direct resources or how to evaluate a current policy/process/procedure.
- **Spokane Regional Health District** [Resolution #20-07](#) (2020) — Resolution to adopt a regional health equity response, including implementing the use of an equity lens to current/new policies programs and services, instituting all-staff professional development training in health equity, cultural competency, and anti-racism, and reviewing and updating recruitment and hiring practices, among other things.

Community Policing and Police and Criminal Justice Reform Initiatives

Some local governments are conducting specialized DEI policing and criminal justice efforts to address long-term racial disparities in arrests and sentencing.

- **Port of Seattle** [Solicitation 00320367](#) (2020) — A request for proposals to comprehensively assess the port police department's policies, protocols, and procedures that impact DEI issues; Seeks recommendations for action.
- **Spokane County** [Justice Task Force](#) — Develops recommendations for the county commissioners regarding the future of the Spokane County Jail. The [Racial Equity Committee](#) is tasked with developing a clear and complete action plan to address the disproportionate impact on people of color within the regional criminal justice system.
- **Pasco Citizen's Advisory Committee** — Specifically formed to address community concerns and assist in developing strategies for implementation of Community Oriented Policing components.

Community Equity in Procurement

Local government can promote equity through its procurement and contracting practices. Equitable procurement practices can contribute to business growth, especially for minority businesses, leading to greater economic equity.

Produced by Living City's City Accelerator, this report includes spotlights on several cities leading the way with equitable procurement practices. These cities include Chicago, Milwaukee, Charlotte, Memphis, and Los Angeles. [0812109_resource_implementation_guide_final_32019.pdf \(lisc.org\)](#)

Equity for those with physical and intellectual disabilities

This region has a higher than average percentage of individuals living with disabilities of varying types. The individuals represent all age groups, not just the senior population. The workplace, transportation, public spaces, and housing need to be inclusive in their access for individuals in this category.

A prior Institute study on accessible housing demonstrated a regional shortage of housing for those with physical, auditory, and visual disabilities as well as appropriate senior housing to age in place.

While mass transit may be equipped to move people with these disabilities, consideration must be given to waiting areas, ticket purchases, etc. As the City continues its efforts in promoting walkability, it can ensure that considerations are given to those individuals with these types of disabilities.

- [Empowered Cities](#) is a consortium of cities launched in 2019 by Citi and Mayors of major cities around the U.S. Each City engaged created their Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities. Boston focused on workforce, while Chicago aimed to "foster accessibility, full participation, and equal opportunities for people with disabilities in all aspects of life, through systemic change.
- **Disability Inclusion in Parks and Recreation** – National Recreation and Parks Association – The association has put [equity at the center](#) and developed a number of guides related to developing parks and recreation with [disability inclusion](#) and equity at the forefront.

Additional Equity and Inclusion Policies

Below are examples of additional DEI-related internal policies

- **Bellingham [Ordinance 2017-02-008](#)** (2017) — Affirms the City's support of immigrants and refugees from all nationalities, religions, and backgrounds; precludes the use of city funds or resources for activities that enforce civil or administrative federal immigration laws.
- **Kirkland: [Reflections and Lessons Learned from the Welcoming Kirkland Initiative](#)** (2020) — As part of this initiative, the City contracted with an external entity on a comprehensive community engagement project to ensure that all residents feel welcome and secure in the community.
- **Mason County [Park & Trails Gender Equity Policy](#)** — Provides that the department's and third-party-sponsored athletics/sports programs and department's facilities that support athletic programs provide equal opportunity and access for activities for both boys and girls, as well as women and men.
- **Tacoma [Municipal Code Chapter 1.29](#)** (2019) — Requires gender-neutral labeling of all single-occupancy bathrooms

Also, see - **National League of Cities [Repository of City Racial Equity Policies and Decisions - National League of Cities \(nlc.org\)](#)**

DEI – Practices, Initiatives, and Service Recommendations

The City of Scranton and its members are committed to ensuring that their practices are equitable and reflect the diversity of the communities they serve.

Considering Scranton’s rapidly diversifying communities, local governments must consider issues of equity and inclusion that go beyond race, ethnicity, and gender, including age, sexual orientation, ability, economic status, education attainment, and immigration status.

The recommendations included below, in addition to the Equity Primer, will provide government leaders with the additional capacity to ensure they continue to work toward building equitable and inclusive organizations and communities.

Creating a healthy, sustainable, and equitable community is a priority, and as such, it is vital to ensure that the recommended programs, services, and initiatives have a broad reach throughout the communities in the City of Scranton. Implementation of these recommendations should ensure that there is equitable access to the growing immigrant population, the LGBTQ+ community, and at-risk populations throughout the community. Community needs should be addressed by services and resources that reflect a diverse community and its values. An equitable and integrated effort is necessary in order to address inequities identified throughout the community, including issues connected to housing and transportation.

Based on the data and case studies included in this report, the following recommendations are offered for implementation. Programs, services, and projects going forward should directly address a need or issues identified within this report and should identify the outcomes and impacts that will remain after their initial implementation phase. For further guidance on equitable implementation, see the Equity Primer.

Community-Wide Recommendations

A needs survey and community-wide interviews assisted in understanding community members’ views on access to housing, transportation, and zoning, as well as the lived experiences of community members.

The findings from the recommended research should be actively integrated into the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion plan and actively integrated into other foundational city documents and processes in order to infuse equity into the work of the City of Scranton's government.

The recommendations below consider an intersectional approach to achieving equity and inclusion, recognizing the City's diversity and each individual's unique experiences.



Diversity encompasses a vast range of differences, including but not limited to social and ethnic backgrounds, gender, gender expression, sexual orientations, religion, age, socio-economic level, ability, education, and lived experiences. Each initiative, practice, and service recommended below should be thoughtfully considered and planned to ensure equity and inclusion and reflect an understanding of the City's diversity and how intersectionality plays a role.

Further Development of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion through Community Partnerships
The City of Scranton should recognize the vital role non-traditional partners can play in improving equitable outcomes and encourage and support the inclusion of a broader range of invited stakeholders throughout the community.

Multi-Partner Grants

Knowledge Sharing: Through participation in a collaborative, programs and initiatives can share best practices and information with colleagues they may not otherwise engage. Collaboration leads to more exposure to networks of organizations and individuals, more knowledge shared, and ultimately the community members benefit from a united partnership.

Greater Impact: A collaboration can lead to a greater understanding of issues and resource gaps in the community and, as such, make a more significant impact than individual programs and initiatives.

Emerging Issues: Exposure to diverse issues and opportunity gaps can inform the strategic planning of the collaborative members and allows collaborators to be more aware of opportunities to support emerging change.

Increase Awareness about the Services Available in the Community

Residents are not always aware of the programs and services available in their communities. The City could consider providing a community liaison or social worker for each school district, neighborhood, and senior living residence that can be available to connect residents to programs and services surrounding behavioral health and other areas on an ongoing basis. This would increase community awareness and lead to the use of services as well as healthier and safer outcomes. This work could be done in partnership with already trusted organizations or institutions within neighborhoods.

Bringing awareness of existing resources, activities, and networking options to engage and connect with others is essential for one's health and well-being. It is vital to continue to bring awareness to existing resources that can help people – especially at-risk populations, including older adults and children.

The creation of a resource directory that identifies local programs and providers in the areas of mental health and substance abuse, including resources in areas such as prevention, education, shelters, and housing services, is needed. For many, finding assistance in the community can be a frustrating experience. A resource directory, online and in print, as well as appearing in more than one language, can help community members find services more efficiently. This could be delivered or shared with residents through trusted intermediaries in the community.

Below are examples of interactive resource directories.

1. Missouri Northwest Workforce Development Board - [Resource Directory | Northwest Workforce Development Board \(nwwdb.org\)](https://www.nwwdb.org)

2. Colorado Business Resource Book - [Colorado Business Resource Book – Your one-stop resource for everything related to starting a small business in Colorado.](#)
3. L.A. County Small Business Resource Guide - [LACountySmallBusinessResourceGuide.pdf](#)

Equitable Access to Services Available in the Community

An essential function of local government is to deliver services efficiently and effectively while being equitable and inclusive. The City of Scranton could consider a framework similar to that utilized by King County, Washington, to ensure equity in the delivery of services and to ensure that equity and inclusion are thoroughly considered.

Before King County, Washington revises or implements a new program or service, they use a five-step process to thoroughly analyze the impact of any policy, program, or project as it pertains to equity in three definitive variations. The Equity Impact Review Process approach uses quantitative and qualitative data to assess the future impact.

See the Equity Primer for additional information.

Further Promotion of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

Community members were asked to discuss how the City of Scranton could further promote diversity, equity, and inclusion. Below is a summation of significant themes and ideas that were discussed.

- A visual representation of Scranton’s diverse City through its workforce and officials
- Creatively and robustly promoting all community events
- Economic initiatives to encourage diverse business owners
- A strengthened partnership with the Scranton School District, and working toward a more synergistic relationship, because there are opportunities to improve sharing of information and resources
- Increasing community engagement (see below)

Improving Community Engagement

Community engagement and outreach to promote an open dialogue with community members is critical but involves planning and effort. There are important considerations to review when engaging with community members, as community engagement can often be complex.

Community engagement is a two-way exchange of information, ideas, and resources. Engagement activities can include a range of approaches from informing to sharing leadership to resident-led efforts, depending on the degree of community and county involvement, decision-making, and control.

Community engagement should offer opportunities for communities to express their views and have a meaningful role in decision-making. It should also consider the diversity of communities, including culture and ethnicity, and seek to create an inclusive and accessible process. Effective engagement removes barriers that may have previously prevented residents from successfully working with the City government.

Dialogue and interaction are vital to bringing a community together. The City of Scranton could consider using and/or adapting the Community Engagement Worksheet developed by King County, Washington. See the Equity Primer for additional information.

The community members in the City of Scranton should understand the governmental process. The City workforce needs to be prepared to engage with people to work toward a more equitable and inclusive City.

This could begin with the formation of an *Ambassador* program whereby the city seeks to identify volunteers from various marginalized communities and provides education and training on City and community services and the Ambassadors share the information within their neighborhoods. The Ambassadors can act as a liaison between the various communities and the City. The Ambassadors could also support and share the work of the Equity Commission. The Ambassadors must be trusted partners to the community in order to be successful. Trust is a major issue, especially as it relates to those of different races and ethnicities.

Community-Based Support Initiatives

Social support initiatives that include workforce development, education, housing, financial assistance, and legal assistance are critical in helping community members develop a positive outlook. Community-based initiatives can serve as an informal support network while providing practical support to community members. Programs such as those listed above offer both economic and behavioral health benefits. The Equity Primer should be consulted before implementing new or changes to pre-existing community-based support initiatives.

Community Reach

Community members were asked how they believe the City of Scranton can best reach people from various groups and subgroups to make a difference in terms of DEI outcomes. Below is a summation of major themes and ideas that were discussed.

- Open dialogue
- Opportunities for engagement
- Addressing language barriers
- Community education regarding who they can speak to if they have a problem or concern that does not necessitate a call to 911
- Increased outreach
 - Focus on pockets in the community that need additional assistance with finding employment, transportation, locating resources, and understanding how to use them.
- A photographic marketing campaign for the City
 - “What makes us Scranton?” Pictures of the diversity represented in the City.
- Community education regarding various cultures, celebrations, and traditions
- Incorporation of community education into events that already exist, such as First Friday.
- Engagement with trusted community leaders to create strong working relationships; Community leaders can act as liaisons and trusted sources to communicate information about how to obtain various services and resources in the City.
- School involvement in community outreach in order to educate and engage the younger population
- Diverse community events
 - Hold a multi-cultural food festival or fair to give the community a glimpse into the cultures and traditions represented in the City of Scranton.

Community Resources, Programs, and Services

Community members were asked to discuss how can programs and services address both their neighborhood's needs and the needs of the City overall, as well as where more efforts are required. Although each individual has a unique situation, below is a summary of the key areas where community members noted a need for new services and additional efforts.

- Co-housing opportunities for those who identify as having a disability, both physical and intellectual
- Mentorship opportunities in the community for those who identify as having a disability, both physical and intellectual
- Community-based activities and community involvement for the older population to offset loneliness and isolation
- Funding for programs to help reduce poverty, homelessness, and food insecurity
- Access to information
- Additional language resources, including interpreters; reaching everyone in the community across various platforms and modalities
- Resources for bullying; supports are needed in the school and community resources where parents and students can go for help
- Refugee and resettlement services; a centralized, strategic, and integrated information resource for new refugees or any person settling into the community.
 - Social service agency information
 - DMV information
 - Healthcare information
 - Language services information

Creating an Inclusive and Involved Community

Many of the community members who participated in the interviews and surveys indicated that organized activities throughout the community represent one way to bring people together and help them get to know and understand their neighbors.

- Organized leagues and park activities
- Free or low-cost wellness programs
- Public swimming pools
- Neighborhood associations and meetings for conversations to occur and concerns to be discussed
- Volunteer activities
 - Composting, gardening, etc.
 - Neighborhood clean-up

Community Education Programs

Education, as well as dialogue, are critical in working toward an equitable and inclusive community. There should be regular opportunities for engagement with various aspects of the community. Education will ultimately lead to a more diverse and equitable environment. Education allows for relationship building and the ability to address issues and engage in conversation. The City of Scranton should offer opportunities through various events and modalities to educate the community members on issues of equity, diversity, and inclusion to ultimately increase understanding.

Educate the community – It is imperative to educate communities about the importance of creating a diverse, equitable, and inclusive City. Additionally, education on available services and resources can

provide a better pathway for community members to access the resources that will improve their well-being.

Educate the health care community, social services, human services, and educators on equity in cultural behaviors and values – The region is becoming very diverse, and cultural differences can affect access to services. This also applies to impoverished individuals in the region who may not understand how to access resources or services. Those living in poverty are focused more on basic needs like food and shelter.

Equitable City Practices

City planning and zoning can contribute to inequitable development, which ultimately has implications for the neighborhood designs as well as health and economic development disparities. City land use policies and procedures should consider inequitable impacts of gentrification by emphasizing preservation of neighborhood character and affordable housing creation while still meeting Scranton's development needs. The zoning ordinance and other regulations should also be periodically reviewed to ensure it addresses activities or business types specific to certain community or cultural contexts. There should also be designated channels to help informal businesses come into compliance with city regulations without disadvantaging entrepreneurs from historically marginalized backgrounds.

Equity and social justice should be taken into consideration as it pertains to zoning, contracting, and procurement in order to address existing inequities and prevent inequitable practices in the future. City officials should work cohesively to provide equitable development and opportunities for all of its residents, avoid practices that exacerbate social, economic, and health disparities, and lift up disadvantaged populations historically marginalized. A specific planning resource to bring equity to planning is available to help the City [develop zoning and planning guidelines](#).

Collaborative Efforts to Address Transportation

Almost every participant throughout the interview process cited transportation as a significant issue, whether it be the location of the bus stop is or the hours of availability. Collaborative efforts should be considered to address transportation problems, as they affect community members getting to work; receiving medical care, treatment, and medication; and ultimately directly impacting the well-being of community members. Students also represent an underserved population concerning transportation. It is critical to consider the aspect of privilege, which includes access and time, when discussing needs around transportation. Assessments with specific regard to student and senior populations should be conducted. Additionally, focus groups and roundtables should occur, in conjunction with other organizations and initiatives currently addressing transportation issues, to discuss transportation routes and availability in relation to community members' abilities to commute to their places of employment.

Law Enforcement and Public Safety

While there was a mixture of opinions and experiences with regard to law enforcement and public safety, most community members agreed that positive police interaction is critical.

Below are recommendations to increase positive interaction between law enforcement and community members.

Public safety training – Providing law enforcement with an understanding of various conditions, including mental and behavioral health and conditions such as dementia that affect behaviors and

interactions with law enforcement, could promote more positive interactions with community members. Additionally, training to understand the prison population's difficulty when returning to the community with regard to stigma, employment, and housing could be helpful.

Relationship Building – Appoint community liaisons to neighborhoods and provide intentional relationship-building activities and projects to create positive connections and build trust between law enforcement and community members.

Youth Involvement

It is vital for the youth population in the City of Scranton to be involved in promoting a diverse, equitable, and inclusive City. Youth education in school and resources for parents regarding safe and inclusive spaces are essential. Additionally, providing community activities for students and parents to get involved could be helpful in fostering relationships and increasing understanding and awareness throughout the community.

Creating space for inclusion and relationships to grow is vital as well. City government and community agencies could also offer events inside the schools regarding relationship building for parents and students to increase the sense of community and healthy interactions among families.

Housing Assistance

Many community members noted the importance of empowering consumers with information and assistance with regard to housing. It is crucial to consider how such policies and programs can be effectively deployed to address existing housing disparities and leverage solutions.

The City of Scranton must work to empower consumers with information and assistance through community outreach and education.

The City should also become familiar with the Property Appraisal and Valuation Equity (PAVE) plan with regard to policy and guidance recommendations.

Research on the feasibility of cohousing complexes should be conducted. Furthermore, an emphasis on inclusionary housing should be considered. Inclusionary housing programs are local policies that tap the economic gains from rising real estate values and, in turn, help create more affordable housing for lower-income families. An example of an inclusionary housing program might require developers to sell or rent a percentage of new residential units to lower-income residents.

Community Land Trusts are another option to support affordable housing and effective tool in marginalized neighborhoods and for infill development in downtown.

A review of landlord and tenant regulations may identify opportunities to equitably improve tenant protections.

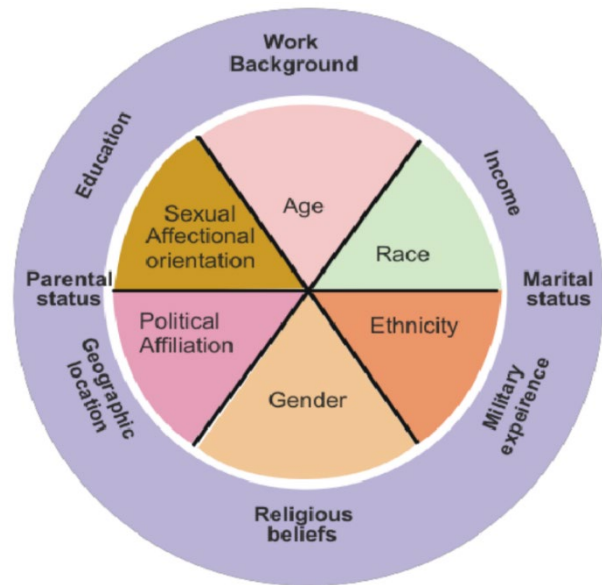
General

Have Scranton join the Empowered Cities program referenced above and implement the recommendations for disability inclusion and equity in parks and recreation.

Intersectionality – Forgotten Dimensions of Diversity

Intersectionality is addressed in depth in the Equity Primer. Understanding intersectionality is critical in order to implement strategies and recommendations. Forgotten dimensions of diversity include, but are not necessarily limited to:

- Age
- Education
- Skills
- Cognitive diversity
- Socioeconomic background
- Lived experiences
- Religious beliefs
- Marital status
- Parental status
- Immigration status
- Political views
- Veteran status
- Occupation
- Language



Incorporate Disability Equity

Gender identity and race are often at the forefront of diversity, equity, and inclusion. Ability is an area most often overlooked or omitted from conversations with community members and leaders.

Implementing disability inclusion into communities and workspace is integral to diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts. It is crucial to understand all forms of social identity, how they show up in the community and workplace, and how they intersect with other areas of identity.

The Social Model of Disability is a key framework for understanding disability equity. The Social Model of Disability does not frame disability as a diagnosis, unlike other models, such as the Medical Model of Disability.

Medical Model	Functional Model	Social Model
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disability as a consequence of a health condition, disease or caused by a trauma • Disrupt the functioning of a person in a physiological or cognitive way 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disability is caused by physical, medical or cognitive deficits • Limits functioning or the ability to perform functional activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A person's activities are limited not by the impairment or condition but by environment • Barriers are consequences of a lack of social organization

The Social Model of Disability describes the various barriers that exist as a product of one's social and physical environment. The Social Model of Disability holds accountable those who are in charge of the physical and social environments to make the appropriate accessible accommodations. Creating equitable environments for people who identify as having a visible or invisible disability will occur naturally as communities and workplaces shift the lens through which disability is viewed.

The social identity of disability also intersects with other aspects of identity, including race and gender. And as discussed above, intersectionality is vital to understanding the inequities and barriers people face throughout the community and workplace. The City of Scranton should create opportunities to educate community members and employees on disability accessibility (visible and invisible) through dialogue while actively implementing strategies to become a more accessible City.

City of Scranton Organizational Recommendations

Although it is important to have a diverse workforce, a diverse group of employees does not indicate equity or inclusivity unless intentional efforts are used.

Diversity programs and training can promote understanding, acceptance, and respect for others in the workplace, despite their differences. They can help illustrate the lived experiences of coworkers. Diversity within an organization does not address systematic problems of an organization, however, nor does it guarantee that all employees will have equitable opportunities and treatment. The City must make an intentional effort to review its practices as an employer. Recommendations and resources can be found in the Equity Primer, as well as the evidence-based programs and case studies included in this document.

Working Definitions of DEI for employees

The City should maintain a working definition of DEI for employees in order to provide a starting point for DEI-related conversations.

Below are the definitions suggested for use in the workplace, adapted from *Managing Workforce Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in Local Government*.

Diversity: The extent to which people of varying backgrounds or demographic characteristics are represented as part of the workforce

Equity: The treatment of those individuals who are already part of the organization in a way in which policies, employee development, and leadership opportunities apply to all in an equitable manner

Inclusion: The engagement of all voices in an organization in a way that respects their diversity, encourages their self-expression and sense of belonging as part of the team, and involves them in policy development and decision-making.

Intersectionality – Forgotten Dimensions of Diversity – Organizational

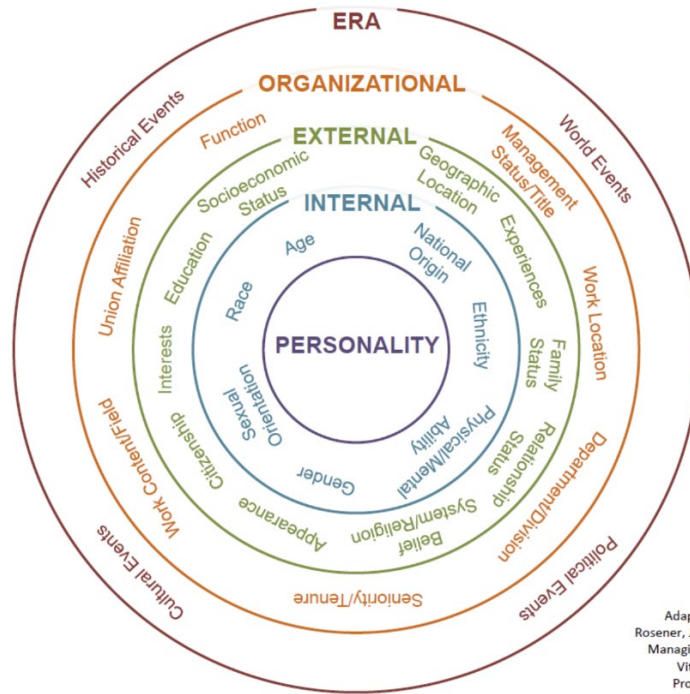
Just as forgotten dimensions of diversity were discussed above regarding communities, organizational dimensions of diversity should be taken into account when discussing intersectionality.

Organizational dimensions of diversity intersect with other layers of identity and can include the following:

- Classification
- Management status
- Union affiliation
- Work location
- Seniority
- Division/Department
- Work content field

Workforce Development

It is imperative as an organization to continuously reflect and reevaluate internal practices to ensure that barriers related to equity and inclusion are recognized and removed.



Adapted from: Loden, Marily & Rosener, Judy, "Workforce America! Managing Employee Diversity as a Vital Resource," McGraw-Hill Professional Publishing, 1990.

The creation of an equitable and inclusive workplace must start at the top of an organization and work down. Employee training should involve all individuals within a local government organization in order to promote buy-in. A method should be determined to ensure leadership is on board in a visible process. Leadership and staff at all levels of City government should be engaged in ongoing training and learning opportunities.

In the case that an outside partner is commissioned to facilitate a training or learning opportunity, it is recommended that leadership preview the course materials so any necessary adjustments can be addressed to best meet the City's organizational needs. Note that not all topics related to DEI can be covered in one training. The City should participate in ongoing training, which can include various modalities, on various subjects that best suit the City's needs.

It would not be uncommon to receive pushback or confusion among employees about the need for diversity training. It is crucial that leadership engage in discussions about the need for diversity training in the workplace.

Development of a Permanent Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Position within City Government

A change in organizational culture can be complex and requires an intentional focus across all leadership and departments. Creating a permanent office or position, such as an inclusion task force or a Chief Equity Officer, could be helpful in coordinating internal and external DEI efforts and ensure that equity efforts are on track.

A task force or Chief Equity Officer's focus would be to ensure that equity and inclusion are embedded in service delivery, all levels of decision-making, and community engagement.

A permanent DEI position within City Government would allow the City to focus on its ability to reshape internal and external practices, facilitate DEI events in the community, create educational opportunities internally and externally, and form equity-focused collaborative community partnerships to ensure an equity lens is applied to City-wide practices. The specific role will depend on the City's goals and timeline regarding each goal. Still, the role would ultimately provide guidance and support to the City and community members in the delivery of DEI policies and initiatives. A DEI position could be the City's liaison with an Ambassador program as well as the Equity Commission. It would also help the City if it joined the Empowered Cities program.

Community Relations

Involving employees, at all levels, in community projects, relations, and engagement opportunities connects employees and community members, leading to potentially impactful DEI outcomes. Engaging employees and community members together will demonstrate the City's commitment to their community and pave the path for a more inclusive community.

Equity Commission

While the City and the Scranton Area Community Foundation have already begun jointly developing an Equity Commission, recommendations regarding the Commission's makeup as a result of The Institute's research follow below.

It is insufficient to merely gather a group of allies around a table. There must be representation from as many intersections as possible. An ally can empathize but can never fully understand another person's lived experiences. Representation should include individuals of various races, ethnicities, genders, religions, and educational and socio-economic backgrounds. Additionally, there should be representation from the community members who identify as having visible and invisible disabilities. The Autistic and Down Syndrome communities should also be represented. Invitations to participate should be thoughtfully and intentionally extended to individuals who would not normally participate.

The Equity Commission will have the task (or challenge) of clearly communicating its mission and strategies to community members and garnering community-wide support. Patience and resilience are vital, along with a focus on community engagement. (See the Community Engagement tool in the Equity Primer).

Conclusions

When considering the recommendations above and using the equity assessment tools included in the Equity Primer, the City must continually ask, "What are we doing to ensure that the different needs are met, and that different voices are heard?" Diversity, equity, and inclusion should permeate every aspect of the City's actions and be at the core of every decision to reduce barriers, disparities, and inequities.

The City should remain mindful that many of the topics discussed in the recommendations are interrelated, and one often affects the other. Examples of these areas include institutional inequities, economic instability, education, food insecurity, barriers to transportation, health disparities, inadequate housing, neighborhood environment, and employment. These issues are difficult to separate from one another, and policy decisions and recommendations should consider how an individual area might directly or indirectly affect another.

References

The following resources were studied and considered in combination with primary research to inform the Equity Primer and recommendations developed by The Institute.

City of Beaverton, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Plan, 2014

City of Boulder, Racial Equity Plan, 2021

City of Morgantown, Strategic Plan for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, 2020

City of Scranton – Official Website (scrantonpa.gov)

Deloitte (2020). Practicing Inclusive Leadership in Times of Crisis 2020 (deloitte.com)

Dimensions of Diversity | About Diversity and Inclusion (percipiocompany.com)

Diversity Wheel - Welcome to CCLI (Cultural Competence Learning Institute) (astc.org)

Getting ready for racial equity work (2018). Community Science.

Hankivsky, O. (2014). Intersectionality 101. *The Institute for Intersectionality Research and Policy, SFU*. ISBN: 978-0-86491-355-5

Hudson, E. (2019). Local government role in advancing Equity and inclusion. *Certified Public Manager Research Paper, Texas State University CPM Program*.

Illinois DEI Resources for Municipal Governments. DEI Resources for Municipal Governments - Mayors Caucus

International City/County Management Association (ICMA). icma.org

King County Washington. Equity and Social Justice. Equity and Social Justice - King County

Managing Workforce Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in Local Government) (2022). Mission Square Research Institute.

Nishishiba, M., & Elledge, F. (2014). Embracing Diversity, Equity, and inclusion: Developing and facilitating the City of Beaverton's Diversity Advisory Board," Report submitted to the City of Beaverton, OR. FDIC, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Strategic Plan, 2021-23

No Racial or Ethnic Majority in the United States by 2050 - Center for American Progress Officer of Equity task force proposal (2020). Washington State.

Privilege and Disadvantage Inventory. *Teaching for Diversity and Social Justice, Second Edition, Routledge, 2007*.

Rapid Equity Assessment (v6). LA Metro.
Scranton Strategic Economic Development Plan

Social Identity Wheel (n.d.). Adopted from "Voices of Discovery," Intergroup Relations Center, Arizona State University.

Tools for equitable mobility practices (2021). *Community Science* and the *Center for Neighborhood Technology*.

Tsai, S. (2015). Local Government Models of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in Employment.
<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/04x4z6xq>

Washington State Legislature. HB 1783. Creating the Washington state office of equity.

Weiner (2020). The new coronavirus affects us all. But some groups may suffer more. | AAMC

Why Leadership Diversity Matters in Handling Crises Like COVID-19 - Knowledge@Wharton (upenn.edu)

Wilson, S., Hutson, M. & Mujahid (2008). How planning and zoning contribute to inequitable development, neighborhood health, and environmental injustice. Doi: 1089/env.2008.0506

W.K. Kellogg Foundation. Doing Evaluation in Service of Racial Equity: Diagnose Biases and Systems (2021).

The Institute

Turning Information into Insight

THE INSTITUTE FOR PUBLIC POLICY & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



ACADEMIC PARTNERS

Geisinger Commonwealth School of Medicine
Johnson College
Keystone College
King's College
Lackawanna College
Luzerne County Community College
Marywood University
Misericordia University
Penn State Scranton
Penn State Wilkes-Barre
The Wright Center for Graduate Medical Education
University of Scranton
Wilkes University - Managing Partner

OFFICES

85 South Main Street
Wilkes-Barre, PA 18701
570.408.9850

St. Thomas Hall
Suite 107
Scranton, PA 18503
570.408.9850

E-mail: info@instituteapa.org
www.instituteapa.org