



Tompkins County

Institutionalizing Equity Report

Transforming Our Future





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Introduction

Executive Summary

The *Inaugural Institutionalizing Equity Report* is a major step forward for Tompkins County in our commitment to embedding equity across all areas of our organization. This report offers a clear framework and structured approach for each department to develop, implement, and sustain practices that promote diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) in our workforce and community services. It aligns with Tompkins County's Strategic Operations Plan, ensuring that equity-focused goals are fully integrated into our broader organizational objectives.

Key components of this report include:

1. **Equity-Mindedness Framework (EMF):** Serving as the foundation, the EMF encourages evidence-based, race-conscious, institutionally focused, systemically aware, and equity-advancing practices to address existing disparities. This framework guides our DEI initiatives, ensuring consistency and accountability.
2. **Strategic Alignment:** Each department will align its DEI goals with the County's Strategic Operations Plan, embedding equity indicators within departmental workplans. This alignment allows us to measure progress effectively and systematically.
3. **Key Equity Indicators:** Departments are asked to select 1-2 equity indicators that best reflect their mission and the needs of their stakeholders, providing a tangible way to track performance and accountability across departments. These indicators will serve as benchmarks, helping us identify areas of improvement and ensuring our DEI commitments are measurable and impactful.
4. **Data & Analysis:** By aggregating insights from multiple data sources, the report provides an evidence-based foundation to inform policy, practices, and resource allocation. Key data sets include the Listening Tour, which gathered in-depth feedback from both community members and staff; the Equity Exchange Reading and Discussion Group data, reflecting employee engagement and DEI knowledge; and Workforce Demographic Data, which benchmarks the County's representation and diversity metrics. Additionally, findings from the Overall DEI Staff Survey, Leadership Summit Post-Survey, and GIS-compiled Diversity Index by District based on 2010-2020 census data capture both demographic and experiential insights.
5. **Themes from the DEI Listening Tour:** Findings from our recent listening tour, such as the need for workforce diversity enhancement, civil service exam accessibility, improvements in workplace culture, and support for intersectional retention efforts, are highlighted. These themes provide high-level insights into priority areas, helping departments address identified challenges and opportunities within their operations.
6. **Guidance for Implementation:** The report offers detailed instructions and resources to assist departments in operationalizing their DEI goals. Through structured support and resources, each department can meet these goals in alignment with the County's strategic objectives and the unique needs of our community.

Letter from the County Administrator



As the new County Administrator, I am honored to be part of an administration that is committed to fostering equity, diversity, and inclusion throughout all levels of our organization. I am excited to support the continued work of institutionalizing equity in Tompkins County, and I look forward to advancing this vital work for our employees and residents.

The Institutionalizing Equity Report serves as a powerful roadmap, guiding us through the necessary steps to embed equity into our policies, practices, and daily operations. Equity is not simply a goal to strive for but a foundation upon which we must build to ensure fairness,

inclusion, and opportunity for all.

Looking ahead, I am eager to continue collaborating with our Legislative body, Deputy Administrators, Department Heads, and all our dedicated staff to implement the strategies outlined in this report. I am confident that through our collective efforts, we will create an organizational culture that is not only diverse and inclusive but also reflective of the values we hold dear—equity, respect, accountability, stewardship, and integrity.

My vision for the future is one where equity is deeply embedded in every decision we make and in every service we provide. We have the opportunity to ensure that our policies, practices, and programs reflect the diverse needs of our community, and I am excited to work with all of you to make this vision a reality.

Together, we will continue to take bold, intentional steps toward building a more inclusive Tompkins County where all individuals can thrive.

Thank you for your commitment to this important work.

With Appreciation,

Korsah Akumfi

County Administrator

Letter from the Chief Equity and Diversity Officer



Tompkins County Colleagues -- I am honored to introduce the *Inaugural Institutionalizing Equity Report*, the first report of its kind in Tompkins County. This report serves as a cornerstone resource that centralizes and aligns our county's diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) efforts, establishing a cohesive and unified approach toward achieving our equity goals across departments and functions. This report builds on the insights gathered during the DEI Listening Tour and emphasizes actionable strategies to guide departments in advancing equitable outcomes, tailored to the unique challenges within each scope of work. By centralizing our approach, we can foster more coherent and impactful results, streamline our DEI practices, and provide the guidance necessary to meet each department where it is in its equity journey.

Key Themes and Strategic Focus

Through the DEI Listening Tour, we identified high-level themes crucial to creating an inclusive and equitable environment for our workforce and the community. These insights shaped the structure and focus of this report along with informing the development of the County's first Strategic Operations Plan, spotlighting areas such as:

1. **Workforce Diversity Enhancement** - Building strategies to increase workforce diversity and addressing barriers that often impact historically ignored groups.
2. **Civil Service Exam Accessibility** - Evaluating how civil service exams might create barriers to diversity and exploring alternatives that align with our DEI commitments.
3. **Culture and Morale** - Understanding and improving organizational culture, especially in the context of DEI, to uplift morale and support a positive work environment.
4. **Retention Efforts for Intersectional Identities** - Recognizing the unique challenges faced by individuals with intersecting identities and centering their experiences in retention strategies to foster inclusivity.
5. **Access to DEI-Related Training** - Expanding DEI training opportunities, addressing gaps, and improving accessibility for all employees to enhance language inclusivity and cultural competency.
6. **Recognizing Unnoticed Work of Intersectional Providers** - Valuing the extra efforts by service providers who have intersections of identity and supporting them as we address historical inequities.
7. **Promoting Cross-Departmental Collaboration in DEI** - Breaking down departmental silos, fostering thought partnerships, and supporting a more cohesive, cross-departmental approach to DEI initiatives.
8. **Promotional Infrastructure** - Evaluating and enhancing the promotion infrastructure to enhance professional development opportunities for advancement across all roles.

Guidance and Support for Departments

This report will serve as a critical resource, guiding departments in integrating equity indicators into their workplans and providing targeted support based on each department's unique needs and challenges. It is designed to meet departments where they are on their DEI path, offering practical steps to enhance diversity, boost retention, and strengthen inclusion. Departments are encouraged to use this report to identify specific equity indicators aligned with their scope of work and measure progress through concrete metrics, establishing a baseline for tracking and improvement.

The Path Forward

With this report, we are laying a foundation for sustained improvement and accountability in our DEI efforts. By providing a structured approach and the tools necessary to measure outcomes over time, we ensure that every department contributes to a County-wide commitment to equity. The *Institutionalizing Equity Report* is a living document, evolving as we learn, adapt, and refine our strategies to better meet the needs of our workforce and our community. It is an essential conduit through which we can achieve our strategic objectives with an equity lens, advancing our commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion in every facet of our organization.

Thank you for your dedication and shared commitment to this vital work. Together, we are shaping an equitable and inclusive Tompkins County that reflects our collective values and aspirations.

In solidarity,

Charlene Holmes, MPS

Chief Equity and Diversity Officer

Letter from the Former County Administrator



I am pleased to introduce Tompkins County's first Institutionalizing Equity Report, a landmark document representing our steadfast commitment to embedding equity within all facets of County governance and operations. Developed through in-depth research and cross-departmental collaboration, this report is a testament to our shared dedication to building an organization that values diversity, promotes inclusive decision-making, and places equity at the core of every service we provide to our community.

Strategic Alignment and Purpose

The Institutionalizing Equity Report is directly aligned with the County's Strategic Operations Plan, establishing a cohesive framework and methodology that bridges our organizational goals with measurable equity objectives. This alignment ensures that equity-focused initiatives are embedded within the County's broader strategic priorities rather than standing as isolated efforts. By embedding equity into the structural fabric of our work, we're setting a foundation that will endure beyond any changes in leadership. This report provides actionable steps for each department to foster a workplace culture that respects diverse perspectives and addresses structural inequities that may have historically limited access to County services. Following the report's methodology and recommendations will empower departments to establish specific equity indicators within their 2025 workplans, thus driving measurable, accountable progress.

Guiding Our Equity Journey

This report is not just an aspirational document; it translates our vision for equity into actionable steps, enabling us to measure success meaningfully. The Institutionalizing Equity Report serves as a roadmap that allows us to better understand and address the diverse needs of our community, especially those who have historically been underserved. Designed to help departments approach their work through an equity lens, the report highlights key areas for growth, identifies opportunities to track the effectiveness of equity-driven initiatives, and fosters a structure of accountability. This intentional process is vital for advancing DEI principles within the organization and fostering a more inclusive community.

As you review this report, you will find specific guidance for developing equity indicators, integrating DEI strategies into departmental objectives, and promoting a culture of transparency and accountability. Implementing these steps will enable each department to play a critical role in embedding equity into our structure, ensuring that these principles remain active and measurable components of County operations.

Our Commitment Moving Forward

Implementing the Institutionalizing Equity Report successfully will require a collective effort, with active participation and commitment from all levels of the organization. This is an opportunity to take our work from aspirations to actions, creating a foundation for equitable policies, enhanced community relationships, and service delivery that meets the needs of all residents. By establishing and tracking equity indicators, the County is positioned to respond proactively to the evolving needs of both our workforce and community, making equity an operational priority rather than a distant goal.

This report marks the beginning of a journey that demands ongoing effort, openness to learning, and a commitment to transformative change. I am confident that together, we can build on this foundation and create lasting impacts that strengthen Tompkins County's commitment to equity and enrich the well-being of our community. Thank you for your dedication, collaboration, and engagement as we embark on these essential next steps.

With appreciation,

Lisa Holmes

Former County Administrator

Equity & Diversity History

On December 1, 2006, Tompkins County passed Resolution No. 227 (amended in 2012 and 2023) establishing the Workforce Diversity and Inclusion Advisory Committee (WDIC). WDIC was created to advise the Tompkins County Legislature, Commissioner of Human Resources, County Administrator, Department Heads, and later and later the Chief Equity and Diversity Officer (CEDO) on diversity and inclusion in employment and service. The Committee's primary objectives include promoting equality in employment and customer service, ensuring compliance with local, state, and federal laws, and assisting the County in meeting the goals outlined in the Diversity and Inclusion Policy and the Tompkins County Strategic Plan.

In 2014, the County issued a Request for Proposal (RFP) to design and implement a Climate Survey. This survey aimed to provide a snapshot of the County's organizational culture, focusing on work satisfaction, leadership effectiveness, communication, accountability, professional development, inclusiveness, diversity, and overall organizational commitment. With 447 employee responses, the data collected was used to build cultural competence, enhance communication, and create a career development plan.

In 2018, Tompkins County conducted a second Climate Survey, partnering with The Kaleidoscope Group, which provided guidance on interpreting results and formulating recommendations to address organizational strengths and areas for improvement. The survey offered key insights into employee perspectives on work satisfaction, leadership, inclusiveness, diversity, communication, professional development, and accountability.

Later that year, the Diversity, Inclusion, Infusion (DII) Team, tasked with implementing survey findings, recommended that the County join the Government Alliance on Race & Equity (GARE) and hire a Chief Equity and Diversity Officer (CEDO). Recognizing the need for systemic change, the DII Team advocated for the creation of a core equity team, which led to the formation of the Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (JEDI) Team.

As the County's commitment to advancing DEI initiatives grew, the DII Team recognized the need for dedicated leadership to address systemic inequities. Leveraging its GARE membership, DII conducted national research on best practices in local governments and designed the CEDO role to strategically coordinate and advance DEI efforts across the County.

In July 2020, a call for members was sent out for Team JEDI, and all applications received were approved. Team JEDI, an employee-led initiative, operates on values of respect, diversity, social justice, and equity, with the mission of fostering an inclusive environment in Tompkins County. As agents of institutional change, Team JEDI leads efforts to embed DEI principles across all operations, services, and policies, while promoting a future of inclusive excellence.

Comprised of 34 volunteer members from 22 different County departments, Team JEDI's key objectives include promoting inclusive excellence, fostering a culture of diversity, enhancing communication, and offering professional development opportunities. The team has focused on

data collection and analysis to improve service delivery for underserved populations, further advancing equity and inclusivity within Tompkins County.

By 2024, Tompkins County had appointed its second Chief Equity and Diversity Officer (CEDO), following the leadership of the inaugural CEDO who spearheaded the work of a racial equity lens. This foundational work laid the groundwork for a more in-depth approach to systemic change, fostering a lasting framework that bridges the intersection of government and community relationships. A key achievement during this time was the joint development of a response to Executive Order 203, resulting in the Reimagining Public Safety initiative. The inaugural CEDO played a pivotal role in establishing the Community Justice Center, which facilitates the community's priorities in shaping its relationship with law enforcement, while also assisting law enforcement in utilizing resources to reimagine their practices and the impacts on the community.

The second CEDO has taken this established framework further and has been tasked with a focus to embed equity across all aspects of County operations. This continued progress reflects the tremendous efforts of the DII committee and those who have supported the County's commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion. Their work has been instrumental in driving Tompkins County's trajectory toward more equitable governance and community engagement.



Equity & Diversity Current Infrastructure

1. *Workforce Diversity and Inclusion Committee (WDIC)*

The Workforce Diversity and Inclusion Committee is a special committee of the Tompkins County Legislature dedicated to addressing diversity and inclusion within County operations. The Committee focuses on assessing workforce demographics, identifying gaps, and recommending actionable strategies to enhance diversity in hiring and retention.

2. *Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Committee (JEDI)*

Team JEDI plays a pivotal role in advancing equity across Tompkins County. As an employee-led initiative, Team JEDI is dedicated to ensuring equitable outcomes in programs, services, and policies. This includes implementing training sessions, workshops, and community engagement activities designed to foster dialogue and understanding, as well as promoting inclusive leadership and continuous learning throughout the organization. By partnering with the Workforce Diversity and Inclusion Committee and the Chief Equity and Diversity Officer, Team JEDI operationalizes the County's commitment to equity, striving to create a more inclusive community for all residents.

3. *Chief Equity and Diversity Officer (CEDO)*

The CEDO is responsible for leading the County's equity initiatives. This role involves overseeing the implementation of equity and diversity strategies, monitoring progress, and serving as a liaison between departments to ensure alignment with equity goals. Additionally, the CEDO serves in an advisory capacity to the County Administrator and collaborates with leadership and community members to embed equity into County operations effectively.

4. *County Administrator*

The County Administrator supports the integration of equity principles into all County operations. By collaborating with various departments, the administrator helps ensure that equity considerations are embedded in decision-making processes and service delivery.

5. *Human Resources*

The Human Resources Department plays a crucial role in promoting a diverse workforce. HR policies and practices are designed to attract, hire, and retain individuals from varied backgrounds, fostering an inclusive workplace culture that aligns with the County's equity goals.

6. Office of Human Rights (OHR)

The Office of Human Rights advocates for the protection of civil rights and provides resources to address discrimination and harassment. This office is instrumental in investigating complaints and ensuring that residents are informed of their rights under federal, state and local laws.

7. Departmental DEIB (Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging) Committees and Initiatives

Various departments within the County have established DEIB committees to address specific equity issues relevant to their areas. These committees develop tailored initiatives that align with County-wide goals and foster inclusivity at the departmental level.

8. Administrative Policies

The County has implemented several key policies that support its commitment to diversity and inclusion, including:

- [Diversity and Inclusion Policy](#)
- [Workplace Discrimination and Sexual Harassment Policy](#)
- [Affirmative Action Policy](#)
- [Equal Employment Opportunity \(EEO\) Policy](#)
- [Title VI and ADA Compliance Policies & Procedures](#)

These policies provide a framework for equitable treatment and protection against discrimination in all County activities.

9. County Values

The County's core values—respect, accountability, integrity, equity, and stewardship—underpin all efforts related to equity and diversity. These values guide decision-making and set expectations for behavior within the County workforce and the broader community.

10. Legislature

The County Legislature plays a critical role in enacting policies and allocating resources for equity and diversity initiatives. Legislative support is essential for sustaining ongoing efforts and promoting a culture of inclusion throughout the County.

11. Anti-Discrimination Law

Promulgated in 2004, the County's anti-discrimination law provides essential protections to residents based on sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression. This law safeguards individuals in housing, commercial spaces, lending, employment, education, and places of public accommodation.



Shared Language and Key Terminology

Shared language and key terminology are used to develop a cohesive organizational approach to descriptors of DEI that is easily accessible to all County constituents and is used in messaging and reporting across communications, policies, operations, and beyond.

Definitions: *(some definitions are adopted from the Diversity & Inclusion Policy):*

Chief Equity and Diversity Officer (CEDO) – The County employee who has the primary responsibility for leading the development and implementation of Tompkins County’s diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives.

Discrimination – Any adverse employment action (termination, failure to hire, demotion, failure to promote, etc.) taken on the basis of sex (with or without sexual conduct, and including gender identity, gender expression or transgender status), race, color, religion, national origin, age, disability, genetic information or predisposing genetic characteristic, marital status, familial status, military status, domestic violence victim status, and any other class protected by law.

Discriminatory Harassment – Verbal or physical conduct that is offensive to or shows hostility or aversion toward an individual because of a protected class or characteristic, and that: (i) has the purpose or effect of creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive work environment; (ii) has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual’s work performance; (iii) subjects an individual to inferior terms, conditions, or privileges of employment; or (iv) otherwise adversely affects an individual’s employment opportunities. Harassing conduct includes, but is not limited to: epithets, slurs or negative stereotyping; threatening, intimidating or hostile acts; denigrating jokes and display or circulation in the workplace (including through e-mail) of written or graphic material that denigrates or shows hostility or aversion toward an individual or group based on an individual’s protected class.

Diversity – Individual attributes that include, but are not limited to, national origin, language, race, color, disability, ethnicity, gender, age, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, socio-economic status, veteran status, and family structures. Diversity also encompasses differences among people concerning where they are from and where they have lived, and their differences of thought and life experiences.

Equal Opportunity – The offering of employment, pay, or promotion equally to all, without discrimination.

Equity – The term “equity” (in the context of diversity) refers to the fair treatment, access, opportunity, and advancement for all people, while at the same time striving to identify and eliminate barriers that have prevented the full participation of some groups.

Inclusion – Fully and respectfully involving all employees/volunteers in the activities and life of the organization, including configuring opportunity, interaction, communication, information, and decision-making to utilize the potential of employee/volunteer diversity.

Empowerment – Empowerment is the creation of an environment in which individuals from varied backgrounds and with varied abilities and experiences can fully participate in an organization’s decision-making processes and operations.

Dismantle – Intentionally examine the ways oppression has been built into the fabric of a system AND strategically remove the threads.

Harassment – Unwelcomed, unwanted, and uninvited conduct that demeans, threatens or offends. Harassing behavior may include, but is not limited to, epithets, derogatory comments or slurs and lewd propositions, assault, impeding or blocking movement, offensive touching or any physical interference with normal work or movement, and visual insults, such as derogatory posters or cartoons. Harassment becomes unlawful where 1) enduring the offensive conduct becomes a condition of continued employment, or 2) the conduct is severe or pervasive enough to create a work environment that a reasonable person would consider intimidating, hostile, or abusive.

Harm Reduction / Racial Healing – a process that restores individuals and communities to wholeness, repairs the damage caused by racism and transforms societal structures into ones that affirm the inherent value of all people.

Inclusive Governance – seeks to address historical imbalances in resources and structural barriers to opportunity and operates at the intersection of disadvantages that may be based on race, gender, sexual orientation and identity, disability, and socioeconomic status.

Team JEDI – Team Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (Team JEDI) is an employee-led initiative, driven by the shared values of respect, diversity, social justice, and equity, striving to promote and model compassion and an inclusive environment. Team JEDI works to support County efforts to ensure equitable outcomes among programs, services, and policies in Tompkins County.

Microaggressions – describes daily behavior (verbal or nonverbal) that communicates hostile or negative insults towards a group, either intentionally or unintentionally, particularly culturally marginalized groups.

Organizational Culture – Shared attitudes, beliefs, customs, and written and unwritten rules that have been developed over time and are considered valid, and is usually demonstrated by (1) the ways the organization conducts its business and treats its employees/volunteers, customers, and the wider community, (2) the extent to which freedom is allowed in decision making, developing new ideas and personal expression, (3) how power and information flow through the organizational hierarchy, and (4) how committed employees/volunteers are towards collective objectives.

Equitable Provision of Government Services – all individuals have equal access, effectively serving and engaging all people; takes into account the facets of personal identity and the intersectionality thereof; and when institutions, policies, processes, and services are accessible, accountable and responsive to all members of society.

Retaliation – Disciplinary or other adverse personnel action relating to the terms and conditions of employment taken against the employee/volunteer, or relative of the employee/volunteer, because the employee/volunteer has made a good-faith report or complaint. Prohibited retaliatory actions include, but are not limited to, discharge, discipline, personal attacks, harassment, intimidation, or change in job, salary, or responsibilities.

Systemic Barriers – are often a function of geographical and racial background, class, gender, and ability. The barriers themselves could be financial, physical, geographical, or social.

County Values:

Respect – We embrace a safe inclusive culture and treat each other with dignity, understanding, and compassion.

Accountability – We embrace our vital role as public servants by pursuing excellence while holding ourselves, each other, and the organization responsible for decisions that impact the community.

Integrity – We commit to making conscious choices to act ethically in all endeavors, including following through on our commitments, admitting and learning from our mistakes, and being honest with the community and one another.

Equity – We sustain a workplace community that ensures fairness through diversity and inclusion by embracing learning and best practices, eliminating structurally oppressive systems, and building trust, appreciation, a sense of belonging, and opportunities for all.

Stewardship – We value our human, financial, and environmental resources, and provide services in a manner that responsibly manage and preserve those resources into the future.



Methodology & Framework

Methodology

Tompkins County is dedicated to embedding equity into its operations. The outlined methodology for achieving this goal will draw from our strategic plan priority areas and accompanied equity indicators. By incorporating the **Equity Mindedness Framework (EMF)** and leveraging our current infrastructure, we aim to create a systematic and comprehensive approach to equity.

Our approach to embedding and institutionalizing equity within Tompkins County's operations is guided by a comprehensive methodology that integrates strategic planning, equity indicators, and the Equity Mindedness Framework (EMF). This methodology serves as the foundation for developing departmental workplans, which act as the primary conduit for embedding equity into our organizational practices.

To achieve this goal, we will address seven key questions that will guide our efforts and ensure a systematic and inclusive approach to equity. These questions will help us evaluate current practices, identify areas for improvement, and implement strategies that promote diversity, equity, and inclusion across all departments. By focusing on these critical areas, we aim to create an environment where equity is deeply rooted in our operations and culture.

Our Diversity Statement:

Tompkins County Government centers diversity, equity, and inclusion. We are committed to the empowerment of employees and residents to dismantle systemic barriers that inhibit inclusive governance and the provision of government services to all.

Seven Key Questions:

1. How do current departmental policies and practices support or hinder equity?
2. What training and resources are needed to build staff capacity for equity work?
3. What partnerships and collaborations can we leverage to enhance our equity work?
4. What data do we have to inform our understanding of equity issues? Additional data needed?
5. How can our departments contribute to the County's strategic priority areas through an equity lens?
6. How will we measure the effectiveness of our equity initiatives and make adjustments as needed?
7. How can we ensure that our services and programs are accessible and beneficial to all community members, especially historically ignored groups?

Overview

This methodology focuses on the systematic integration of equity principles into County operations, primarily through departmental workplans. This approach involves several key steps.

1. *Equity Mindedness Framework (EMF)*

The EMF provides a comprehensive framework for organizations to institutionalize equity by using evidence to inform targeted interventions, prioritizing the needs of marginalized groups, embedding equity into institutional practices, dismantling harmful systemic structures, and continuously improving their equity efforts. This structured approach helps organizations create lasting and meaningful change towards achieving equity across all aspects of their operations and impact within their communities.

2. *Strategic Alignment*

This involves aligning departmental goals and activities with the priority areas outlined in the County's strategic plan.

3. *Utilization of Equity Indicators*

To effectively measure progress and performance in advancing equity, specific equity indicators are identified and utilized. These indicators provide measurable benchmarks against which the County can track its success in promoting equity across different departments and initiatives.

4. *Key Questions*

Departments are guided by key questions that help embed and institutionalize equity into their operations. These questions address various aspects such as inclusivity, access, fairness, and the impact of policies and practices on historically ignored communities within the County.



The Framework – Equity Mindedness Framework (EMF)

USC Center for Urban Education – Race and Equity Center

EMF provides a comprehensive framework for organizations to institutionalize equity by using evidence to inform targeted interventions, prioritizing the needs of marginalized groups, embedding equity into institutional practices, dismantling harmful systemic structures, and continuously improving their equity efforts. This structured approach helps organizations create lasting and meaningful change towards achieving equity across all aspects of their operations and impact within their communities.



Dimensions of the Framework:

Evidence Based

This involves gathering and analyzing quantitative and qualitative data to understand where disparities exist and their root causes. This evidence serves as the foundation for developing targeted interventions and policies to address inequities effectively.

Race Conscious

This dimension guides tailoring strategies to dismantle barriers and promote inclusivity for racial minorities. By prioritizing race-conscious approaches, we can actively work to mitigate the impacts of systemic racism and promote equity for all individuals.

Institutionally Focused

This involves revising existing policies, procedures, and structures to remove biases and promote fairness. Focus ensures that equity considerations are integrated into decision-making processes across all levels of the organization, from leadership to frontline operations.

Systemically Aware

This dimension guides identifying and dismantling systemic barriers that contribute to disparities. By understanding how societal systems impact equity outcomes, we can implement proactive measures to create more equitable environments.

Equity Advancing

Emphasizing continuous learning and assessment ensures that equity initiatives evolve and improve over time. This iterative process encourages adaptation to changing circumstances and emerging equity challenges effectively.



Strategic Alignment

The Tompkins County Strategic Plan is a comprehensive framework designed to guide our community toward a future marked by inclusivity, sustainability, and well-being. Central to this plan are five priority areas: Organizational Excellence, Equitable Service Delivery, Economic Opportunity & Quality of Life, Climate Change Mitigation & Resiliency, and Health & Safety. Each of these priorities is infused with a commitment to equity, ensuring that our efforts to advance these areas benefit all community members fairly and justly.

Strategic Priority Areas:

Organizational Excellence

To foster a collaborative, flexible, organized, and effective government operation, Tompkins County will invest in its employees, promote a culture of belonging, and ensure a highly skilled and accountable workforce.

Performance Measurement Example:

of qualified applicants for County career opportunities

% of employees who report adequate access to training and development opportunities

Equitable Service Delivery

To ensure that all residents have full and convenient access to person-centered County services, Tompkins County will develop and implement strategies to provide effective services in the most equitable and accessible manner for community members.

Performance Measurement Example:

% of public and clients who indicate knowledge of County programs/offering

% staff who receive equity training annually

Economic Opportunity and Quality of Life

To increase residents' quality of life and support a thriving, inclusive and sustainable local economy, Tompkins County will use its resources and partnerships to advance access to living wage jobs; appealing, affordable, and attainable housing; and safe and affordable transportation options for people traveling to jobs and services.

Performance Measurement Example:

Analysis of outside agency funding for non-mandated services by 2026

% Cost burdened households

Climate Change Mitigation and Resiliency

To mitigate the negative impacts of climate change and enhance community resiliency, Tompkins County will reduce greenhouse gas emissions from its operations and develop and implement programs to help the community transition from fossil fuels, sustainably manage materials and waste, reduce severity of climate impacts such as flooding and drought, and prepare for disasters of all kinds.

Performance Measurement Example:

acres protected through the County's natural infrastructure capital program

of participants in Citizen Preparedness Corps

Health and Safety

To promote the health and safety of all community members, Tompkins County will provide person-centered services informed by best practices to address existing and emerging concerns.

Performance Measurement Example:

% of Clients of Office of Aging Who Report Being Able to Remain at Home₇

% of Whole Health clients who received timely access to mental health services

Utilization of Equity Indicators

Equity indicators are measurable benchmarks that help assess and track the progress of equity initiatives within an organization or community. They offer a quantitative and qualitative view of how effectively disparities are being addressed and fairness is being promoted across our work. By monitoring these indicators, we can pinpoint areas where inequities remain, evaluate the success of our actions, and make data-driven adjustments to improve our strategies.

These indicators are essential for embedding equity across all departments, aligning with our strategic goals and providing a clear view of how well we are serving diverse groups. They guide us in developing effective, equity-focused strategies that ensure our initiatives benefit all segments of the population.

Whether we are looking at economic opportunity, health outcomes, or access to services, these indicators help us ensure that our policies and programs are data-driven and tangible. By regularly reviewing and reporting on these indicators, we hold ourselves accountable to our commitment.

Equity Indicator Examples:

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Public Safety• Justice & Government• Crime Rate• Poverty Prevention• Incarceration Rates• Racial Diversity in Neighborhoods• Business Ownership• Economic Recovery• Homelessness• Cost-Burdening Households• Health Insurance• Technology Equity	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Grocery Access (Food Deserts)• Transportation• Community Engagement• Workforce Environment• Intentional Inclusion• Technological Accessibility• Poverty• Self-Sufficiency Wage• Representation & Leadership• Access to Public Services• Transparency & Accountability• Inclusive Policy Development
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Departmental Equity Indicator Examples:

Workforce Development:

- Business Ownership
 - Measures the representation of different racial, ethnic, and gender groups among business owners.
- Economic Recovery
 - Tracks the community's ability to rebound from economic downturns, focusing on equitable outcomes for all demographic groups.
- Homelessness
 - Measures the prevalence of homelessness within the community and evaluates the effectiveness of interventions to address it.

Human Resources:

- Workforce Environment
 - Measures the overall climate and culture within the workplace.
- Intentional Inclusion
 - Assesses the deliberate efforts made to integrate diversity, equity, and inclusion into all aspects of the organization.
- Poverty
 - Examines the impact of economic disparities within the workforce and aims to address issues related to employee poverty.

COFA:

- Health Insurance
 - Measures the availability and accessibility of health insurance for older adults.
- Grocery Access (Food Deserts)
 - Measures the availability of nutritious and affordable food options for older adults, particularly in areas known as food deserts.
- Transportation
 - Assesses the availability and accessibility of transportation options for older adults.

District Attorney:

- Justice and Government
 - Focuses on fair and equitable legal processes within the justice system.
- Crime Rate
 - Measures the incidence of criminal activities within a given area.
- Poverty Prevention
 - Addresses the root causes that may lead individuals to engage in criminal activities.

Key Questions to Develop Measurable Indicators that Align with the Strategic Plan

This section provides guidance for developing and selecting measurable equity indicators that align with Tompkins County’s strategic priorities. The goal is to establish clear standards for governance, resource allocation, and service delivery that reflect the county’s commitment to addressing community needs in an equitable manner. By reviewing existing departmental policies and practices for potential biases, collecting relevant data, and leveraging partnerships, departments will be equipped to make data-driven decisions that improve equitable service delivery. Additionally, the section emphasizes the importance of providing DEI training, enhancing staff understanding, and ensuring economic opportunities are accessible to all. Departments are encouraged to align their work with the county’s strategic plan by implementing targeted programs that address historically marginalized groups, focusing on health, safety, and climate resilience, while ensuring that economic and environmental policies are inclusive and equitable. The following table outlines specific questions and expected outcomes to guide departments in selecting the most relevant equity indicators for their 2025 workplans.

Developing and Selecting Equity Indicators

Table 1.1

Question	Details	Outcome	Strategic Plan Priority
How do current departmental policies and practices support or hinder equity?	Review existing policies and practices for potential biases or barriers.	Identification and removal of inequitable policies and practices.	Organizational Excellence
What data do we have to inform our understanding of equity issues? Additional data needed?	Collect and analyze data on service usage, outcomes, and demographics.	Data-driven decisions that address service gaps and improve equitable service delivery.	Equitable Service Delivery
What partnerships and collaborations can we leverage to enhance our equity work?	Ensure representation from diverse groups in committees and institute feedback mechanisms.	Inclusive decision-making that reflects the community's diversity and needs.	Economic Opportunity & Quality of Life
What training and resources are needed to prioritize an inclusive workplace and create a sense of belonging?	Identify and implement DEI training programs and provide necessary resources for staff.	Enhanced staff understanding and commitment to DEI principles.	Organizational Excellence
Ways our department can contribute to the County's strategic priority areas through an equity lens?	Develop targeted programs and services to support often historically ignored and marginalized groups.	Improved access and outcomes for often historically ignored and marginalized communities.	Health & Safety
What strategies are in place to ensure economic opportunities are equitable?	Review and revise economic policies and programs to eliminate disparities.	Equitable access to economic opportunities for all community members.	Economic Opportunity & Quality of Life
How is the department contributing to climate change mitigation and resiliency?	Implement practices and policies that reduce environmental impact and enhance community resilience.	Reduced environmental impact and increased community resilience, with a focus on equity.	Climate Change Mitigation & Resiliency

Shared Data and Analysis

In the process of institutionalizing equity, it is essential to ground our efforts in comprehensive and accurate data. The data shared in this report is preliminary in nature and serves as an important starting point for understanding both our internal and external practices. It highlights areas of strength and identifies opportunities for growth. This information includes workforce demographics (2016 vs 2024), the legislative district diversity index, and the results from the CEDO listening tour. Additionally, the shared data and analysis will include both qualitative and quantitative data, with qualitative data highlighting professional development opportunities and exposure to DEI-related topics.

As we continue to track equity indicators over time, we will refine and expand our data aggregation and analysis, developing a more robust and comprehensive approach. These insights will guide decision-making and shape strategies to advance equity, ensuring that our initiatives are measurable, aligned with strategic goals, and responsive to the needs of historically marginalized groups.

Analysis of Diversity Metrics: 2016 vs. 2024

This analysis compares the diversity metrics of the full-time workforce from 2016 and 2024, focusing on key demographic factors including race/ethnicity, gender, age, veteran status, and disability status. The goal is to identify trends and changes over the eight-year period and assess the overall diversity of the workforce.

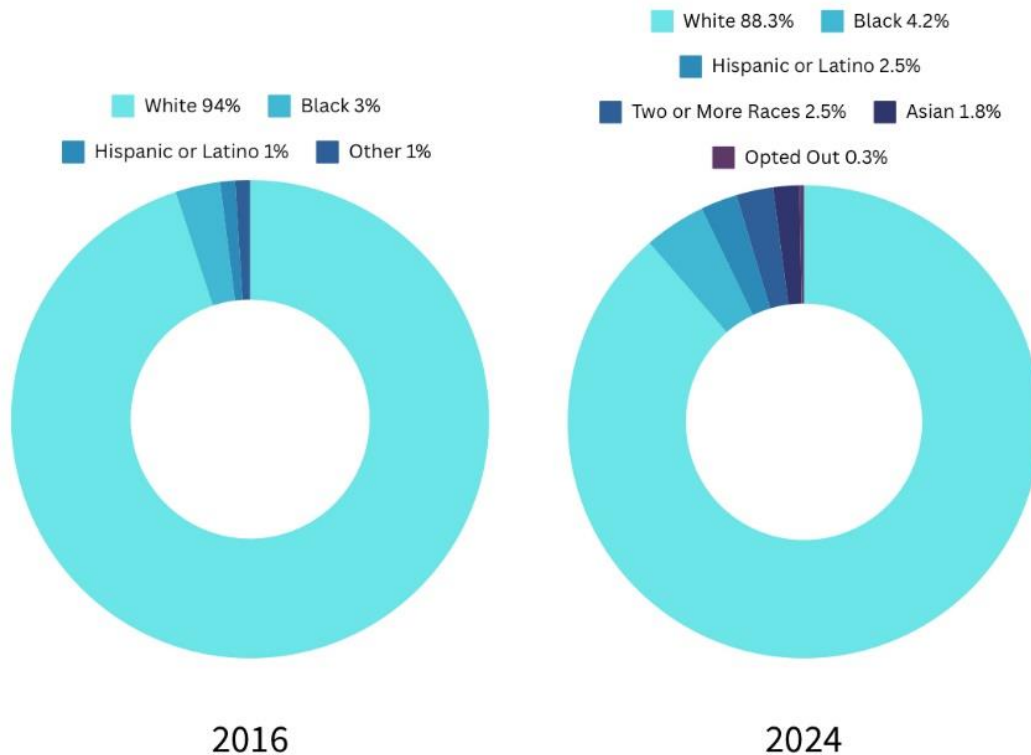
Further analysis is conducted to break down these metrics by specific industry roles. The workforce is categorized into the following industry roles:

- **Officials & Administrators:** This category includes top-level management and executives responsible for policy-making, strategic direction, and overall leadership within the organization.
- **Professionals:** Employees in this role typically have specialized education and training in fields such as healthcare, law, education, engineering, and other areas that require a high level of expertise.
- **Technicians:** Technicians apply technical knowledge and skills to support professionals in their work. They often operate specialized equipment or systems and provide technical support in various fields, such as IT, healthcare, and engineering.
- **Protective Services:** This group includes employees working in roles related to safety and security, such as law enforcement officers, firefighters, and emergency responders.
- **Paraprofessionals:** Paraprofessionals provide support to professionals in fields such as education, healthcare, and social services, often performing specialized tasks under the supervision of a licensed or certified professional.
- **Administrative Support:** These employees manage office operations, provide clerical support, and assist in administrative tasks across various departments and sectors.

- **Skilled Craft Workers:** This category includes workers with specialized trade skills, such as electricians, carpenters, and mechanics, who perform hands-on, skilled work requiring training or apprenticeships.
- **Service Maintenance:** Employees in this role perform routine and specialized maintenance work, including janitorial services, building upkeep, and groundskeeping.

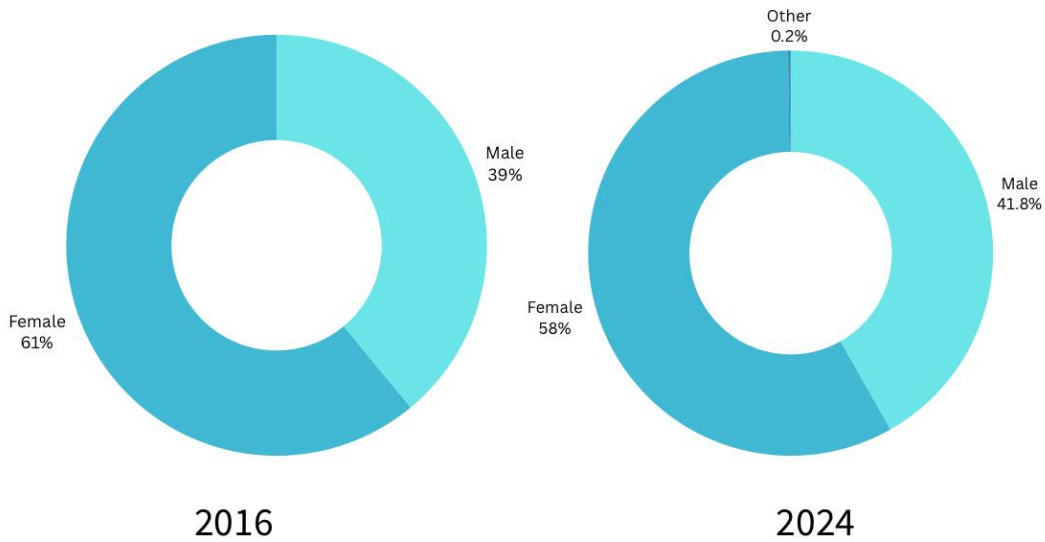
By analyzing the demographics within these roles, the report seeks to provide a deeper understanding of diversity trends within specific job categories and identify areas for improvement or further action.

Race/Ethnicity:



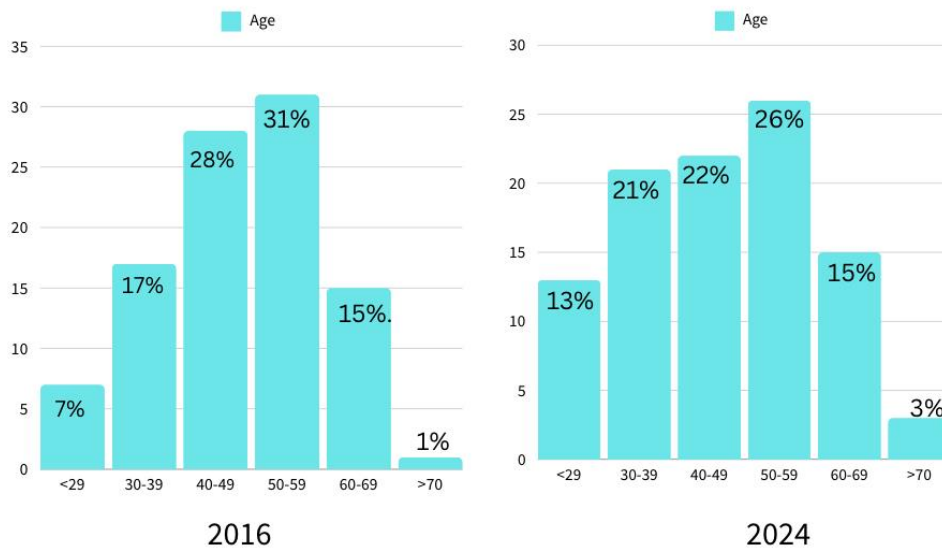
The data indicates a decrease in the percentage of White employees, from 94% in 2016 to 88.3% in 2024. Concurrently, there has been a slight increase in the representation of Black employees, rising from 3% to 4.2%, and Hispanic or Latino employees, increasing from 1% to 2.5%. Additionally, the introduction of new categories in 2024—Two or More Races and Asian employees—further highlights the overall increase in racial diversity within the workforce since 2016.

Gender Distribution



Gender distribution has remained relatively stable, with a slight increase in the percentage of male employees, from 39% to 41.8%. Additionally, there is some representation of other gender identities, reflecting a growing diversity in gender representation within the workforce.

Age Distribution

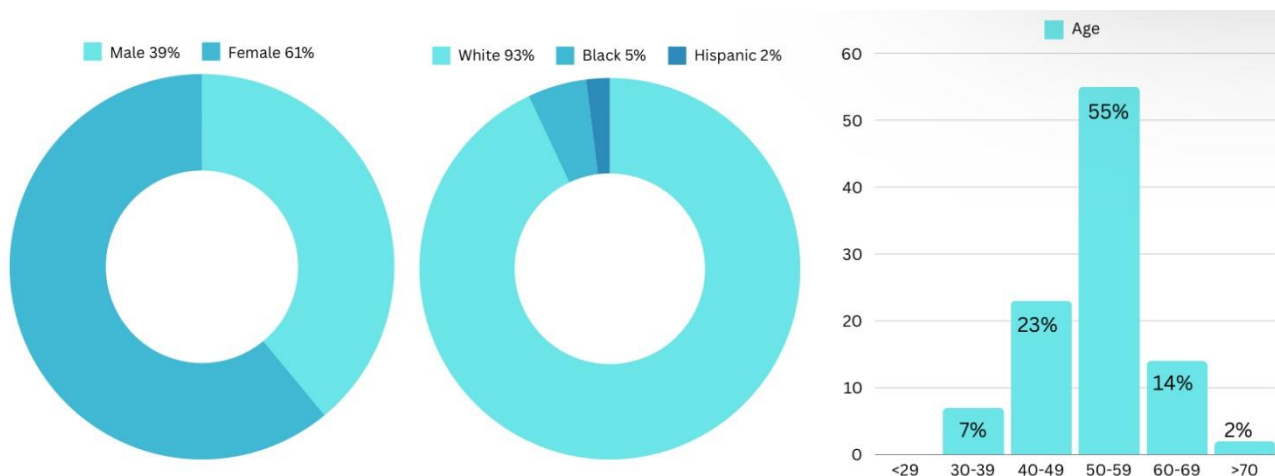


Age distribution has experienced notable shifts over the eight-year period. The percentage of employees under 29 has increased from 7% to 13%, indicating a trend toward a younger workforce. The 30-39 age group has seen a slight increase, from 17% to 21%, the 40-49 age group has also experienced a slight decline, from 28% to 22%. The 50-59 and 60-69 age groups have remained relatively stable, with slight decrease in representation. Additionally, the percentage of employees aged 70 and over has risen from 1% to 3%.

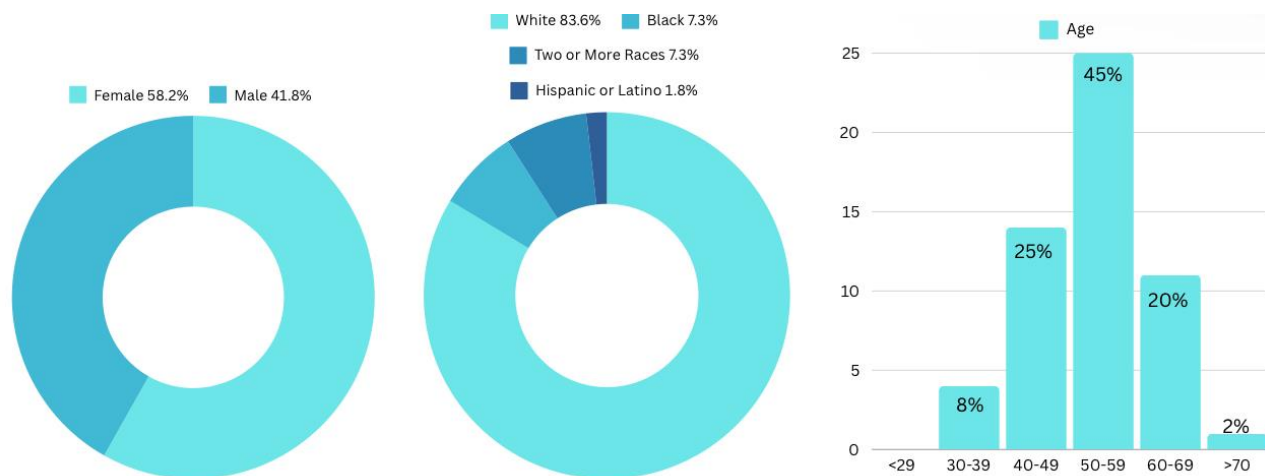
Veteran and Disability Status

The 2016 data did not include information on veteran and disability status. In 2024, these categories represent less than 1% of the workforce. The county is committed to resurveying the workforce to obtain a more accurate depiction of these areas. The support of the Veterans Department will be integral to this effort, playing a significant role in enhancing the research and driving improvements in these underrepresented categories.

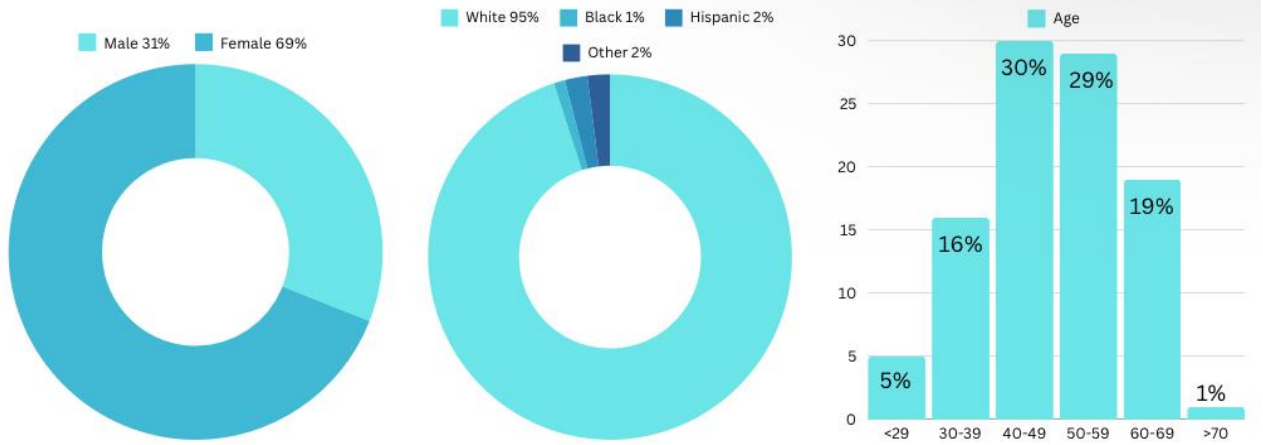
Officials & Administrators 2016



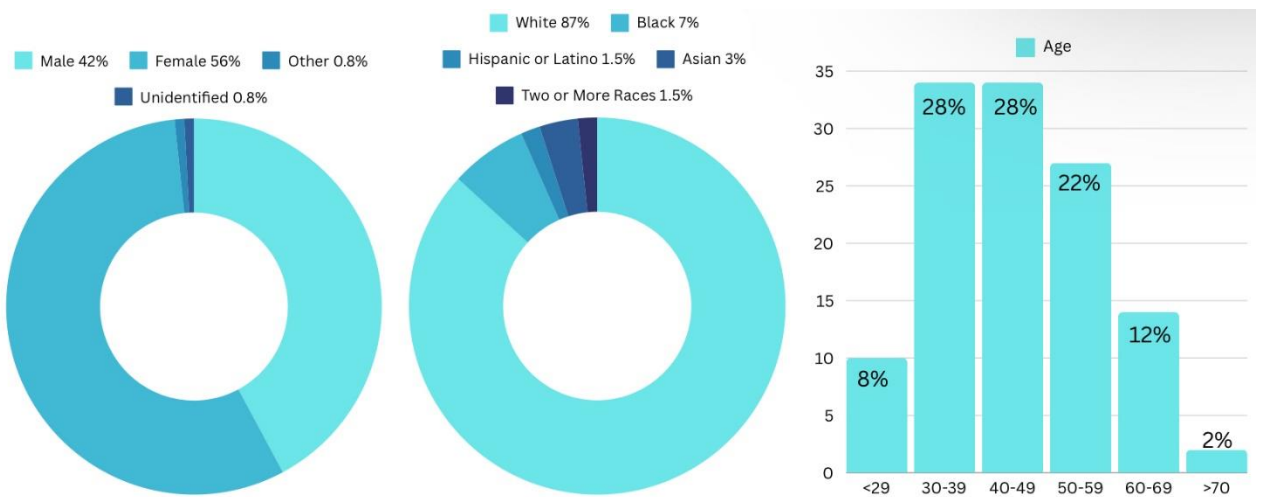
Officials & Administrators 2024



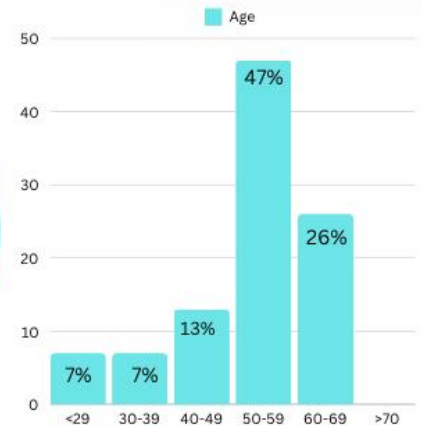
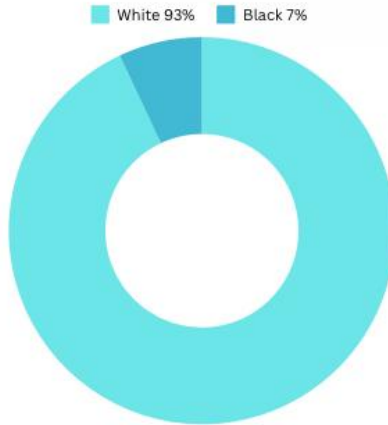
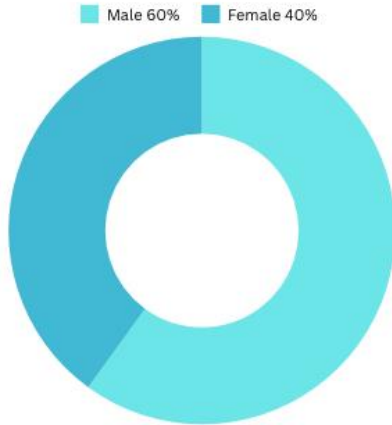
Professional 2016



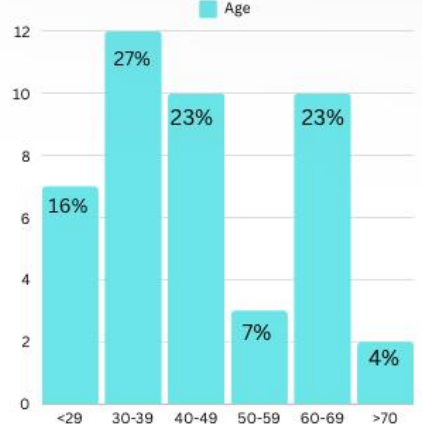
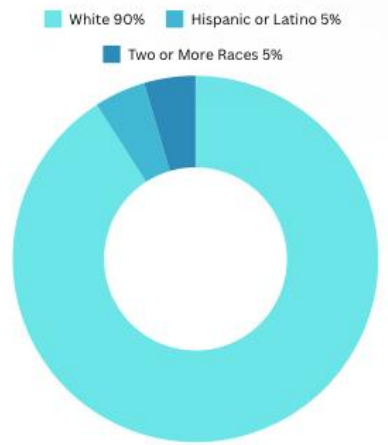
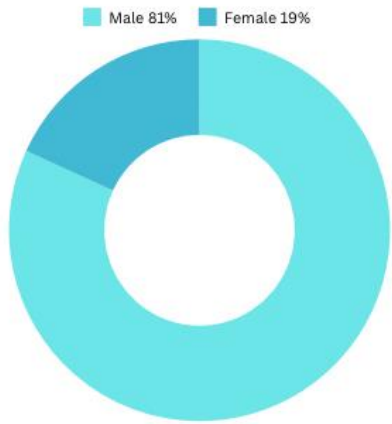
Professional 2024



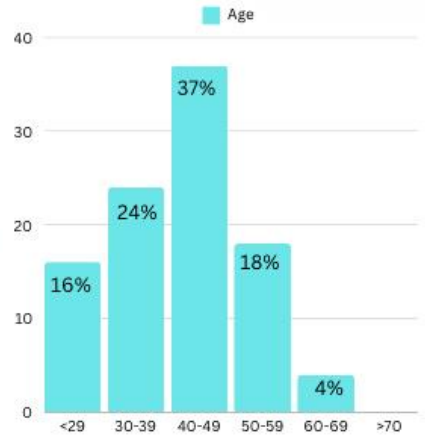
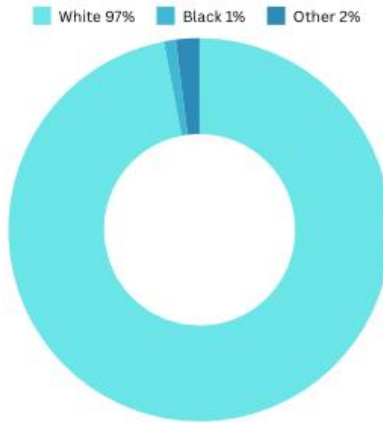
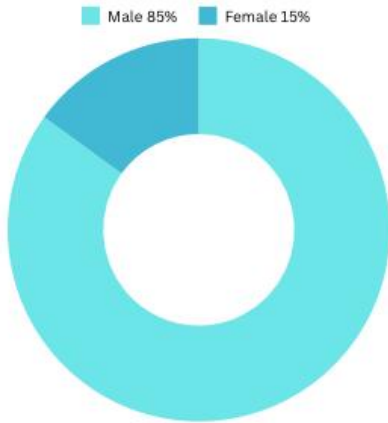
Technician 2016



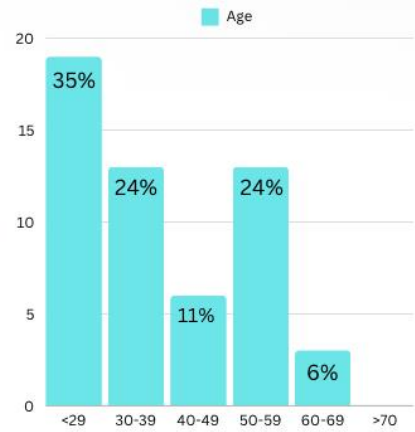
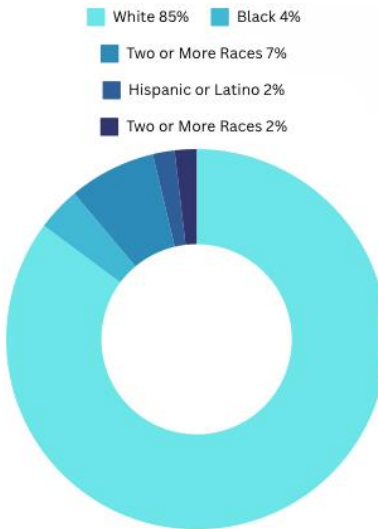
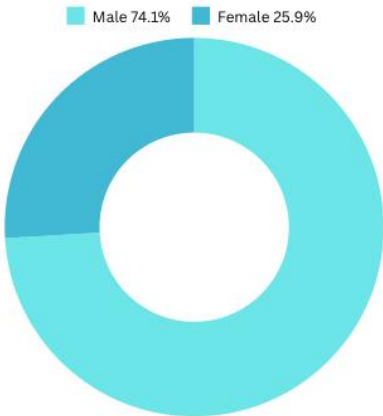
Technician 2024



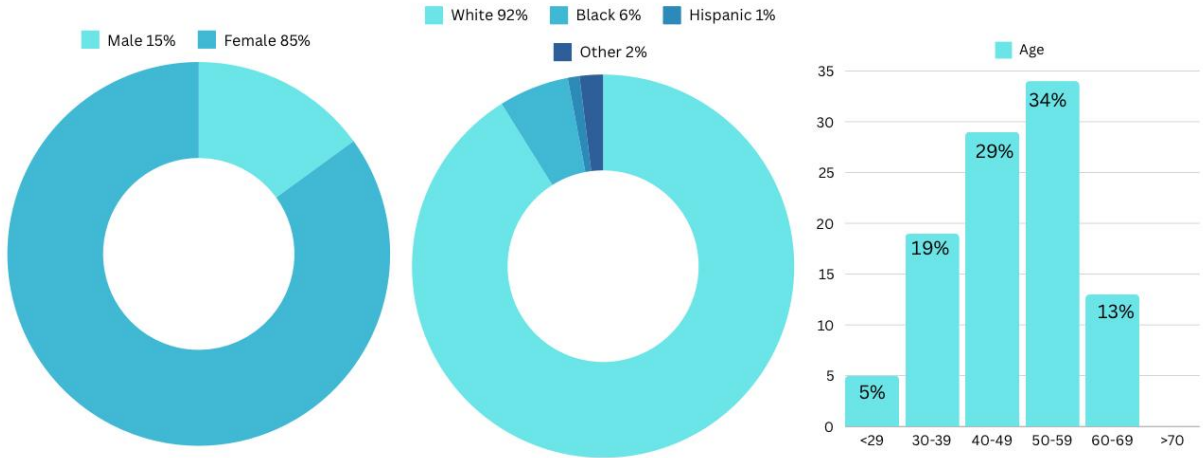
Protective Services 2016



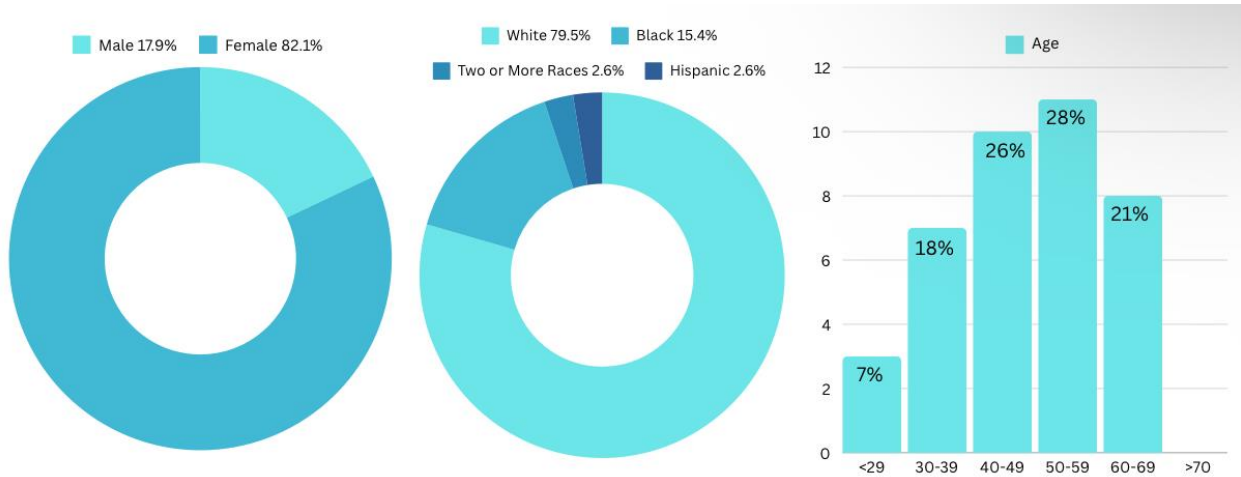
Protective Services 2024



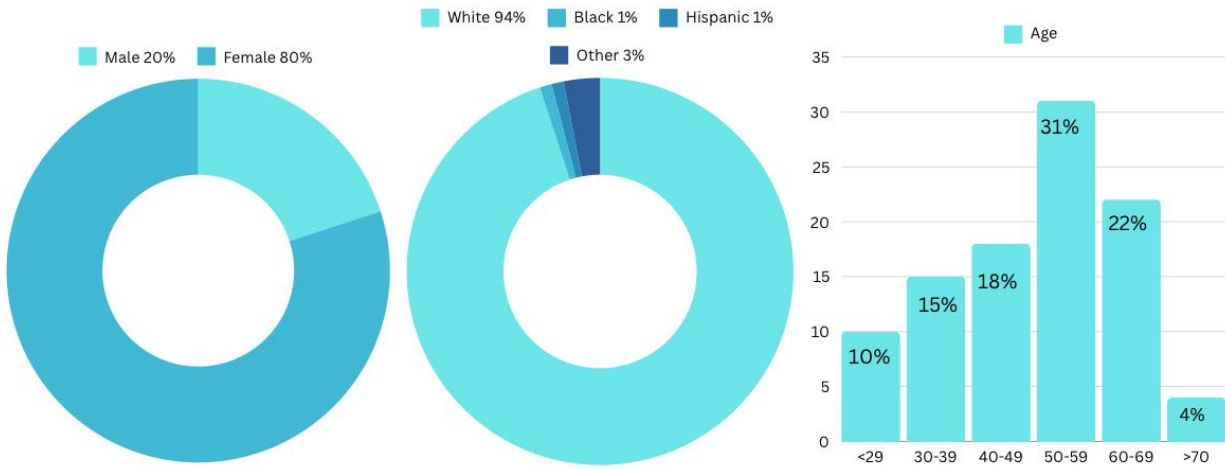
Paraprofessional 2016



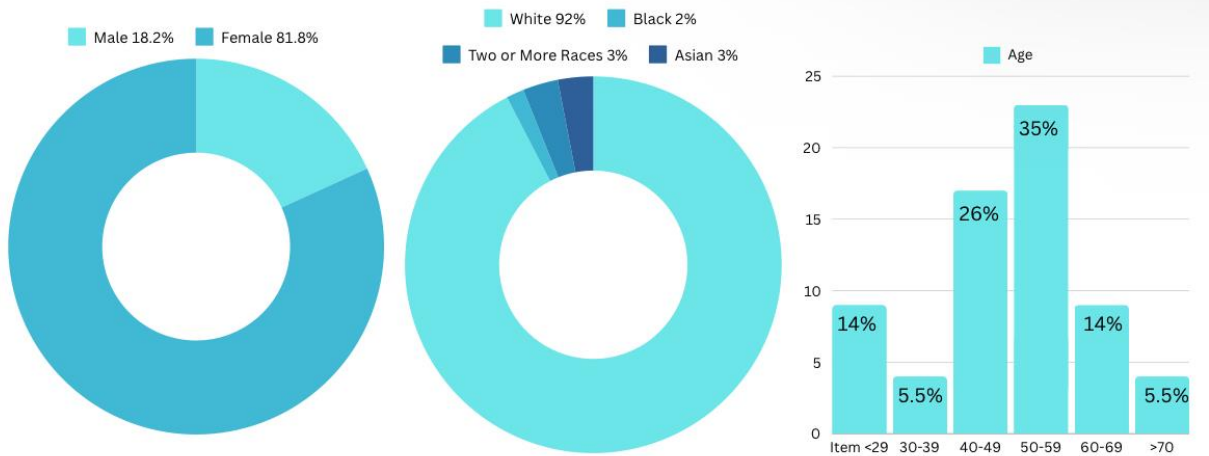
Paraprofessional 2024



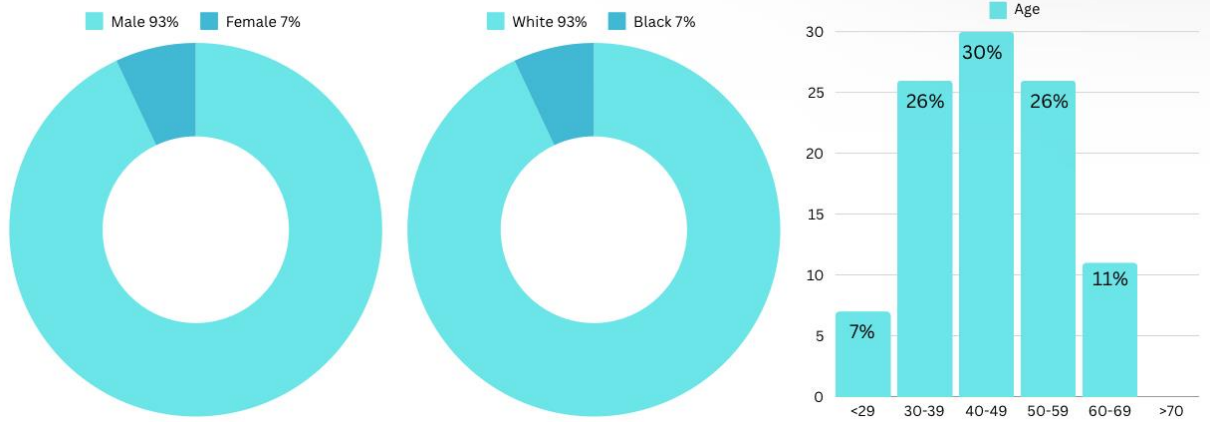
Administrative Support 2016



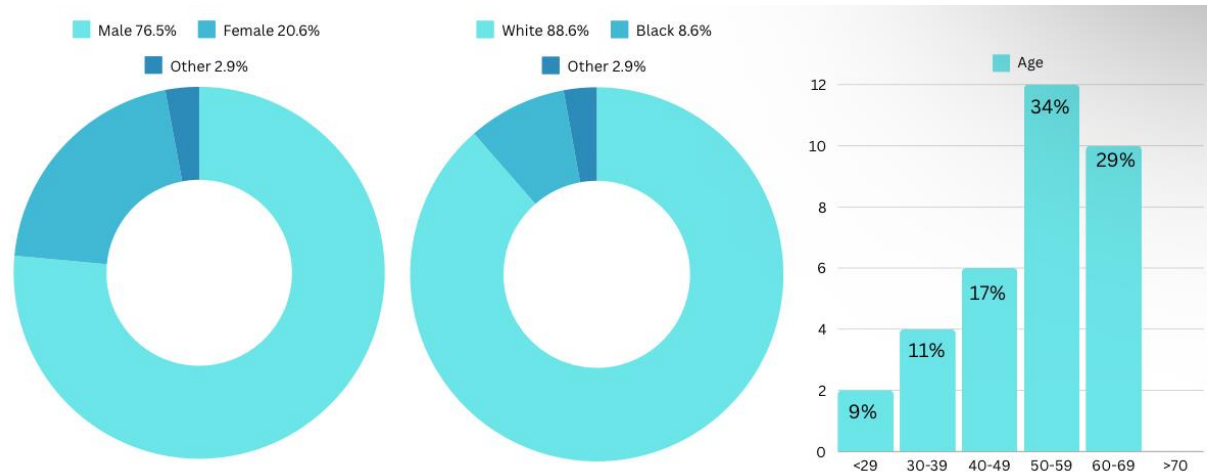
Administrative Support 2024



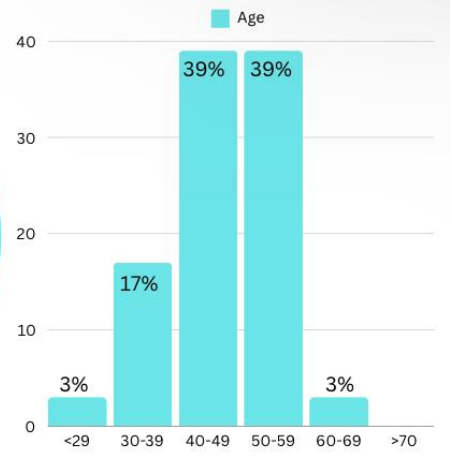
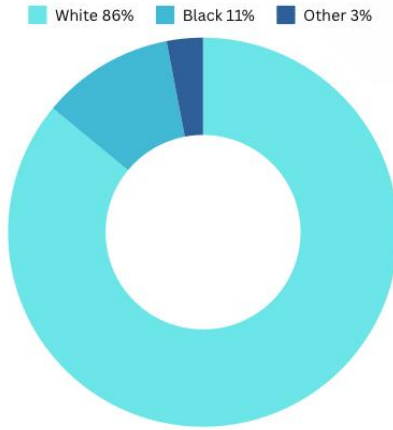
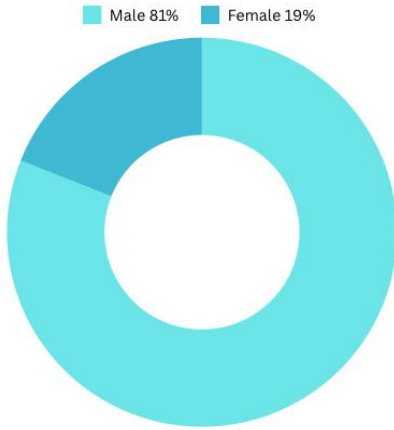
Skilled Craft Worker 2016



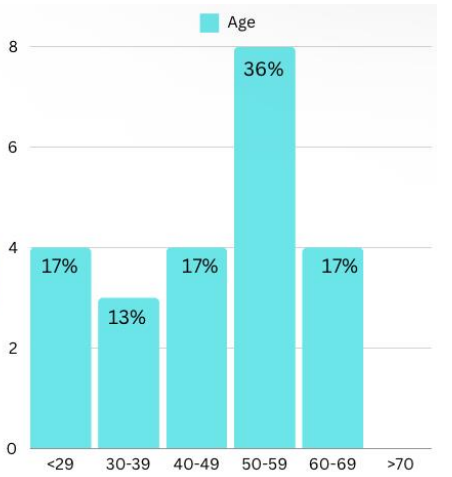
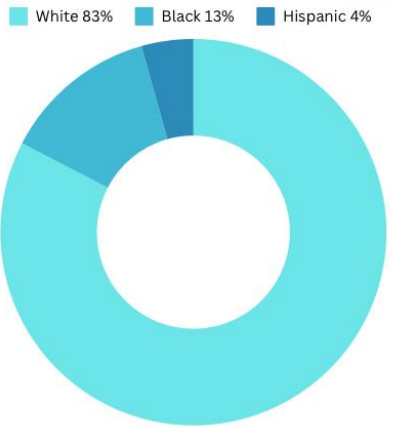
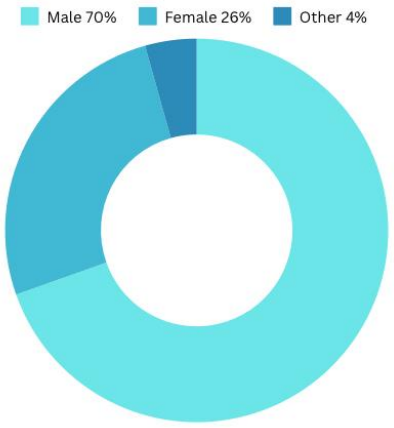
Skilled Craft Worker 2024



Service Maintenance 2016



Service Maintenance 2024



The comparison of diversity metrics between 2016 and 2024 highlights several important trends:

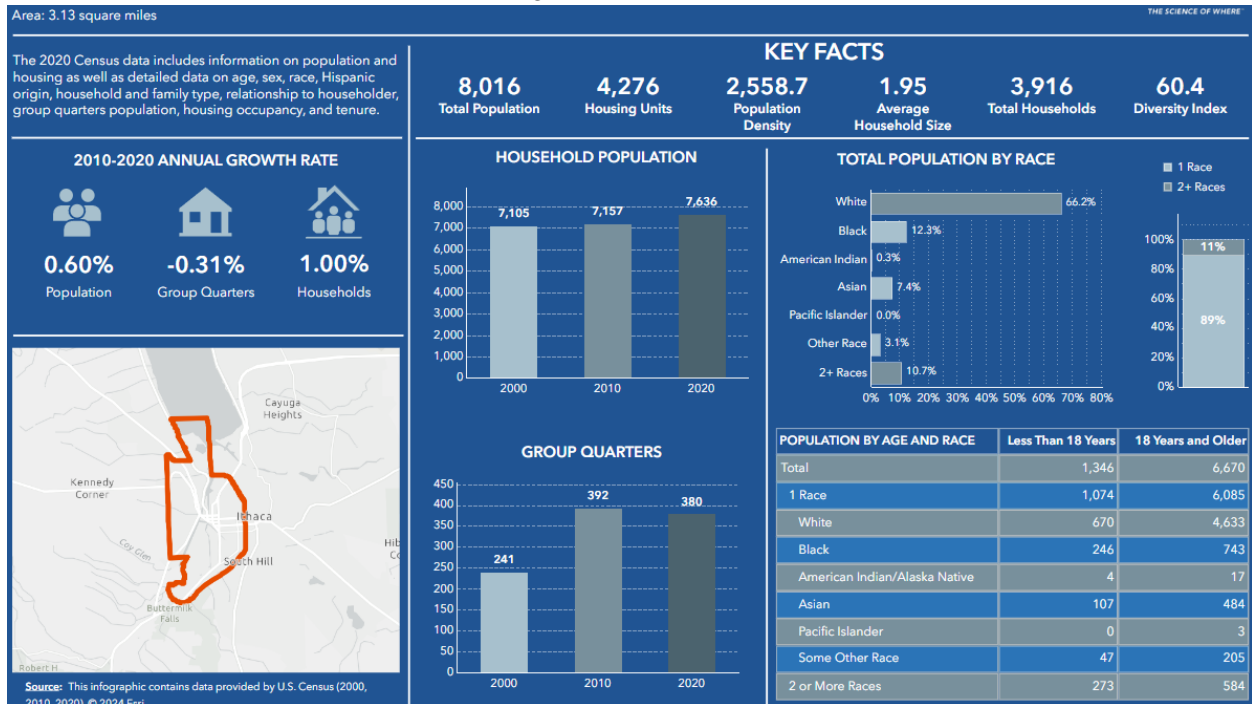
- **Increased Workforce Diversity:** Over the past eight years, there has been a modest increase in the representation of various demographic groups within the workforce, reflecting a positive trend toward greater diversity across the organization. To continue increasing this diversity over time, the county can focus on implementing targeted recruitment strategies, fostering an inclusive work environment, and providing professional development opportunities that support underrepresented groups.
- **Stable Gender Distribution:** Gender distribution has remained relatively consistent, with a gradual shift towards a more balanced representation between male and female employees. To continue promoting gender equity, the county can implement targeted strategies to attract diverse gender identities and ensure that all employees have equal access to opportunities for growth and advancement.
- **Younger Workforce:** Age distribution reflects an increase in younger employees, indicating a trend toward a younger workforce within the organization. To build on this trend, the county can focus on providing mentorship and career development opportunities that support the professional growth of younger employees, ensuring their long-term retention and success within the workforce.
- **Opportunities for Inclusion:** The data highlights areas where greater inclusion efforts are needed, particularly in the participation of veterans and individuals with disabilities. To enhance inclusion, the county can develop targeted outreach programs, create accessible pathways for these groups to enter the workforce, and implement workplace accommodations to ensure all employees can fully contribute and thrive.

2020 GIS Census Diversity Index

The inclusion of GIS Census data is pivotal for advancing equity in public policy and governance within Tompkins County. By offering a detailed overview of population trends, demographics, and housing characteristics within each Legislative District, this data provides a critical lens for understanding the diverse needs of our communities.

Below are samples from the 2020 GIS Census:

Legislative District 1



Legislative District 2

Area: 1.31 square miles

THE SCIENCE OF WHERE

The 2020 Census data includes information on population and housing as well as detailed data on age, sex, race, Hispanic origin, household and family type, relationship to householder, group quarters population, housing occupancy, and tenure.

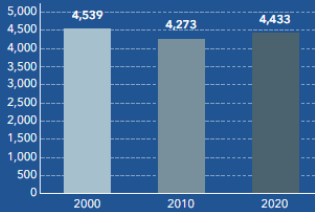
KEY FACTS

6,370 Total Population **2,313** Housing Units **4,864.5** Population Density **2.15** Average Household Size **2,060** Total Households **58.0** Diversity Index

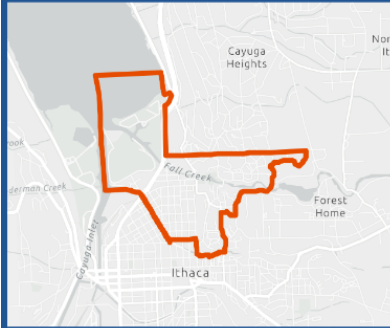
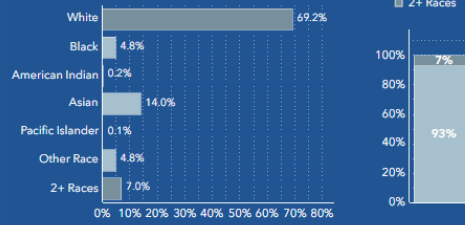
2010-2020 ANNUAL GROWTH RATE



HOUSEHOLD POPULATION

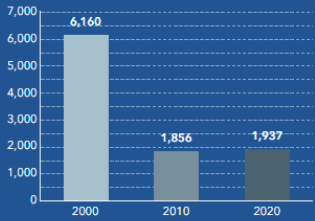


TOTAL POPULATION BY RACE



Source: This infographic contains data provided by U.S. Census (2000, 2010, 2020). © 2024 Esri

GROUP QUARTERS



POPULATION BY AGE AND RACE

	Less Than 18 Years	18 Years and Older
Total	578	5,792
1 Race	476	5,448
White	383	4,022
Black	17	288
American Indian/Alaska Native	1	13
Asian	54	835
Pacific Islander	0	2
Some Other Race	20	288
2 or More Races	102	344

Legislative District 5

Area: 53.3 square miles

THE SCIENCE OF WHERE

The 2020 Census data includes information on population and housing as well as detailed data on age, sex, race, Hispanic origin, household and family type, relationship to householder, group quarters population, housing occupancy, and tenure.

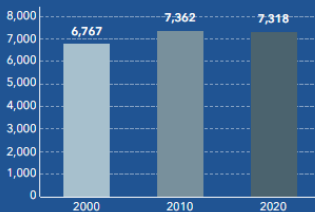
KEY FACTS

7,498 Total Population **3,834** Housing Units **140.7** Population Density **2.19** Average Household Size **3,349** Total Households **33.7** Diversity Index

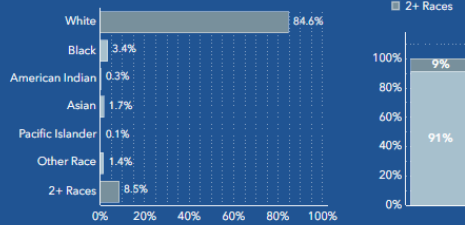
2010-2020 ANNUAL GROWTH RATE



HOUSEHOLD POPULATION

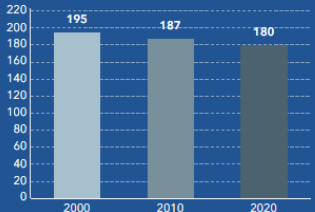


TOTAL POPULATION BY RACE



Source: This infographic contains data provided by U.S. Census (2000, 2010, 2020). © 2024 Esri

GROUP QUARTERS



POPULATION BY AGE AND RACE

	Less Than 18 Years	18 Years and Older
Total	1,434	6,064
1 Race	1,201	5,658
White	1,057	5,283
Black	75	183
American Indian/Alaska Native	5	15
Asian	29	100
Pacific Islander	3	4
Some Other Race	33	74
2 or More Races	233	406

This comprehensive data serves as a foundation for making informed decisions, ensuring that policies are tailored to address disparities and foster fairness across all neighborhoods. This data-driven approach not only enhances the fairness and effectiveness of public policies but also creates a foundation for long-term, sustainable change in our community.

Examples of initiatives that utilize this data include:

Identifying Community Needs

GIS Census data enables a comprehensive understanding of the unique needs and characteristics of each district. By examining population trends, demographics, and housing conditions, we can identify areas with higher concentrations of marginalized groups—such as racial and ethnic minorities, low-income residents, or vulnerable populations. This helps pinpoint where targeted interventions and support are needed to address disparities.

Effective Allocation of Resources

Equity in policy requires that resources be distributed in a way that addresses the specific needs of different communities. This data allows for a more nuanced understanding of where resources such as affordable housing, social services, and infrastructure investments are most needed. This ensures that resources are directed to communities with the greatest disparities, rather than adopting a "one-size-fits-all" approach.

Monitoring Progress and Ensuring Accountability

Institutionalizing equity involves continuously assessing whether policies and initiatives are reducing disparities and improving outcomes for historically disadvantaged groups. Census data provides a baseline for tracking changes in population, housing, and demographics over time. This allows policymakers to evaluate the effectiveness of equity-focused programs and hold institutions accountable for measurable improvements in equity.

Building Community Trust and Engagement

Transparency in the use of data is vital for rebuilding trust between government institutions and the communities they serve. When data is used to identify and address inequities, it signals a commitment to fairness and inclusion. Engaging with communities based on accurate, detailed data fosters stronger partnerships and ensures that public policies reflect the diverse needs and experiences of all residents, particularly those from historically underrepresented groups.

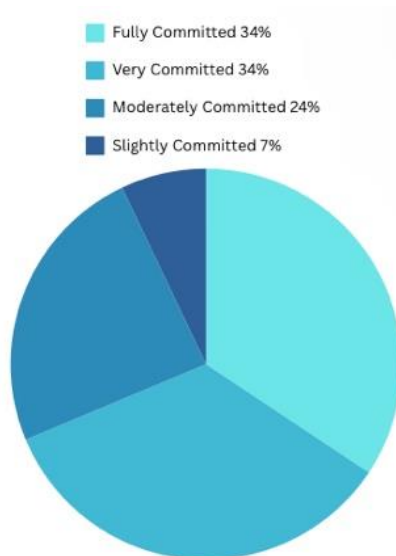
Chief Equity & Diversity Officer Listening Tour: Survey Analysis

Delving deeper into data analysis, it's important to emphasize the role of active listening. In 2023, the CEDO launched an initial project to assess the organizational DEI landscape by conducting a listening tour. This initiative engaged department heads, senior leaders, and employees in meaningful dialogue to gather valuable insights into the current workplace culture, identifying both areas for improvement and opportunities for enhancement. Following the tour, a survey was distributed, yielding a 32% response rate for the overall organization. The data collected addresses key themes essential to fostering a more diverse, equitable, and inclusive workplace. Key highlights from the findings include:

- **Workforce Diversity Enhancement**
- **Civil Service Exam Accessibility**
- **Culture & Morale**
- **Retention Efforts for Intersectional Individuals**
- **Access to DEI-Related Training**
- **Recognition of the Work of Providers with Intersectional Identities**
- **Coherent Approaches to DEI**
- **Promotional Infrastructure**

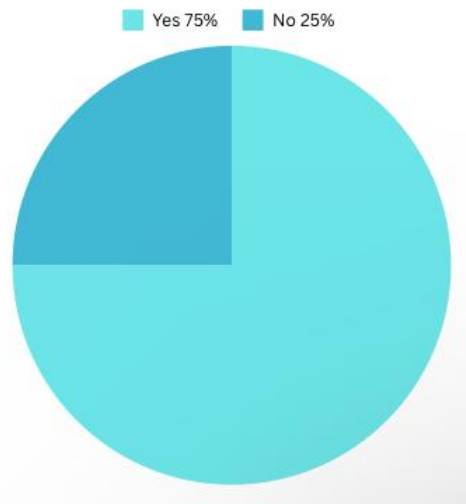
Survey Overview:

1. How would you rate your departments commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion?



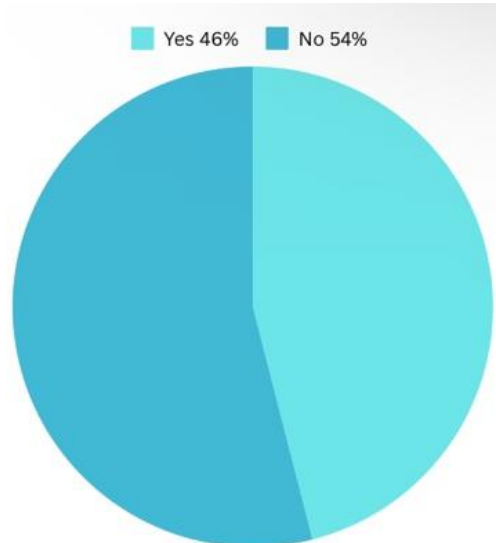
34% rated their departments current DEI commitment as Fully Committed.

2. Have you received diversity, equity, and inclusion training in the past year?



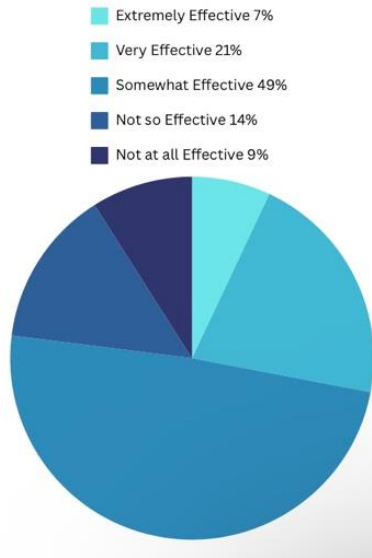
75% of employees have received diversity, equity, and inclusion training in the past year.

3. Has your department implemented diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives or programs in the last year?



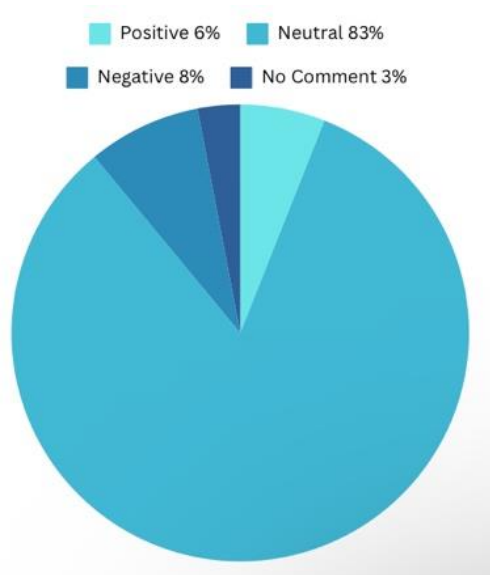
The data reveals a nearly even distribution between departments that have implemented diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives (46%) and those that have not (54%).

4. How effective do you believe these initiatives have been in promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion.



Approximately 49% of respondents indicate that the initiatives are somewhat effective, while the remaining responses range from extremely effective to not effective at all.

5. Do you believe there are any areas where your department needs additional diversity, equity, and inclusion support or resources?



The majority of respondents (83%) remain neutral regarding the areas where departments may require additional diversity, equity, and inclusion resources.

DEI Summit – Leadership at Every Level

The *DEI Summit: Leadership at Every Level* was a pivotal event focused on equipping Tompkins County leaders and Ithaca College administration and staff with the tools, strategies, and accountability frameworks needed to advance diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) within their departments and beyond. This collaborative effort, held in partnership with *Ithaca College's DEI Department*, emphasized the integration of DEI principles into all facets of operations, fostering a culture of equity and inclusion across organizations.

The summit featured inspiring and educational sessions, including a keynote address from *Dr. Cornell Verde-Woodson*, founder of *Brave Trainings, LLC*, an LGBTQ+ eLearning boutique DEIB consulting firm. Dr. Verde-Woodson challenged participants to rethink their approach to leadership and DEI by prioritizing authenticity, accountability, and transformative action. Additionally, the summit included a session led by *John Robinson*, founder of *Our Ability*, an organization dedicated to connecting individuals with disabilities to employment opportunities through innovative technologies and partnerships. Robinson's presentation underscored the importance of inclusive employment practices and leveraging our knowledge of ableism in the workplace to disrupt barriers.

The summit not only strengthened the foundation for DEI efforts but also highlighted the importance of collaborative partnerships and innovative solutions in driving equity across the county. It reinforced that *DEI is not a singular initiative but a shared responsibility* that must permeate all levels of leadership and decision-making.

Tompkins County Equity Exchange Reading & Discussion Group

Tompkins County hosted a four-month Equity Exchange Reading & Discussion Group, led by staff members who volunteered their time and served as members of *Team JEDI*. The curriculum covered a range of themes each month, including *Foundations of Equity and Rights*, *Voices of Resistance and Empowerment*, *Understanding Systemic Racism*, *Intersections of Identity and Health*, and *Dialogue and Action*. The group achieved a 70% retention rate by the end of the four-month period. Following the completion of the program, a brief survey was distributed to gather feedback on participants' experiences.

Team JEDI – Tompkins County Core Equity Team

Team JEDI is an employee-led initiative with 30 total members, of which 15 are active participants. These dedicated individuals represent a diverse cross-section of Tompkins County departments and work collaboratively to advance the county's diversity, equity, and inclusion goals. Through its work, *JEDI* exemplifies a commitment to professional development that not only enhances the skills and understanding of county employees but also plays a pivotal role in advancing equity within Tompkins County. Their ongoing efforts to evaluate policies, engage in

educational initiatives, and build collaborative relationships are essential to ensuring that equity is institutionalized at every level of the organization.

Equity Exchange Monthly Newsletter

The Equity Exchange Monthly Newsletter provides valuable insights and resources for staff and the community, focusing on celebrating monthly observances such as cultural heritage months and awareness campaigns. Each edition highlights key figures to research and explore, offers resources on nuanced DEI topics, and recommends readings related to the month's theme. Additionally, staff recommendations are featured to encourage further learning and engagement, promoting continuous professional development and fostering an inclusive, informed community.



2025 and Beyond: Institutionalizing Equity in Tompkins County

As Tompkins County continues its journey toward equitable practices, the year 2025 and beyond marks a critical phase in institutionalizing equity within County operations and services. This section outlines the next steps for embedding equity across all levels of the County government, providing clear expectations for staff, leadership, and the community. Key elements include the integration of equity indicators into department workplans, the establishment of an annual equity report, the implementation of a bias reporting structure, and the administration of a climate survey to monitor progress. Additionally, the creation of an Equity and Diversity Office will further enhance our ability to make data-driven decisions that promote equity and improve services for all residents.

1. Equity Indicators and Department Workplans (2025)

As previously mentioned, department heads will be building 1-2 equity indicators into their workplans for 2025. These equity indicators will be reported within departmental workplans to the respective Legislative program committees as well as to WDIC in 2025. In addition to integrating equity indicators into their 2025 workplans, departments will be required to report their progress using one of two recommended formats: a written report or a PowerPoint presentation. These presentations will be delivered throughout 2025, providing department heads with an opportunity to highlight the outcomes, challenges, and insights related to their selected equity indicators.

The written reports will provide detailed documentation of progress, data collected, and any adjustments made to strategies or initiatives, ensuring that the work is thoroughly documented. The PowerPoint presentations will allow for a concise, visual overview of the department's efforts, including key metrics, trends, and lessons learned.

Both the written reports and/or PowerPoint presentations will be submitted to the Workforce Diversity and Inclusion Committee (WDIC) for review and discussion. This process is designed to facilitate transparent communication and foster cross-departmental collaboration, allowing WDIC to offer feedback, suggest improvements, and ensure alignment with the county's broader DEI goals.

The development of these reports and presentations will be a key component in maintaining accountability, ensuring that departments not only implement their equity initiatives but also evaluate and adjust them as needed.

2. Annual Equity Report

An essential component of our ongoing commitment to equity is the annual Equity Report, compiled by the Chief Equity and Diversity Officer in collaboration with the County Administrator. The report will serve as both a public and internal-facing document to review progress on equity goals, highlight challenges, and celebrate successes. The report will become an integral part of Tompkins County's accountability framework, providing a comprehensive evaluation of how well the County's equity objectives are being met, and offering actionable insights to guide further improvements.

Expectations for the Annual Report:

- **Progress Updates:** The report will track the success of equity initiatives, based on the data collected from the previous year's departmental workplans and performance against selected equity indicators.
- **Challenges and Areas for Improvement:** The report will highlight areas where progress has been slower than expected or where additional resources or strategies may be required. It will also include an honest assessment of any barriers or systemic issues that need to be addressed.
- **Community and Staff Engagement:** The report will include insights from staff surveys, community engagement activities, and feedback collected from the bias reporting system and climate survey (see below).
- **Action Plan for the Coming Year:** Based on the annual review, the report will set actionable goals for the following year, including updated recommendations for departments to improve equity outcomes. These goals will be aligned with the next phase of the County's strategic plan for equity and inclusion.

The **annual nature** of this report ensures that progress is regularly monitored, public accountability is maintained, and any necessary course corrections can be made promptly. By setting clear expectations each year, we maintain a continuous cycle of learning, reflection, and improvement.

3. Equity Mapping

Equity mapping will be a key component in the ongoing effort to institutionalize equity across Tompkins County. By using GIS and other data tools, equity mapping will provide a visual representation of demographic data, resource distribution, and service accessibility across the County. This will help identify geographic and systemic disparities, ensure resources are allocated equitably, and monitor progress in closing gaps. Equity mapping will allow the County to assess where interventions are most needed and ensure that policies are responsive to the diverse needs of residents, particularly in historically underrepresented communities.

The outcomes from equity mapping, when combined with the departmental equity indicators, will provide a powerful framework for benchmarking progress over time. The data gathered through both mapping and the departmental workplans will work synergistically to identify disparities, track changes in key equity metrics, and guide the development of targeted interventions. These combined insights will allow the County to measure its progress in real-time, enabling departments to adjust their strategies, resources, and policies to better serve marginalized groups. By continuously monitoring these indicators and mapping data, Tompkins County can create more informed, effective interventions, ensuring that equity becomes a sustainable and measurable part of the County's governance.

4. Bias Reporting Structure

As part of our commitment to creating a fair, inclusive, and transparent County government, a bias reporting structure will be introduced to facilitate the safe reporting of incidents of bias, discrimination, or harassment by both employees and community members. This system will

allow individuals to report concerns anonymously or directly, ensuring a responsive, transparent process for addressing issues and improving the organizational climate.

Mapping and Process for Bias Reporting:

- **Clear Channels for Reporting:** Employees and residents will have access to multiple reporting channels, including an online form, email, and designated staff members. This ensures that all individuals, regardless of their comfort level or knowledge of systems, can report incidents easily and without fear of retaliation.
- **Review and Action:** Reports will be reviewed by designated personnel who will assess the reports and take appropriate actions, ranging from informal mediation to more formal investigations, depending on the severity of the report.
- **Regular Data Analysis:** The collected data from bias reports will be analyzed annually to identify patterns or trends, which will be incorporated into the Equity Report to assess the overall climate within the County. These insights will help identify any systemic biases or areas that require further attention.

5. Administering the Climate Survey

In addition to the bias reporting structure, the **Climate Survey** will be administered every three (3) to five (5) years to assess the work environment and organizational climate across the County. This survey will be a vital tool in understanding how employees feel about the County's equity, diversity, and inclusion efforts, as well as providing insights into areas where further support and development may be needed.

Using the Climate Survey to Support Equity:

- **Data-Driven Insights:** The survey will collect both qualitative and quantitative data that will be used to evaluate the County's progress in creating an inclusive work environment. This includes understanding employee perceptions of diversity, inclusion, opportunities for advancement, and overall satisfaction.
- **Departmental Support:** Results from the survey will be shared with department heads to help them assess their own departmental culture and identify areas for improvement. Departments will be expected to incorporate survey findings into their annual equity reports and adjust strategies accordingly.
- **Additional Assessments for the County:** The climate survey results will provide data not only for individual departments but also for the County as a whole. This will help identify any systemic issues that need to be addressed at the organizational level and ensure that all staff members, regardless of their position, feel valued and included.

6. Development of the Equity and Diversity Office

To support the continued implementation and oversight of equity initiatives, the establishment of an **Equity and Diversity Office** will be a key goal for 2025 and beyond. This office will be responsible for overseeing all equity-related initiatives, ensuring consistency in policy application, and leading efforts to collect meaningful data for enhanced decision-making.

Role of the Equity and Diversity Office:

- **Leadership and Coordination:** The office will be led by the Chief Equity and Diversity Officer (CEDO) and will work closely with department heads, JEDI, and other key stakeholders to ensure alignment with the County's DEI goals.
- **Data Collection and Analysis:** The office will oversee the collection of data related to DEI initiatives, including data from the climate survey, bias reporting system, and departmental equity indicators. This data will be used to track progress, identify gaps, and make informed decisions regarding resource allocation.
- **Training and Support:** The office will provide ongoing training and resources to staff to build capacity for addressing equity issues. This includes providing support for departments in aligning their work with equity goals and ensuring that all staff have the tools they need to succeed in an inclusive environment.
- **Annual Reports and Strategic Planning:** The Equity and Diversity Office will be responsible for compiling the annual Equity Report and ensuring that it reflects the County's progress. The office will also be involved in reviewing the strategic plan and providing recommendations for future DEI initiatives.

Conclusion

As Tompkins County advances its efforts to institutionalize equity, the steps outlined in this report represent a critical and strategic framework for embedding diversity, equity, and inclusion across all levels of County operations. From integrating equity indicators into departmental workplans to the creation of the Equity and Diversity Office, these initiatives aim to ensure that equity remains a priority and is continuously monitored, assessed, and refined.

The combination of data-driven approaches, including equity mapping, the annual equity report, and departmental progress reports, will provide both a foundation and a clear path for the County to address disparities, allocate resources effectively, and foster an inclusive environment. By embedding these practices into the core functions of County governance, we are not only creating a more equitable workforce but also positioning Tompkins County as a model for other jurisdictions committed to advancing systemic change.

Looking forward, the ongoing evaluation of our efforts through tools like the climate survey, bias reporting structure, and regular progress updates will ensure that the County's commitment to equity remains dynamic and responsive. These efforts, grounded in transparency, accountability, and continuous learning, will drive Tompkins County toward an inclusive future where all individuals are empowered to thrive.



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