

Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (JEDI)

Strategic Plan




*With all we accomplish all
-W.E.B. DuBois*

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Worksystems coordinates a regional workforce system which supports individual prosperity and business competitiveness. We ensure the public workforce system serves business by developing qualified employees and giving current and future workers the skills and support they need to successfully engage, advance, and succeed in the labor market.

We view this work, and its outcomes, through just, diverse, equitable, and inclusive **(JEDI)** lenses. Our policies, programs, and services provide job seekers what they need to advance their careers -- each as dynamic and unique individuals, not according to what we imagine their needs to be. We, therefore, seek to understand, harness, and leverage the rich diversity of our workers and our stakeholders, in honoring, responding to, and advancing our world's reckoning with systemic inequity. We are accelerating our work toward equity and inclusion to ensure that our organization and its reach is as diverse as the human ecosystem we serve. **This JEDI Strategic Plan is a major step in this direction.**



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A MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

I am pleased to announce the publication of Worksystems' first-ever Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (JEDI) Plan. Our Plan is the product of nearly four years of reflection, learning, training, and collaboration, and will guide us as we seek to become a more equitable and inclusive organization – one which is as warm and welcoming to our team members as it is compassionate and responsive to the needs of the communities we serve.

Much dialogue has taken place in recent years about the need for organizations to embrace JEDI values, and to work proactively to increase diversity in their ranks and remove the barriers that for too long have kept members of underrepresented communities from advancing and realizing the full potential of their talents. But even as JEDI values have risen in prominence and acceptance, there remains a persistent perception that at many organizations, JEDI issues are given merely lip service; that they are a beneficial public relations exercise and nothing more.

I want to be absolutely clear that this is not the case for Worksystems.

JEDI principles reflect Worksystems' core institutional values. The reason for this is simple: the very work we do in the community – connecting people with the resources and training they need to obtain gainful employment and prosperous careers – is itself grounded in JEDI values. Put another way, when more people from historically underserved populations transition to living-wage careers, the values of Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion are elevated and embedded into the fabric of the larger community. For Worksystems, it is not so much a question of whether we should embrace JEDI values as a realization that we cannot effectively carry out our mission without them.

The creation of this Plan is just the beginning of our journey. True institutional commitment to JEDI principles is not a stand-alone project; it is an ongoing process, a constant state of growth, discovery, and evolution. All of us have work to do, both as individuals and members of a team, to better understand the history and context of discrimination and oppression in American life; to identify and overcome the persistent legacy of systemic racism and sexism in ourselves and our organization; and to better internalize and live by JEDI principles. The good news is that there is joy in this work, and that the ultimate outcome is a beloved community in which everyone has what they need to thrive, and no one is held back by the outmoded habits and hatreds of the past.

We believe the fate of our organization, and our community, is tethered to the success of all people. With this Plan, we commit ourselves to serving our entire community with knowledge, awareness, empathy, and humility. We devote ourselves to fostering the full expression of unique backgrounds, experiences, and perspectives. And most of all, we dedicate ourselves to the creation of a truly just, equitable, diverse, and inclusive society.

We look forward to the ride and invite you to join us on the journey.

With Gratitude,

Andrew McGough

Executive Director
Worksystems

JEDI COUNCIL

In 2019 Worksystems formed a Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (JEDI) Council comprised of executive leadership, management, and staff from across the agency. The JEDI Council is responsible for providing leadership and guidance to support Worksystems' JEDI journey. Members bring a diverse set of ideas, perspectives, and lived experiences with a shared vision of forging inclusivity and equity in the workplace and beyond.

The creation of the JEDI Council was an intentional, integral step toward fostering an environment that encourages and values diverse viewpoints and nurtures individual inclusion in order to improve employee satisfaction and performance. The Council serves as a communication conduit to foster dialogue between staff and leadership to promote JEDI growth and enhance the employee experience.

In addition to improving our organizational culture and our team members' experience, it is our hope, and our intent, that the work of the JEDI Council will, ultimately, help Worksystems to better realize our mission of serving and developing the Portland metro area workforce.

JEDI COMMITTEES

The JEDI Council formed three Committees to focus on specific areas where we seek greater understanding of opportunities to advance JEDI work within our organization and with our staff. The three Committees are: Employee Lifecycle, Communications, and Culture. The Areas of Focus and Goals for each Committee were proposed by Committee members and will become organizational goals, to be implemented by specific Worksystems departments.

The JEDI Council Committees act in an advisory capacity to various Worksystems' functional departments. Committee members are not responsible for the actual execution and implementation of projects and tasks; instead, they will partner with department leads to provide input on proposed changes to policies and procedures and hold departments accountable to maintaining transparent, equitable and inclusive processes.

EMPLOYEE LIFECYCLE

The Employee Lifecycle Committee acts in an advisory capacity to the JEDI & HR Manager. Committee members are not responsible for the actual execution and implementation of HR-related projects and tasks; instead, they will partner with HR to provide input on proposed changes to personnel-related policies and procedures and hold HR accountable for maintaining transparent, equitable, and inclusive processes in the following areas.

Area of Focus 1: Recruitment and Hiring

Goals:

- Review job posting templates to ensure job responsibilities and tasks are transparently outlined. Edit and approve job posting language through the lenses of inclusivity and accessibility.
- Identify job boards, professional associations, and other methods of advertising to maintain a proactive outreach to a broad pool of external candidates.
- Review interview process and provide suggestions to be more objective and equitable.
- Review workforce composition statistics (at all levels) and assess if staff demographics are reflective of the populations we serve (not just the overall population)

Area of Focus 2: Onboarding

Goals:

- Provide input for a new, standardized onboarding process for all new hires.
- Coordinate with HR and Department Leads to develop, update, and maintain a library of “foundational” content.
- Develop a workload impact analysis tool to use when onboarding a staff person to a new work assignment (regardless of whether they are a new hire).

Area of Focus 3: Advancement and Professional Development

Goals:

- Provide a dedicated per person budget for training and development each year.
- Establish internal policies to promote from within whenever possible.

Area of Focus 4: Retention

Goals:

- Provide ideas around and approve HR plan for soliciting staff feedback and input, confirming that a variety of methods and channels are utilized.
- Submit ideas for topics to be included in “stay interview” templates and hold HR accountable to conducting these with all staff annually.

Area of Focus 5: Exit Interviews

Goals:

- Expand exit interview questions to include JEDI topic areas.

COMMUNICATIONS

Area of Focus 1: Internal Communications

Goals:

- Keep staff informed of JEDI activities and progress.
- Ensure that staff receive regular and ongoing training in JEDI topics and concepts.
- Promote and encourage opportunities for staff to engage and be involved in JEDI work.

Area of Focus 2: External Communications

Goals:

- Keep the Board of Directors, elected officials, and community/business partners informed of Worksystems JEDI activities and progress.
- Messages are developed and communicated through a variety of platforms.

Area of Focus 3: Performance Metrics and Progress Indicators

Goals:

- A performance dashboard is established to communicate progress and outcomes.

CULTURE

Members of this committee are stewards of inclusivity in their daily interactions with staff. This committee may also work in partnership with the JEDI & HR Manager to establish more formalized ways to enhance employee inclusion and belonging through regular programming, team bonding and trust building exercises, structured conversations and dialogues, formal training, and more.

Area of Focus: Cultivating an Inclusive Culture

Goals:

- Co-create a work environment of appreciation and open dialogue about opportunities to improve racial and other forms of bias.
- Build an environment where workloads are manageable and prioritize a life/work balance. Embed intentionality regarding employee workload into the process when applying for grants and other funding.
- Engender an environment where open communication between management and staff – and open communication between members of minority communities and members of the dominant culture -- is encouraged and received in an open and compassionate way.

- Encourage a culture where roles are clear and trust is built around communication and transparency of decision making.
- Develop an organizational culture that is open to the variety of ways of understanding, communicating, and working with each other that are reflected in all the cultures of our staff.

LOOKING FORWARD

JEDI work is not a stand-alone effort, but an integral part of organizational excellence. It is not a single project, but an ongoing process of growth, evolution, and discovery. The areas of focus outlined in this Plan will be actively integrated into Worksystems operations and employee experience. Timelines, metrics, and performance reporting will be key components of ensuring work moves forward, progress is achieved, and revisions are made as needed. Our JEDI efforts will be proactive and responsive to Worksystems' evolving business needs, demographic shifts, technological advances, and the understanding of the unique needs of our employees and the communities we serve. Worksystems Leadership is committed to making JEDI an explicit organizational priority, and to letting its principles guide our work both within our ranks and in the community.