



Western Association of Fish & Wildlife Agencies

DEI SELF-ASSESSMENT

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- ▶ David Buggs, Vice Chair (Texas Parks and Wildlife Department)
- ▶ Susan Steffen, Vice Chair (Kansas Dept. of Wildlife and Parks)
- ▶ Greg Wolley, Vice Chair (Tomorrow's Workforce)

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Agency Participation

Thank you to all of the WAFWA member agencies who were able to participate in the DEI assessment survey. Also, thanks to those who were participating in the post-survey study (see Epilogue) to identify any barriers faced by others (e.g., cookies, firewalls, technology, timing). Namely we would like to identify those agencies that made this heavy lift and were able to participate, including:

- ▶ Alaska Department of Fish and Game
- ▶ Alberta Environment & Sustainable Resource Development
- ▶ Arizona Game and Fish Department
- ▶ British Columbia Ministry of Forest Lands and Natural Resource Operations
- ▶ California Department of Fish and Wildlife
- ▶ Colorado Parks and Wildlife
- ▶ Kansas Department of Wildlife & Parks
- ▶ Nebraska Game and Parks Commission
- ▶ Nevada Department of Wildlife
- ▶ Department of Environment and Natural Resources
- ▶ Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife
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- ▶ South Dakota Game, Fish & Parks
- ▶ Texas Parks & Wildlife Department
- ▶ Utah Division of Wildlife Resources
- ▶ Washington Department of Fish & Wildlife

Executive Summary

The Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (WAFWA) and the WAFWA Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Committee recognizes that there is a need for increased DEI efforts. In order to more effectively design and implement DEI Programs, WAFWA hired OCCAT to design and administer a DEI Self-Assessment tool, which included both quantitative and qualitative sections. This tool, based on the existing DEISAQ, is a strengths-based approach aimed to identify areas where the network has demonstrated DEI acumen and areas where growth may be pursued. It is critical that the tool has high reliability so that the progress of WAFWA as a whole and individual agencies can be determined over time through repeated measurement. It is not intended to be used to compare any agency against another one.

Diversity in WAFWA organizations can lead to increased resiliency, efficiency, innovation, and relevancy to the constituents they serve. Employees within culturally diverse and historically marginalized communities bring a wider array of perspectives, which can lead to better solutions to organizational challenges and problems.

Report Goals

The goal of this report is to present the quantitative and qualitative data from the self-assessment survey, explain its relevance, and indicate recommendations for the WAFWA DEI Committee and member agencies.

Results

Demographics of Respondents

Participation in the DEI Self-Assessment Questionnaire was voluntary and varied widely. Sixteen out of 24 WAFWA member organizations participated, with a range of respondents between 1 and 357 per organization. Despite this wide variation, analysis of the demographic information indicates that respondents represented a cross section of agency staff in terms of gender, age, race/ethnicity, and education. Staff responding to this survey tended to be male, White and well-educated.

Analysis of Quantitative Data – Significant Findings

- The survey tool was found to be reliable for use in repeated measurements over time.
- Three out of five subscales (Community Awareness, Community Resources/Linkages and Staff Development/Policy) found that WAFWA’s identified strengths outweigh the areas for growth, indicating a solid foundation upon which to build.
- The analysis also indicates, within each subscale, the major focus areas for improvement.

Analysis of Qualitative Data – Significant Findings

- A large majority of respondents have a high level of support for DEI efforts among the staff; however, the level of support varies in a continuum from deep dedication and enthusiasm to animosity.
- Reasons for supporting DEI included better staff retention, increasing the relevance of conservation agencies, and responding to changing demographics.
- Staff identified areas needing increased efforts, ideas for expansion of DEI, internal barriers to success, and individuals' reasons for not pursuing DEI.
- DEI efforts to better serve and include culturally diverse, underserved, or underrepresented communities are viewed as important for agencies to pursue in order to better meet conservation goals.
- Having a diverse staff, with an increased number of people from underrepresented communities will increase the agency's effectiveness, relevance, and credibility.
- Specific areas needing improvement are recruiting and developing a pipeline to jobs, increasing diversity in leadership, providing training opportunities and improving internal communications about DEI efforts.

Recommendations

Recommendations that come from the assessment will build on identified strengths and can be considered when developing staff, organizational or strategic plans with short-, medium-, and long-term goals. They include examples of steps that may be taken in the following areas:

- Process to engage, maintain and augment DEI Task Group.
- Prioritize WAFWA sponsored DEI activities.
- Identify DEI representatives from member organizations.
- Share results (leading with identified strengths) and disseminate best practices.
- Uncover WAFWA resources for DEI consultation, conferences, staff and organization development, and research and publishing.
- Celebrate staff participation, candor, and courage.
- Review DEI opportunities that might occur at the state or province level.
- Include hiring, training and development, community engagement, collaboration and partnerships, mission and vision statements, advisory boards, pipeline development, volunteer, and mentorship opportunities.

Introduction

The Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (WAFWA) and the WAFWA ¹Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Committee recognizes that there is a need for increased DEI efforts. Their member agencies, like most other organizations and municipalities, struggle with traditional paradigms that are not always relevant to the changing demographics of the United States. Not only are demographics different among agencies and the public, but there are also differences in wildlife values. Human dimensions research by Colorado State University concluded that Americans' wildlife values are shifting from a traditionalist value (i.e., animals exist for human benefit and use) to a more mutualist value orientation (i.e., wildlife should be treated with rights nearly on par to that of humans).

Many agencies have started to proactively undertake DEI efforts and there has been an increase in DEI workshops and plenary speakers at conferences and initiatives to improve diversity within public agencies have been more frequent. The purpose of this project is to gather baseline information about these current DEI efforts of natural resource agencies in the western region of the United States and Canada in order to increase the quality and effectiveness of these efforts. The data collected will enable WAFWA and its members to understand the baseline measurements of diversity that are being tracked and reported by individual agencies, where the participating agencies are on the DEI spectrum and identify progress made over time.

The DEI Committee chose the use of a self-assessment survey because it recognized that it is necessary to “meet agencies where they are,” and that not all DEI journeys are the same. The Committee anticipates that the results of this study will allow its member agencies to discover how similar or different their DEI journeys are; provide opportunities for discussion of the results; and make gains or sustain momentum through inter-agency synergy.

The advantages of biological diversity in healthy ecosystems is well understood: healthy ecosystems flourish with diverse organisms that are adaptable and resilient to disturbances and change. Similarly, diversity in WAFWA organizations can lead to increased resiliency, innovation, and relevancy to the constituents they serve. Additional advantages to diversifying organizations can be found later in this document. (See Appendix 1.)

¹ Diversity refers to ways people might differ and includes various characteristics such as: race and ethnicity, age or generational cohort, socioeconomic status, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, marital or family status, language, and physical ability or appearance, veteran status and geography.

The DEI Self-Assessment Process

WAFWA leadership showed great courage when they extended their DEI journey by conducting a DEI organizational assessment in 2022, which took a comprehensive view of its member network. The focus of this assessment was much more on employee behavior rather than on cognition or attitude. This strengths-based approach aimed to identify areas where the network has demonstrated DEI acumen, and areas where growth may be pursued. The assessment is not intended to be pejorative nor to compare WAFWA's journey and that of its member agencies to that of any other organization. This approach views DEI as a developmental process, in that all people and organizations can improve with support, instruction, and reward. In addition, this approach is used to more accurately determine the views of the respondents and to reduce "response sets."

This DEI assessment tool is designed to provide baseline data that can be evaluated through repeated measurement revealing where progress has been made, and possibly produce activities or strategies within the WAFWA network and amongst its member organizations to increase the quality and effectiveness of their agency and their DEI efforts.

The beauty of this assessment is there is no way to score poorly. Since DEI is a developmental process that uses an N=1 or single subject design, thus WAFWA will only be compared to itself over time, and individual agencies can use the tool to evaluate their own progress over time. In addition, recommendations that come from the assessment will build on identified strengths and can be considered when developing staff, organizational or strategic plans with short-, medium-, and long-term goals.

Assessment Goals

Rationale for Organizational DEI Self-Assessment

The intent of this assessment is to provide reliable data that will:

- Help WAFWA organizations prepare for current and projected demographics.
- Reveal WAFWA member agency knowledge of a catchment area's cultural, social, ethnic, and linguistic groups, and trusted voices and programs with whom to partner.
- Uncover culturally diverse community beliefs and practices regarding fish and wildlife, conservation, and outdoor-related programs and services.
- Identify service delivery and workforce development challenges and potential WAFWA member agency resources and strategies that might be used to address them.
- Reveal resources for increasing diversity on WAFWA agency community advisory, policy- and decision-making, and organizational leadership structures.
- Expose areas where unconscious or unintended biases may be occurring (e.g., service delivery, workforce development, supplier diversity, community engagement).

- Capture strengths within WAFWA related to community awareness, community engagement, resource development, community education, service delivery, staff and organizational development, and community outreach.
- Establish baseline measures from which subsequent measures may be made to reveal growth and growth opportunities.
- Identify WAFWA DEI training needs and internal resources.
- Ensure staff alignment regarding definitions of and rationale for a DEI workforce and service delivery.
- Inform strategic planning and organizational development strategies.
- Identify WAFWA agency internal talent that might inform WAFWA and member efforts to engage or serve culturally diverse communities as it concerns conservation and other initiatives.
- Pursue DEI in ways that are specific to the organizational contexts, demographics, and needs.

The Tool - Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Self-Assessment

Questionnaire (DEISAQ)

The Cultural Competence Self-Assessment Questionnaire (CCSAQ)² is one of the first organizational self-assessment tools developed in 1995 specifically with an inclusive workforce and cultural competence model in mind. It has been adapted several times, most recently in 2020, with the goal of keeping it a reliable and valid instrument. Beginning in 2012 the tool was used to assess DEI, and in 2020, the tool was changed to the DEISAQ. This tool is intended to reliably measure changes over time.

The Survey Process

The methodology involves participatory survey research techniques. The WAFWA DEI Task Group played a key role in the development, promotion and coordination of the survey process, and in the utilization of findings. They also helped ensure WAFWA ownership of the process and helped stakeholders understand how the assessment is in the best interest of the participating organization.

The DEISAQ was customized to WAFWA to assure that the assessment was sensitive to organizational, disciplinary, or community nuance. Questions were added, deleted or changed to better fit the culture and work of the WAFWA members. The Task Group assured confidentiality to avoid "response sets" or answers which reflect an expected rather than an honest response. They reminded participants that this was a strength-based assessment; that

² Mason, J.L., (1995). Cultural Competence Self-Assessment Questionnaire: A Manual for Users. Portland, OR: Portland State University. <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED399684.pdf>

the goal was to identify competencies upon which additional competencies might be based; and that there was no way to score poorly. Only WAFWA aggregate data would be shared, and no cross-unit comparisons would be made.

On November 30, 2022, the following letter from Brad Loveless, the DEI Committee Chair, a PowerPoint presentation about the survey tool by Dr. James Mason, OCCAT President, and a link to the DEISAQ survey was sent to all WAFWA State Directors. The letter emphasized that participation was voluntary, and respondents were assured of the confidentiality and anonymity of their responses.

WAFWA representatives sent three reminder emails (December 3, 6 and 9) to the agency Executive Directors to encourage a higher level of participation.

Agencies with 50 or more responses will receive a set of charts reflecting their subscale scores.

All survey responses were sent directly to OCCAT for analysis. The first step in the analysis was to download the responses from SurveyMonkey. We used SPSS version 29 to run the quantitative results. Then we looked at internal consistency, making sure the reliability was still high. Cronbach's Alpha (0 to 1) was applied to quantitative responses (those ranking items on a 1-4 scale) to assure that the data was reliable. Then we determined the mean score for each question and domain (i.e., subscale), which is simply the total number of points divided by the number of respondents for each question. Results for the mean scores can be found in Appendix 6.

Qualitative data, based on the comments in Q33 and Q34, was analyzed on two levels: one identified responses as indicating a strength, weakness, opportunity or threat; the other identified responses according to the specific subscale items (Community Awareness, etc.). From these two viewpoints, major themes were developed and respondents' comments that illustrated the theme were identified.

Once the data were analyzed statistically and qualitatively, the results were used to discuss initial findings and subsequent recommendations. These findings and recommendations are intended to be used by agencies as the basis for designing a series of short-, medium- and long-term goals. These goals are considered as areas where organizational development should occur. It is critical that the findings be presented in a manner that extols DEI strengths of the agency and staff, and diversity within existing staff, programs, and service areas. These data are used to generate consensus for staff- and program-specific interventions. These interventions can be used to stimulate staff and organizational change in ways that propel the agency along its respective DEI journey.

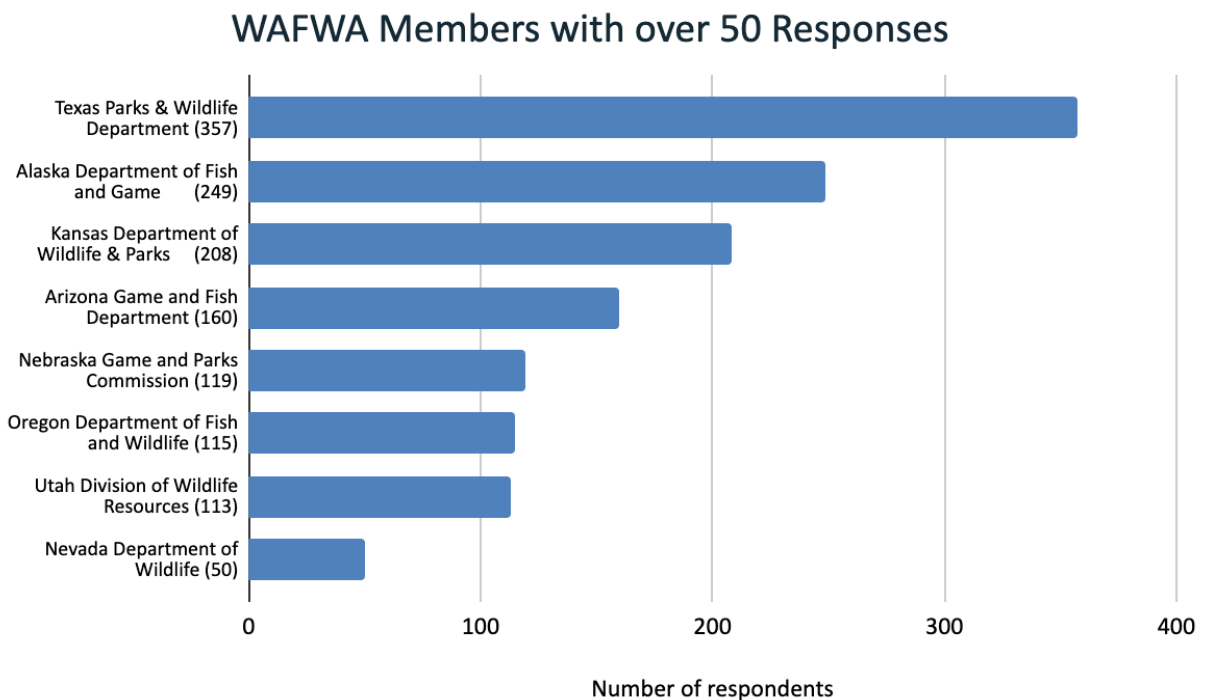


Data

Section 1 - Demographics

WAFWA has 24 member organizations. Sixteen agencies provided survey data to OCCAT for analysis; of those, the eight agencies listed below had responses from more than 50 staff members. We believe that the demographic data from agencies with fewer than 50 respondents cannot be used as an indication of the makeup of the staff at those agencies, so did not include them in the data below. We also recognize that those responding in the agencies listed do not necessarily represent the makeup of their staff, rather represent those most interested in DEI (positively and negatively).

Graph 1

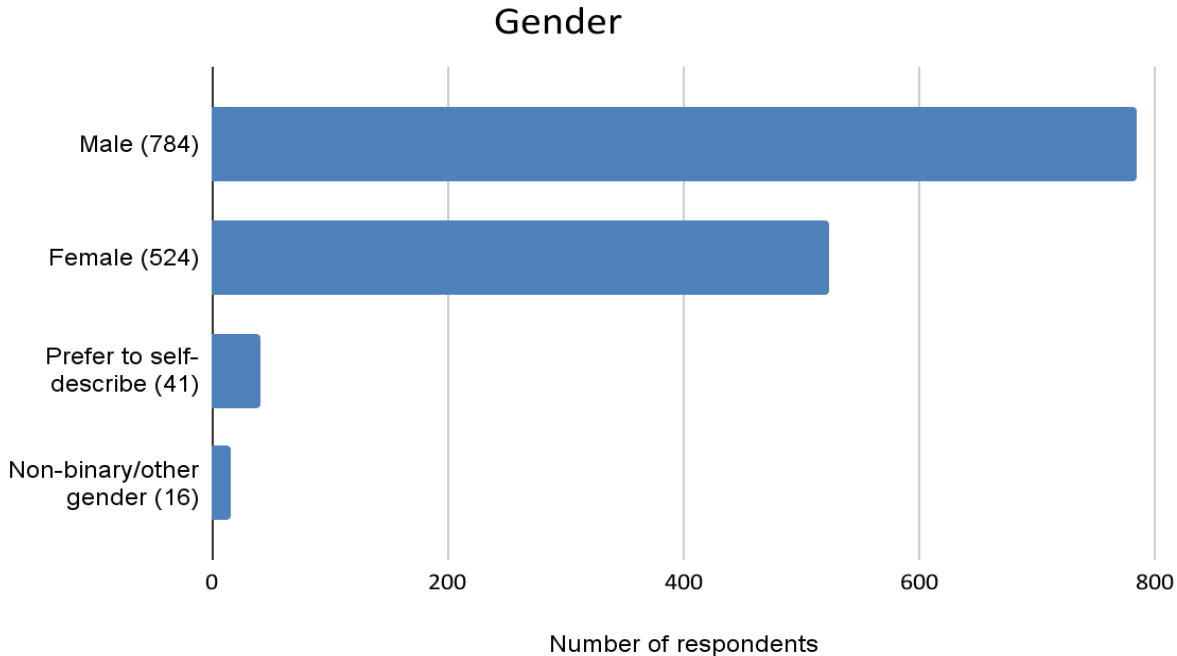


Because this is a voluntary survey, data in the following graphs are influenced by both the absolute number of staff in each of these classifications working at the agencies and the level of interest that people within these classifications have in DEI. In other words, people who have the strongest opinions, both negative and positive, or more knowledge about DEI efforts will be more likely to respond.

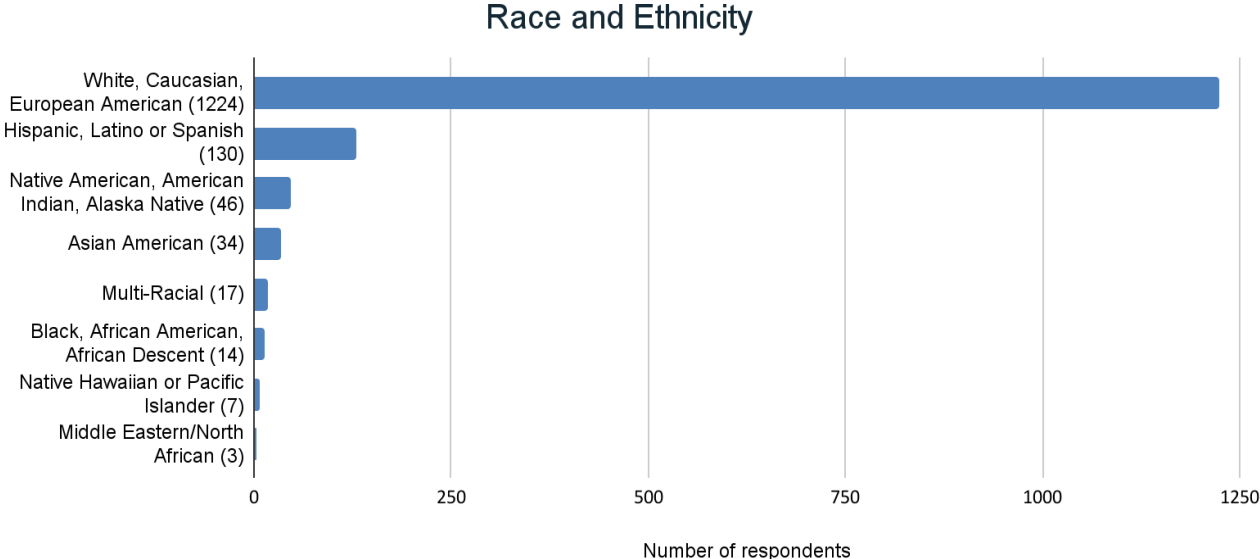
As you can see from Graph 2, 57% of the respondents were male, 38% were female and the remaining 4% either preferred to self-describe or were non-binary/other gender. Almost 90% were White and a little under 10% were Hispanic/Latino or Spanish (Graph 3). In terms of

education, 86% had a bachelor’s degree or higher and 12% had some college (Graph 4). Staff had competency in 26 languages, including English, with Spanish the most frequently competency (Graph 5). In Graph 6, people in management positions (Managers and Admin) and technical positions (Biologists and Tech) outnumbered those in all other positions. In Graphs 7-10 it appears that a wide range of people with different experiences in WAFWA agencies responded, with good representation of agency staff. Graph 11 shows that the vast majority of respondents had little or no involvement with agency policy.

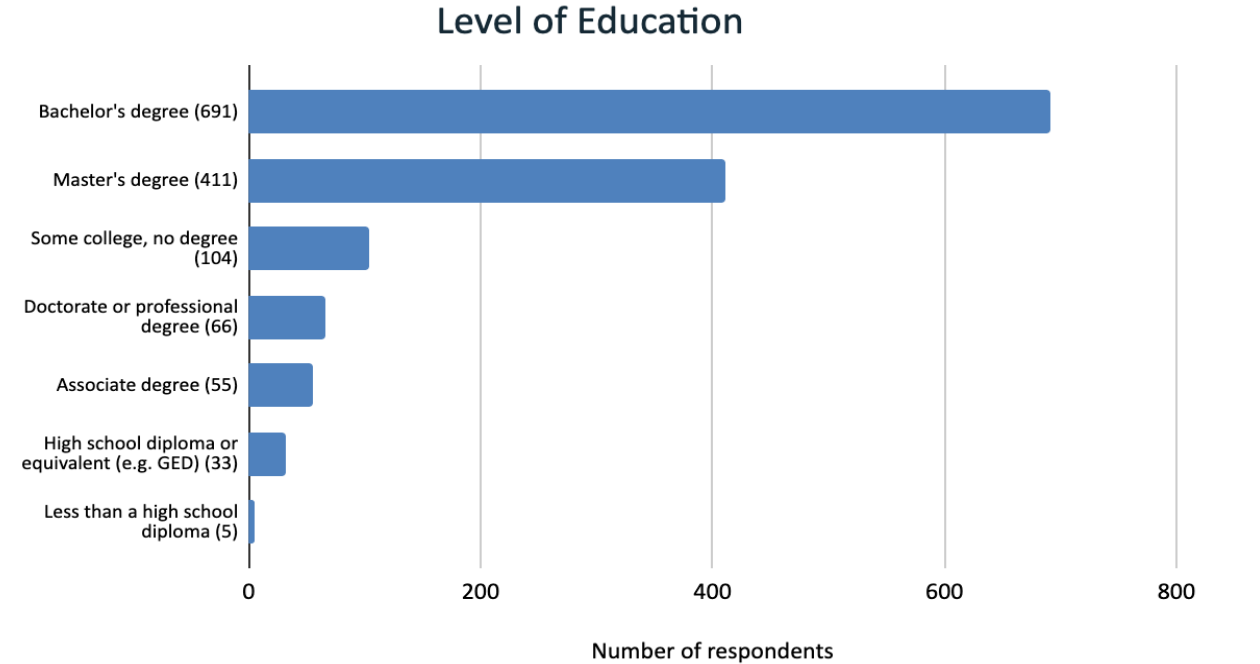
Graph 2



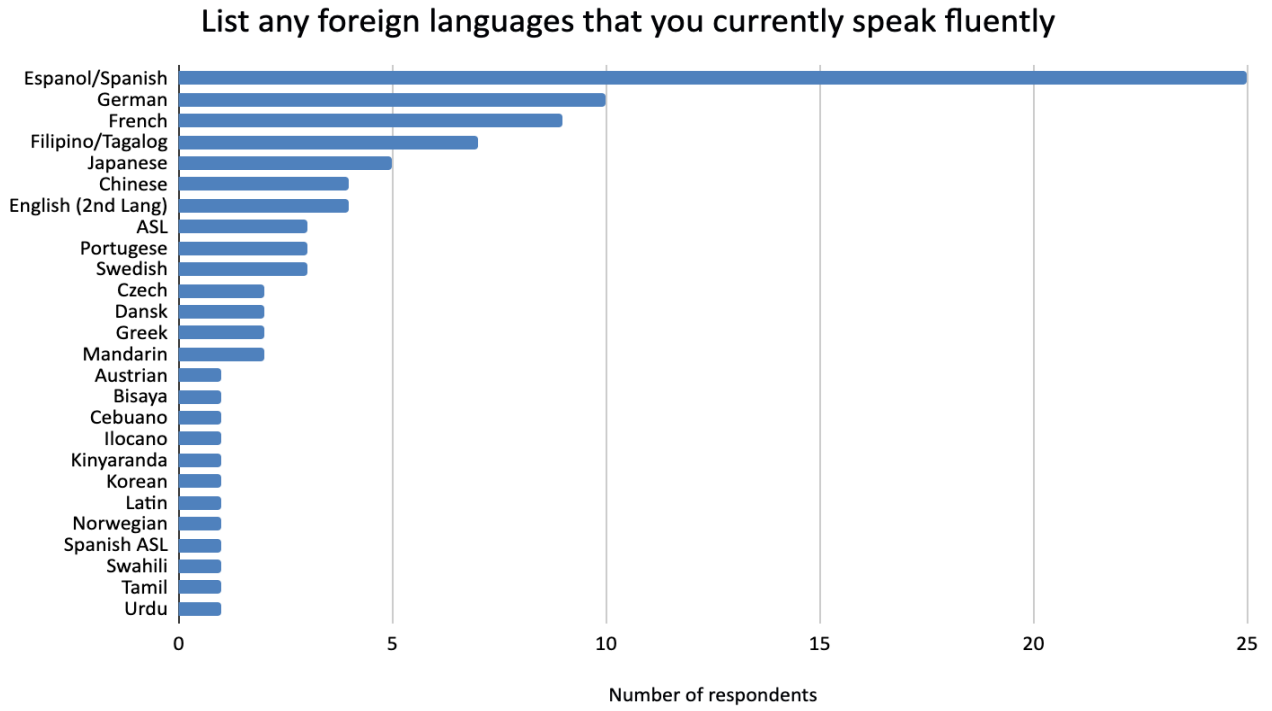
Graph 3



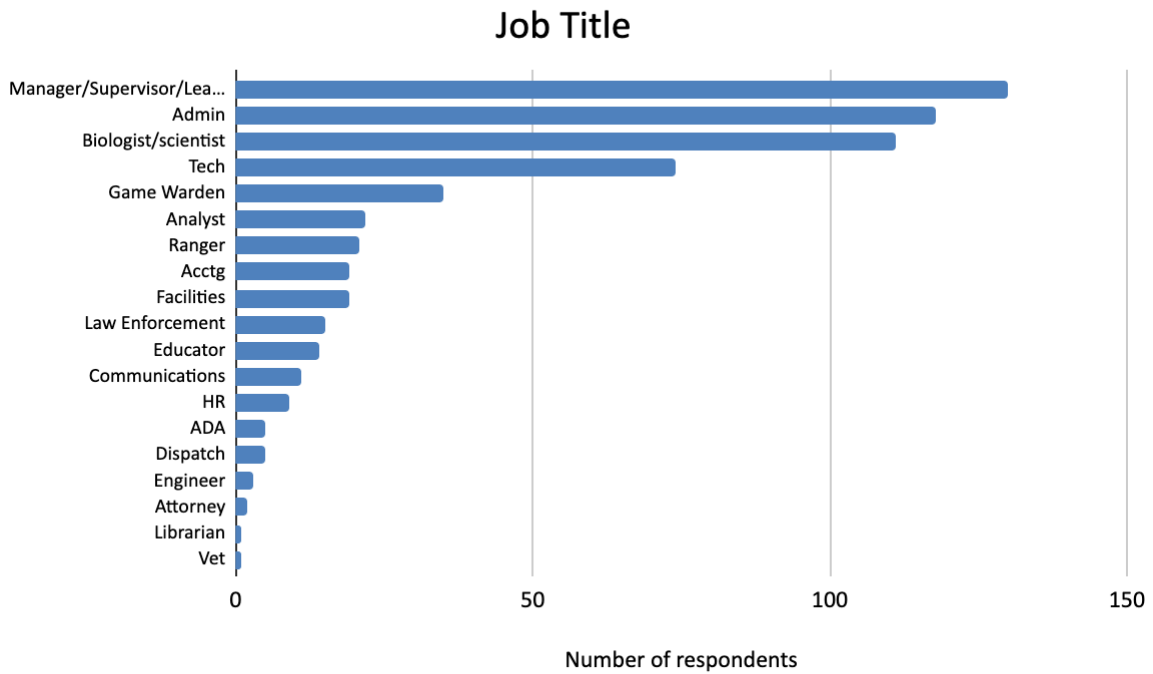
Graph 4



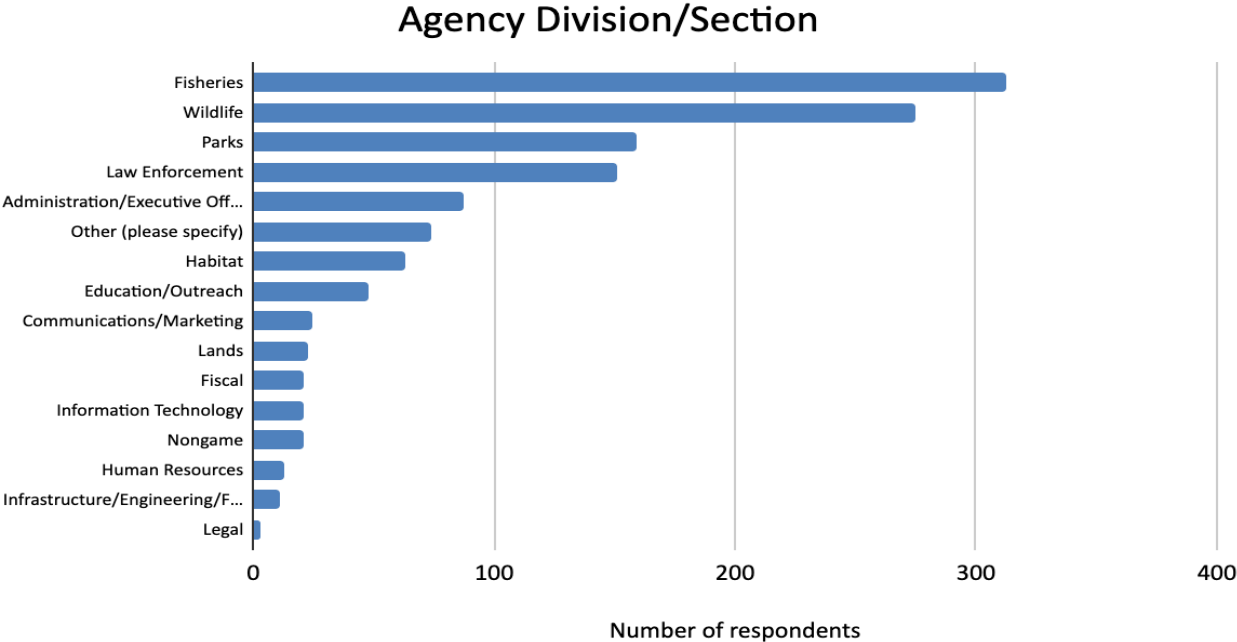
Graph 5



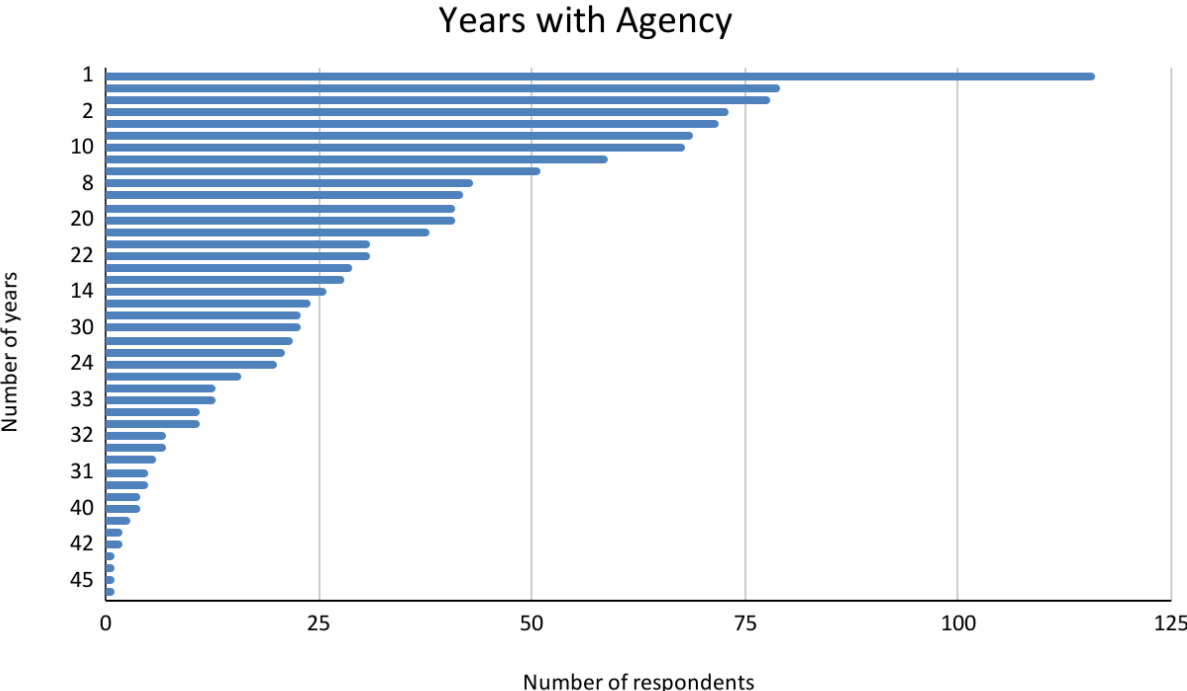
Graph 6



Graph 7

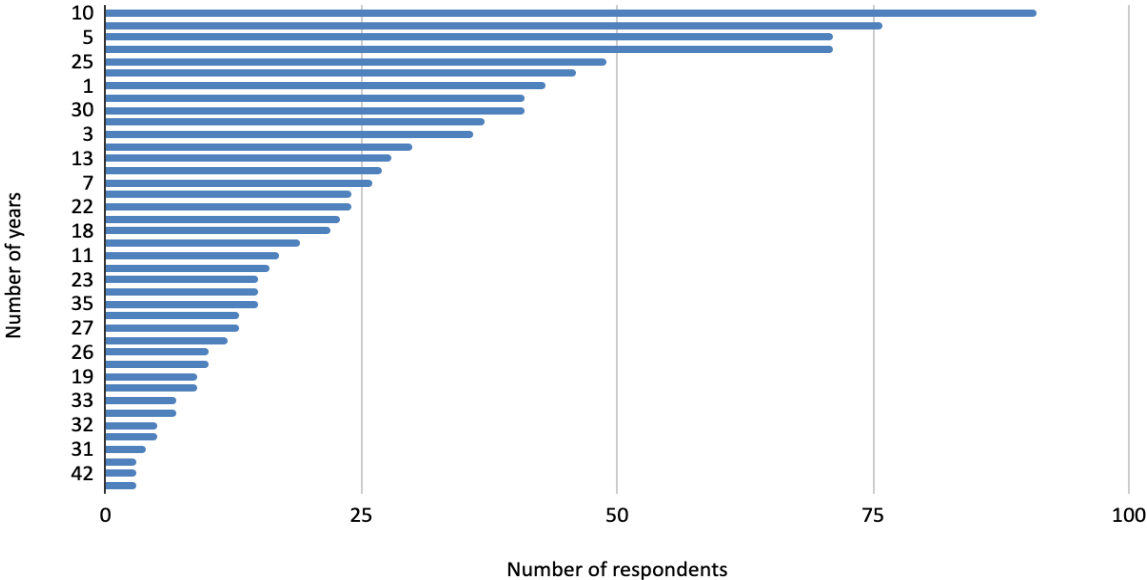


Graph 8



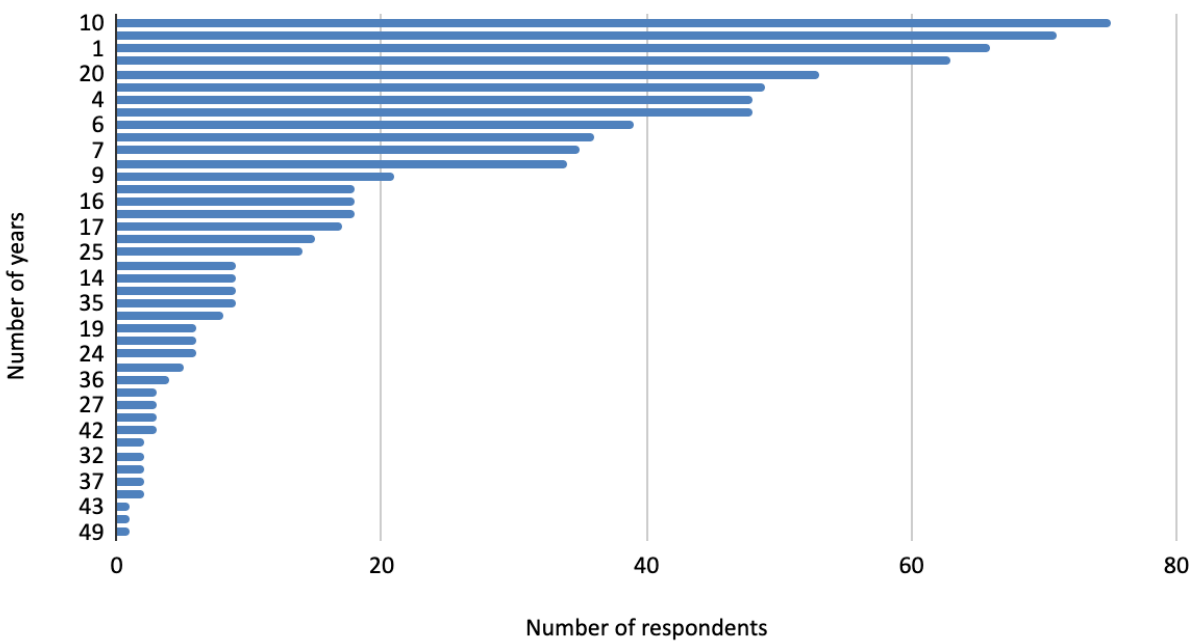
Graph 9

Years of experience in customer-facing positions



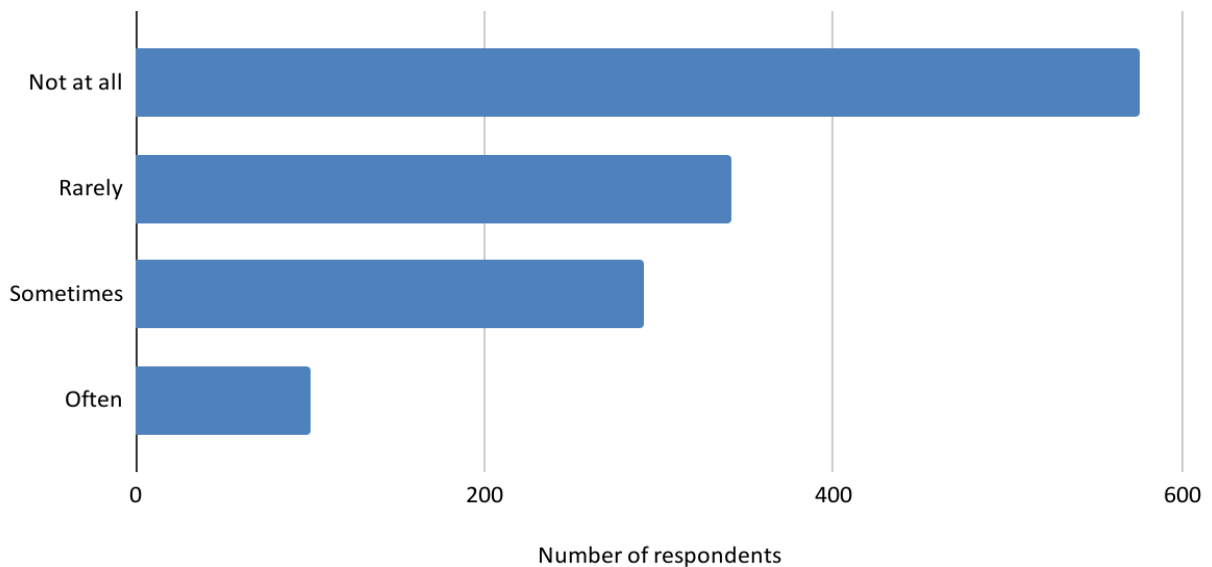
Graph 10

Years of Supervisory Experience



Graph 11

To what extent are you involved with the analysis or formation of agency policy?



Section 2 – Analysis of the Quantitative Data

Questions in the DEISAQ are divided into five domains or subscales which are described in more detail below and include: Community Awareness, Community Engagement, Community Resources & Linkage, Staffing, and Community Outreach. Each of these are a critical part of a successful DEI effort, especially in organizations in which staff do not represent the many culturally diverse groups in the state or province.

Table 1 below provides a measure of the reliability of the survey (Cronbach’s Alpha), which indicates its suitability for repeated surveys over time. As you can see, in four out of five of the domains, the Cronbach’s Alpha is above 0.9 which indicates a high level of reliability. The Community Engagement domain is lower (0.684) in large part because a number of the questions in the original DEISAQ were reduced but is still within an acceptable reliability range and can still be used for subsequent measures. However, adding additional community engagement items might make this scale more helpful.

The mean of the number of points (1-4 per response) was calculated for each item in the domain, and the overall mean of the domain and of the survey as a whole were then calculated. The mean in this analysis is not used to make a judgment about the absolute quality of the DEI effort measured, but rather to indicate which areas could be focused on for improvement (i.e., are below the overall mean, indicated in orange). Because DEI is an on-

going, reiterative process being above the mean (indicated in green boxes), does not indicate you should be content, but it does indicate that there are agencies within WAFWA that have expertise, experience and efforts that can be utilized by other members to move forward on their DEI efforts.

Table 1: Reliability of the data, Number of items in each domain and the mean of responses to the survey questions.

Domain/Subscale Reliability and Mean			
	Cronbach Alpha	Number of Items	Mean
Community Awareness	0.954	21	*2.46
Community Engagement	0.684	4	2.6
Community Resources & Linkage	0.919	9	2.81
Staffing	0.964	26	*2.31
Community Outreach	0.954	22	2.62
Subscale Mean Total (all)	0.979	82	2.49

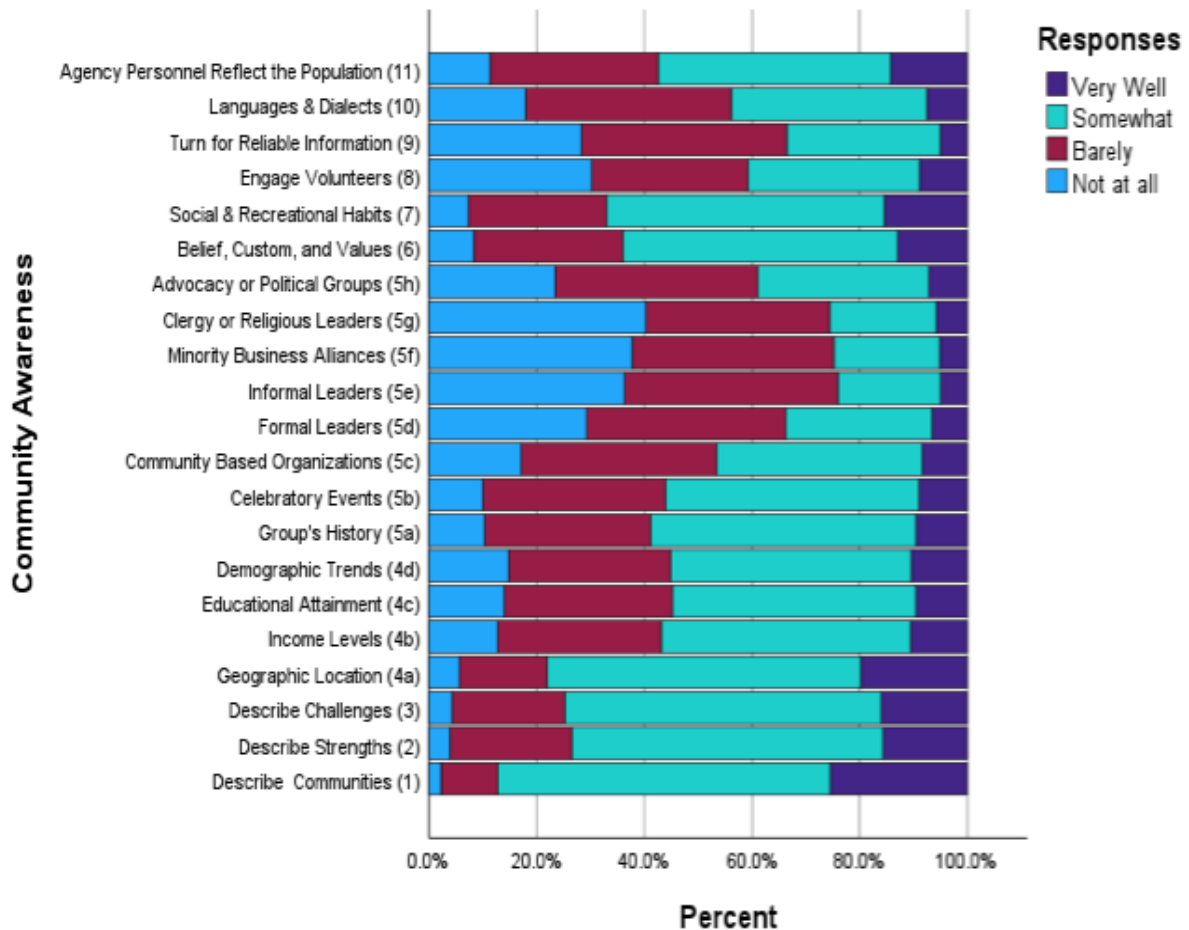
* Domains falling below subscale mean of 2.49

Section 2.1 Community Awareness

Mean = 2.49 (21 items)

Community Awareness involves an organizational ability to understand the demographics, lived experiences, beliefs, and practices of culturally diverse and underrepresented constituents in one’s service or catchment area. This allows professionals to engage these communities without bias and prejudice in efforts to achieve the organization’s mission and goals while reducing interpersonal conflicts.

Graph 12. Distribution of responses (1-4) for each question of the Community Awareness subscale



DEI Strengths and Assets

(Items with means **above** the subscale mean)

- Describe the culturally diverse communities in your state or province (Q1) 3.12
- Geographic locations (Q4a) 2.95
- Describe the social challenges faced by the culturally diverse communities in your state or province (Q3) 2.88
- Describe the strengths of the culturally diverse communities in your state or province (Q2) 2.87
- Know outdoor social or recreational habits of culturally diverse communities in your state or province (Q7) 2.76
- Know the beliefs, customs, and values regarding nature or conservation held by culturally diverse communities (Q6) 2.69
- Group's History (Q5a) 2.59
- Income levels (Q4b) 2.58
- Agency personnel reflect the population of your state (Q11) 2.56
- Celebratory events (Q5b) 2.56
- Educational attainment (Q4c) 2.52
- Demographic trends (Q4d) 2.53

DEI Growth and Opportunity Areas

(Items with means **below** the subscale mean)

- Community based organizations (Q5c) *2.38
- Familiarity with languages and dialects used by diverse communities (Q10) *2.34
- Advocacy or political groups (Q5h) *2.23
- Enhance hiring, messaging, and services to diverse communities (Q8) *2.22
- Know where culturally diverse communities turn for reliable information (Q9) *2.13
- Formal leaders (Q5d) *2.12
- Informal leaders (Q5e) *1.93
- Minority business alliances (Q5f) *1.93
- Clergy or religious leaders (Q5g) *1.90

Community Awareness Summary

In this subscale, identified strengths outweigh the areas for growth, indicating that there is a solid foundation upon which to build for growth in the areas. Respondents indicated abilities to describe the diversity in their state or province and know where these populations were located, as well as describe the cultural strengths and the social challenges faced by historically marginalized communities. Respondents reported feeling safe in these communities, and knowledgeable about income levels, educational attainment, demographic trends, group's history, and celebratory events. They have knowledge of the outdoor habits, as well as beliefs, customs, and values, regarding nature or conservation held by these.

Areas where changes and growth may produce the most significant changes in DEI efforts are often those with means below the average mean for that domain. For WAFWA agencies as a whole, these areas include learning where culturally diverse communities turn for reliable information, engaging volunteers and leaders from these communities to enhance hiring, messaging and providing services to the communities and, if pertinent, becoming familiar with the languages and dialects used by them in your state or province.

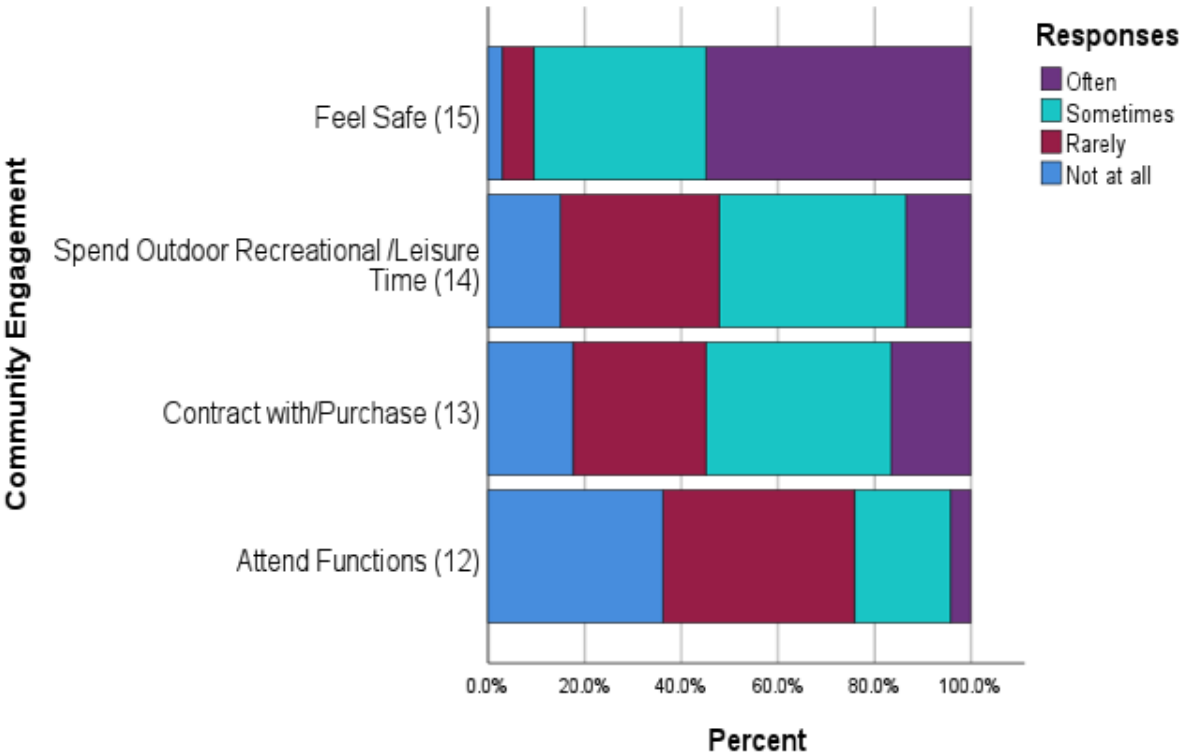
While there were considerable indications that respondents are culturally aware, this assessment did not explore the extent to which the culturally diverse communities are aware of fish and wildlife or conservation programs. Conducting open-house type activities, and especially listening sessions, town halls, or even focus groups might prove valuable in promoting outdoor and conservation opportunities. Focus groups and listening sessions might prove valuable in building relationships, and also reveal strategies for creating multicultural or culturally specific programming, promotional materials, and enhancing programmatic support and interest. Other engagement activities might focus on influencers, such as formal and informal community leaders, minority and emerging business alliances, clergy, social and civic organizations, and community-based organizations.

Section 2.2 Community Engagement

Mean = 2.60 (4 items)

Community Engagement is the intentional interaction between an organization and culturally diverse, underserved, or underrepresented communities that promote mutual acceptance and respect with the goal of disparity reduction in workforce development and service utilization and outcomes.

Graph 13 Distribution of responses (1-4) for each question of the Community Engagement subscale.



DEI Strengths and Assets	DEI Growth and Opportunity Areas
<p>(Items with means above the subscale mean)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feel safe in culturally diverse communities (Q15) 3.40 	<p>(Items with means below the subscale mean)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contracting with or purchasing goods or services from culturally diverse, emerging, and veteran and women owned merchants in your state or province (Q13) *2.51 • Spending outdoor recreational or leisure time amongst culturally diverse communities to build trust, identify cultural practices and behaviors, and build networks that might favorably impact program organizational, and staff development relative to DEI. (Q14) *2.51 • Attending or sponsoring commemorative or cultural events and functions held within culturally diverse communities in your state or province to further strengthen ties to diverse, underserved, and underrepresented communities (Q12) *1.93

Community Engagement Summary

Given this sense of personal safety, together with the cultural knowledge indicated in the prior domain section, there is an opportunity for WAFWA members to expand its engagement with underserved populations by attending ceremonial or cultural events, such as Pow Wows, Cinco de Mayo, events for people with disabilities, Martin Luther King Jr. Day of Service, veterans' events, etc.

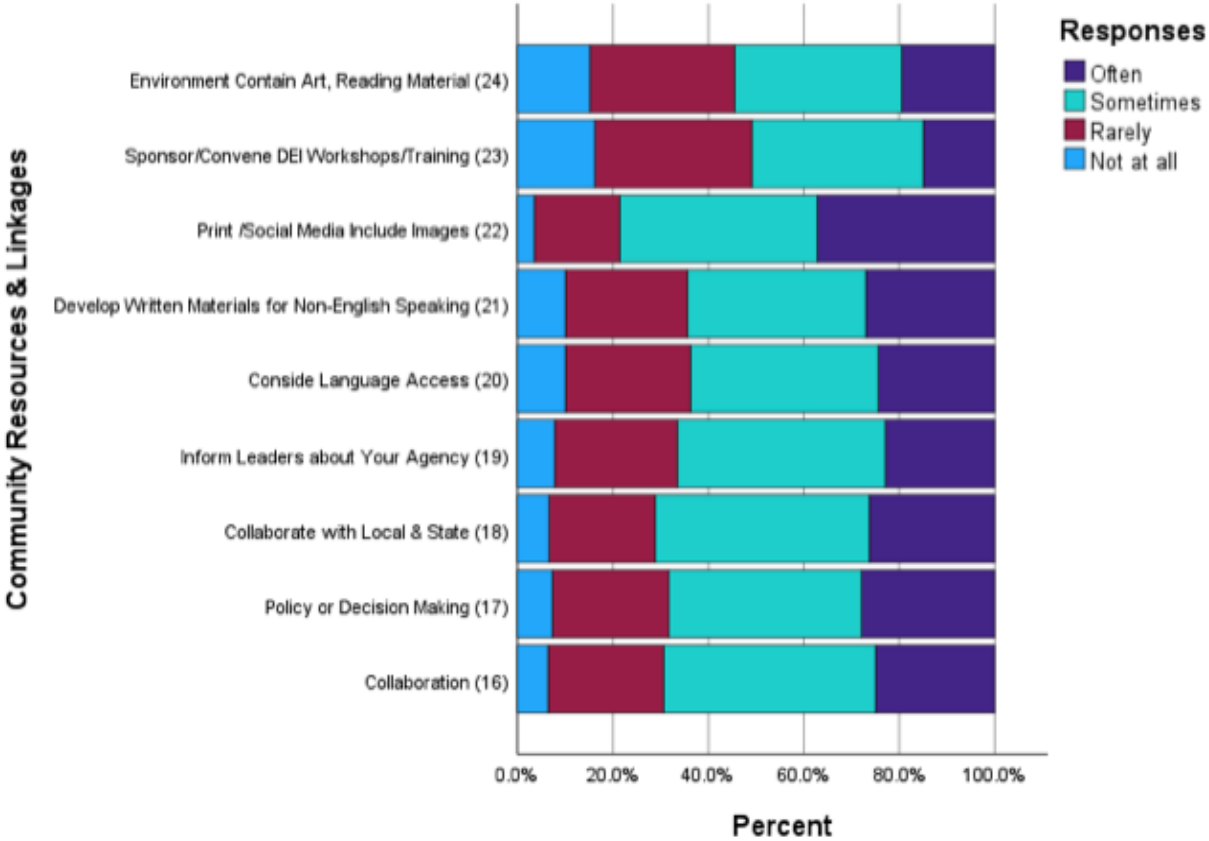
Other opportunities include focusing on supplier diversity, and attending outdoor celebrations at parks, forests, lakes, and rivers to distribute information and meet the public.

Section 2.3 Community Resources/Linkages

Mean = 2.81 (9 items)

Community Resources and Linkages subscale includes a broad spectrum of service providers, community- and faith-based organizations, and other formal and informal helping networks that have credibility with a given population or community. They are typically trusted voices with whom one might partner to effectively serve, inform, and otherwise engage culturally diverse communities.

Graph 14 Distribution of responses (1-4) for each question of the Community Resources/Linkages subscale.



DEI Strengths and Assets

(Items with means **above** the subscale mean)

- Member agency print, and social media include images of culturally diverse people and communities (Q22) 3.12
- Member agencies collaborate with collateral local or state agencies when designing programs, messages, or services for culturally diverse groups (Q18) 2.86
- Member agencies include culturally diverse individuals on policy- or decision- making bodies (Q17) 2.85
- Agency collaborates with culturally diverse community-based organizations to enhance their knowledge of nature or conservation opportunities or issues (Q16) 2.84

DEI Growth and Opportunity Areas

(Items with means **below** the subscale mean)

- Agency develop written materials for non-English speaking communities in your state or province (Q21) *2.80
- Agency inform leaders from culturally diverse groups about your agency (Q19) *2.78
- Agency consider language access (interpreters, translation) to assure your messages are comprehensible to communities whose primary language is not English (Q20) *2.76
- Agency environment contains art, reading material, or decor reflecting culturally diverse groups (24) *2.55
- Agency sponsor or convene DEI workshops or training activities as it concerns culturally diverse groups (23) *2.45

Community Resources/Linkages Summary

In this subscale, identified strengths outweigh the areas for growth, indicating that there is a solid foundation upon which to build for growth in the areas. Strengths included use of media images including culturally diverse populations and collaboration with local, state and provincial agencies when designing services. Two important identified strengths are the inclusion of representatives from culturally diverse communities in policy and decision making and collaboration with community-based organizations.

Areas of growth in this scale would include sponsoring or convening DEI workshops or training activities, and modifying agency environments to contain art, reading materials or decor reflecting people from underrepresented groups.

Linguistic diversity has been rising in many parts of the country. Looking at the top five languages in an area and developing signage, written materials, or even language lines for English language learners might prove valuable in reaching immigrant or refugee communities.

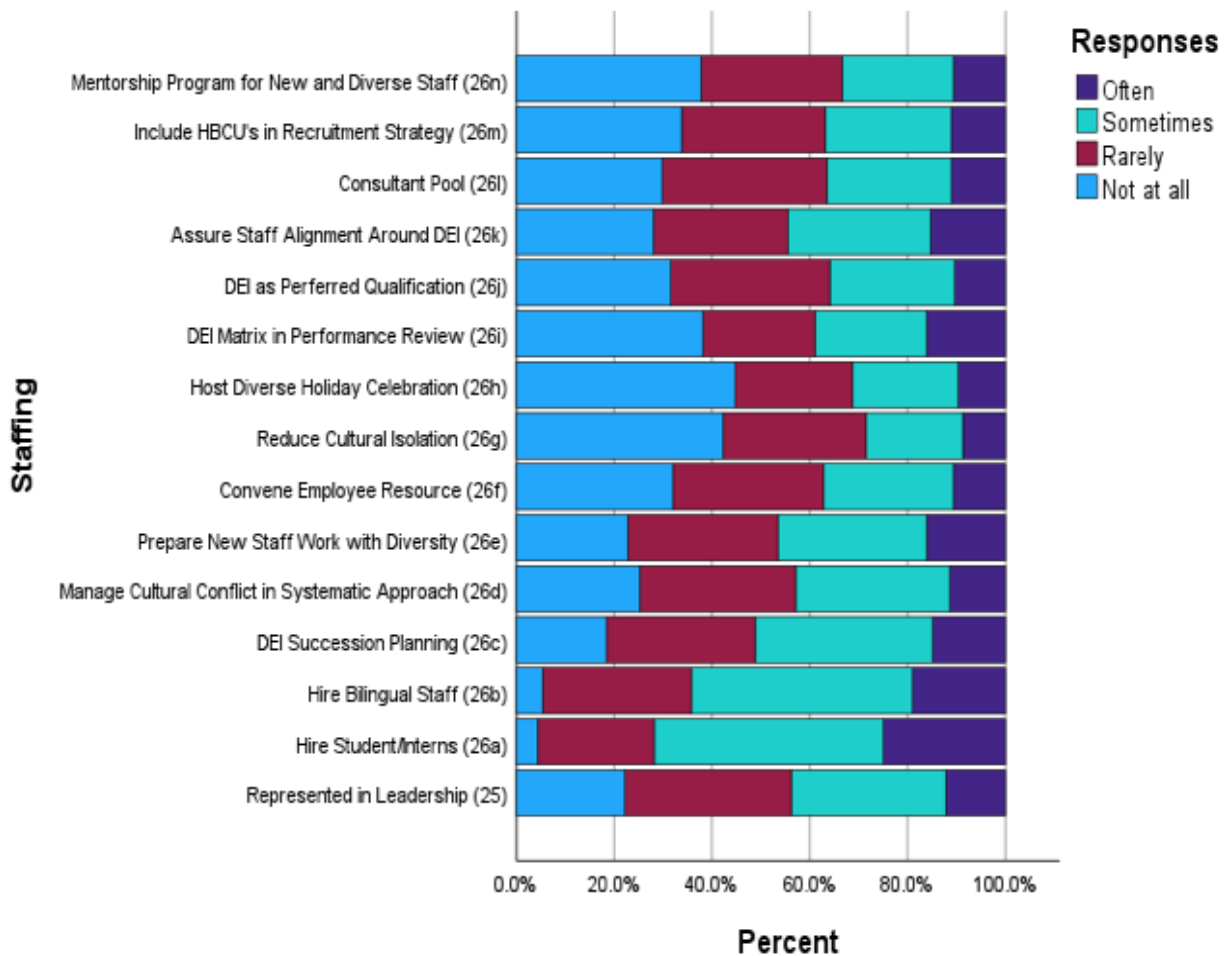


Section 2.4 Staff Development and Staffing Policy

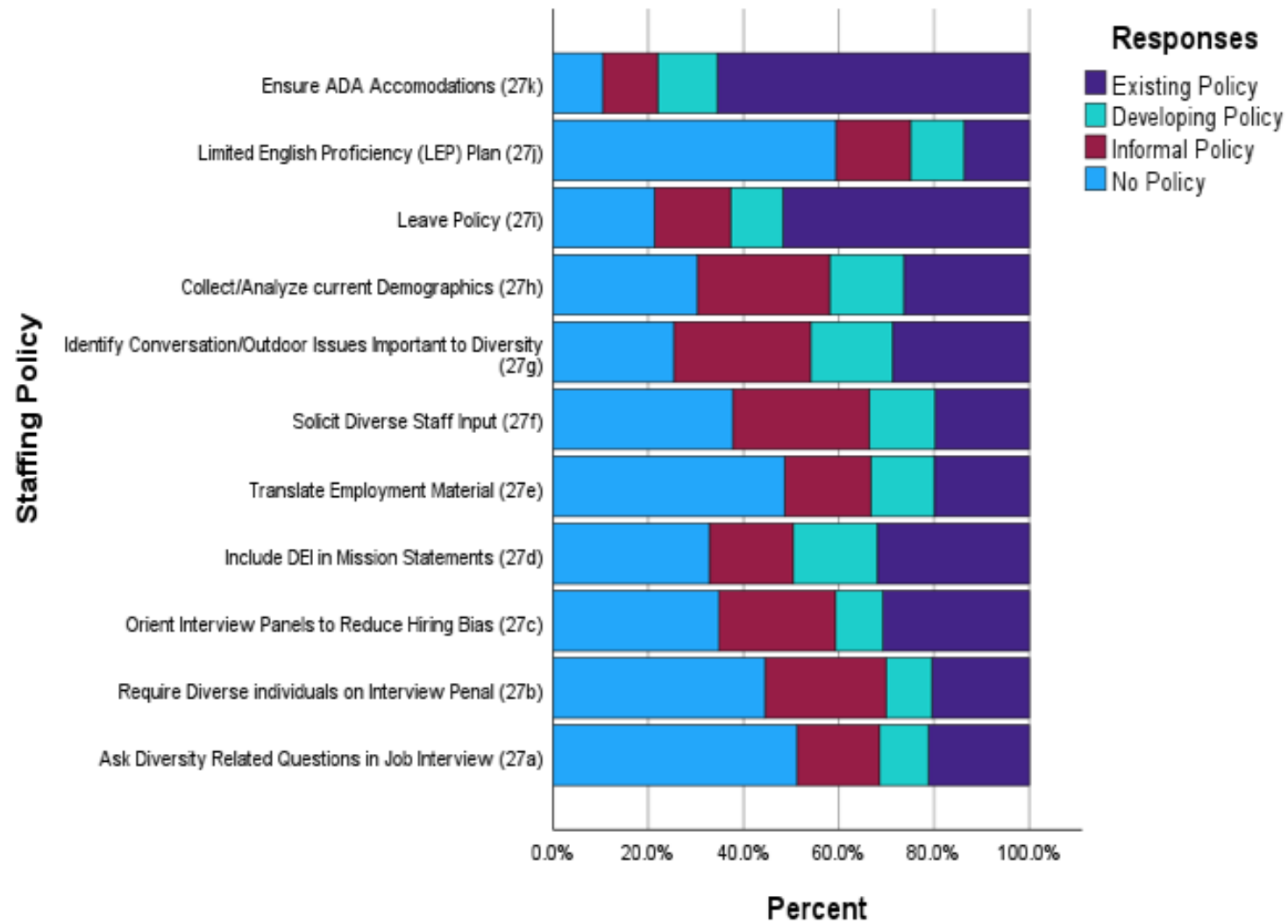
Mean = 2.31 (26 items)

Staff Development and Staffing Policy concerns policies, practices, and relevant structures and behaviors necessary to identify, recruit, retain, and promote a diverse and culturally competent workforce. This includes community engagement, pipeline development, career awareness and other activities needed to assure equity in today’s workforce.

Graph 15. Distribution of responses (1-4) for each question of the Staff Development and Staffing Policy subscale.



Graph 16. Distribution of responses (1-4) for each question of the Staff Development and Staffing Policy subscale continued.



DEI Strengths and Assets

(Items with means **above** the subscale mean)

- Ensuring ADA accommodations for employees with physical, mental, and other disabilities (Q27k) 3.31
- Hiring culturally diverse students, interns, or fellows (Q26a) 2.91
- Having a leave policy that reflects the needs of all staff members (Q27i) 2.91
- Hiring bilingual staff (Q26b) 2.76
- Identify conservation or outdoor issues important to culturally diverse communities (firearm/hunting safety; clean water; green spaces/heat zones, climate change) (Q27g) 2.47
- Having DEI in its mission, vision, or goal statements (Q27d) 2.45
- Engaging in DEI succession planning (Q26c) 2.44
- Preparing new staff to work with culturally diverse, underserved, and underrepresented communities' clients and communities (Q26e) 2.37
- Collecting and analyzing current and projected regional demographics (Q27h) 2.36
- Orienting interview panels to reduce or eliminate hiring bias (Q27c) 2.34

DEI Growth and Opportunity Areas

(Items with means **below** the subscale mean)

- Increasing culturally diverse groups represented in the leadership of your agency (Q25) *2.31
- Seeking diversity in the agency's consultant pool, e.g., HUB program matrix (Q26k) *2.30
- Having a systemic approach to managing cross-cultural conflict (Q26d) *2.26
- Listing DEI as a preferred qualification in all job announcements (Q26i) *2.14
- Establishing Employee Resource Groups to reduce cultural isolation for culturally diverse staff or staff interested in diversity (Q26f) *2.13
- Assuring staff alignment around DEI (Q26j) *2.12
- Including HBCUs or other culturally diverse schools or organizations in your recruitment strategy (Q26m) *2.11
- Creating mentorship opportunities to promote inclusiveness and belonging for new and culturally diverse staff (Q26n) *2.05
- Requiring individuals from culturally diverse, underserved, and underrepresented communities on interview panels (Q27b) *2.05
- Developing DEI metrics to gauge DEI organization growth and performance (Q26h) *1.97

Staff Development and Staffing Policy Summary

DEI workforces are apparently an eventuality given current and projected labor pool demographics, and the significant number of strengths indicate that there is a solid foundation upon which to build for growth in these areas. Areas where the WAFWA respondents scored high and should consider sharing more widely include the hiring of culturally diverse interns and students and bilingual staff, ADA and leave policies, and the mission, vision, and goal statements of the agencies which includes DEI considerations. There are already steps being taken to orientate interview panels to reduce or eliminate bias, preparing new staff to work with diverse clients and communities, and engagement in DEI succession planning. In addition, those agencies that have identified conservation or outdoor issues, such as firearm/hunting safety, clean water, green spaces/heat zones and climate change, that are important to culturally diverse and underrepresented communities can more easily have meaningful discussion on common values and offer opportunities for collaboration.

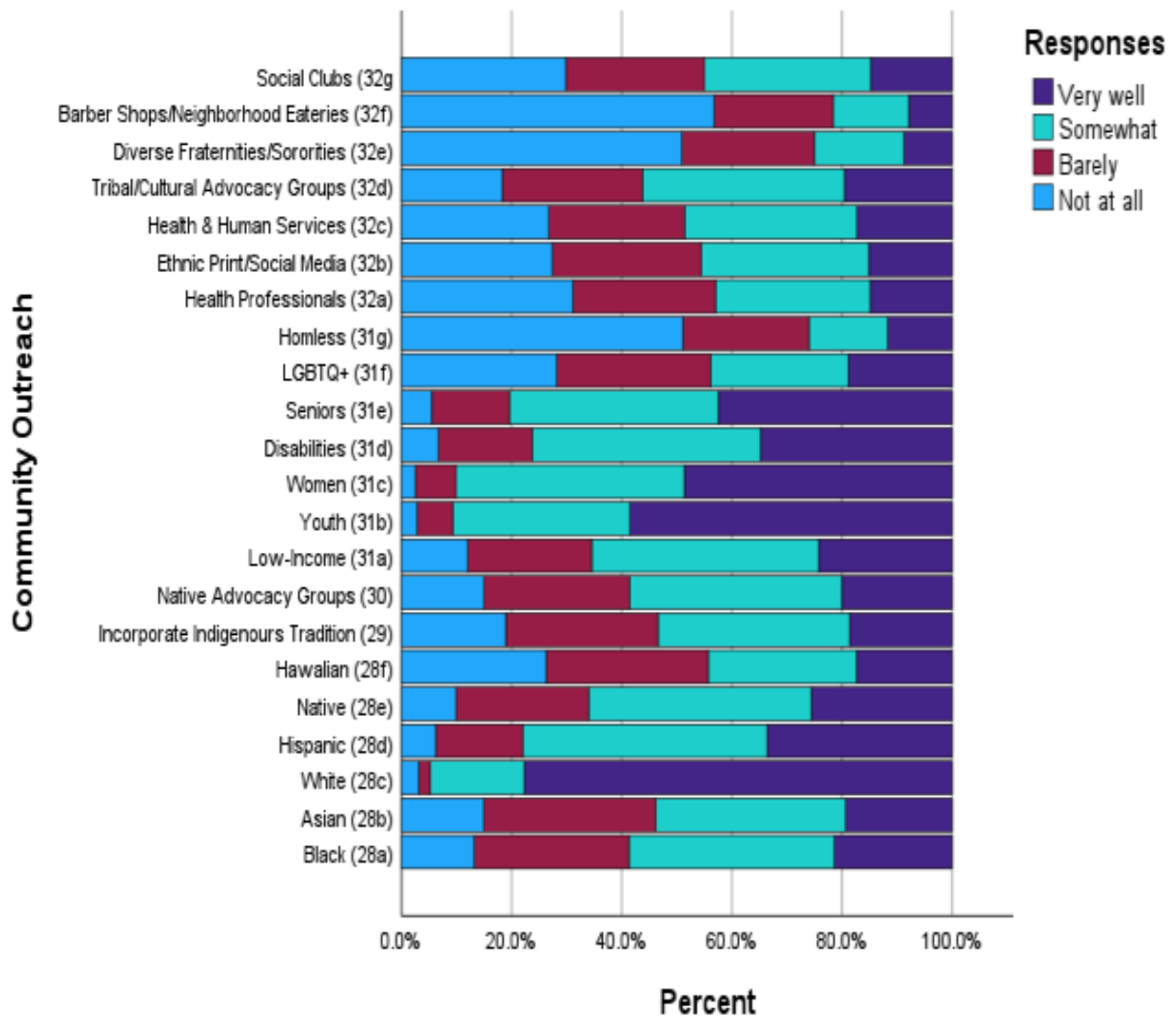
Opportunities for increased communication with culturally diverse communities would include outreach to candidates with limited English proficiency and translating employment materials into multiple languages. Hiring panels might include panelists from diverse, underserved, and underrepresented communities and panels could ask diversity related questions in the job interview process. To increase belonging and inclusiveness agencies might consider hosting culturally diverse holiday celebrations, creating a mentorship program, and adding a DEI metric on performance reviews.

Section 2.5 Community Outreach

Mean = 2.62 (22 items)

Community Outreach includes strategies, platforms, and communication practices and policies needed to ensure messaging and other communication effectively reaches all segments of the target population.

Graph 17. Distribution of responses (1-4) for each question of the Community Outreach subscale.



DEI Strengths and Assets

(Items with means **above** the subscale mean)

- European- or White- American communities(Q28c) 3.69
- Youth and adolescents (Q31b) 3.45
- Women (Q31c) 3.35
- People who are seniors or elderly (Q31e) 3.17
- Hispanic or Latino American (Q28d) 3.05
- People with disabilities (Q31d) 3.02
- Native American/American Indian (Q28e) 2.81
- Low-income groups (Q31a) 2.75
- Black or African American (Q8a) 2.65
- Native American or indigenous advocacy organizations (Q30) 2.63

DEI Growth and Opportunity Areas

(Items with means **below** the subscale mean)

- Asian American (Q28b) *2.56
- Tribal or cultural advocacy organizations (Q32d) *2.56
- Agency incorporates Native American or indigenous traditional ecological knowledge (TEK) into decision making (Q29) *2.52
- Health and human service agencies (Q32c) *2.39
- LGBTQ+ community (Q31f) *2.34
- Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander (Q28f) *2.33
- Ethnic print or social media resources and personalities (Q32b) *2.33
- Social clubs (e.g., Masons, Elks, Moose, Rotarians) (Q32g) *2.30
- Health and allied health professionals (Q32a) *2.27
- People who are homeless (Q31g) *1.88
- Culturally diverse fraternities and sororities (Q2e) *1.85
- Barber shops and salons, neighborhood eateries (Q32f) *1.73

Community Outreach Summary

Responders documented strengths in outreach to seniors, women, youth, people with disabilities, Hispanic, and White communities. The existing expertise and experience with these populations can be applied to outreach to other communities and underrepresented groups. Agencies with existing outreach programs can be used as a resource for those agencies seeking to expand or improve their outreach.

Opportunities for growth would include increased outreach using listening sessions, town halls or focus groups the Asian and Native Hawaiian and other Pacific Islanders communities. Materials can be developed for distribution at locations not traditionally used for outreach, such as fraternities and sororities for culturally diverse populations, barber shops, salons, neighborhood gathering places and social clubs. Additional outreach could be done to reach people experiencing homelessness and to incorporate Native American or Indigenous to bring more traditional ecological knowledge into decision-making.



Section 3 - Qualitative data

Qualitative Study Analysis

Introduction

This section is intended to deepen and add nuance to the understanding of the quantitative data, as well as to provide a sense of the importance of and commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) for the respondents. The following findings and the list of comments used to develop these findings (Appendix 5), can be used by WAFWA and individual agencies for future planning.

The qualitative data analyzed came from responses to Q33. There were 176 comments, and many of them covered multiple topics. The comments that referred primarily to problems with the survey process or content were removed, as were one- or two-word responses, such as "fine" or "good." All references to the specific agency or agency program have been removed. Placement of quotations in various categories is subjective and often a statement could apply to multiple categories. A complete list of the comments included in this analysis grouped by the categories discussed here can be found in Appendix 5.

Findings

Positive and Negative Responses to WAFWA's DEI efforts

Finding 1. There is a high level of support among staff for the existing DEI efforts and their expansion to provide better services, expand the number of constituents and meet the conservation goals of the agency. Constructive and positive comments far outnumbered those that expressed negative opinions about DEI efforts. They endorsed current DEI efforts, expressed the need for additional effort in particular areas and for efforts that do not currently exist in their agency, or commented on the lack of efforts or lack of commitment to DEI.

Finding 2. The level of acceptance and support varied greatly, ranging from deep dedication and enthusiasm to outright animosity for these efforts. The range of views can be seen in the following quotes cited in the subsections below.

- "Our agency superiors are mixed as to the importance of DEI. Many don't see it as important and do little to improve it. Some actively argue against it. Some just play lip service. Many mid and lower level employees are very frustrated with the lack of action, support, and improvement in this area."
- "DEI is extremely important, I would love to see the Agency speed up the process of engaging in meaningful practices. It is impacting the turnover rate, especially amongst younger staff who expect to see DEI efforts."

- "From a marketing perspective, it may not make sense to promote our services to every particular group. I agree, though, that all options should be considered, and a variety of backgrounds and perspectives in our agency is good."
- "Too much time is spent trying to indoctrinate people about the DEI dogma...it is over-rated as a problem."

Reasons for Strong Support for DEI

Finding 3. There are a wide variety of reasons that staff support DEI efforts, including those related to better staff retention, maintaining, or increasing the relevance of these agencies, conserving, and protecting the environment, responding to changing demographics, and because it's the right thing to do.

- "Efforts relating to DE&I are pivotal in increasing the relevance of our agency, conservation-based work as a whole, outdoor resources, and opportunities. It seems that the states making strides in these arenas are the ones prioritizing DE&I straight from the hiring process, and actively working to build altruistic relationships with minority groups."
- "We need help bridging the gaps, especially if we want to beat the technology driven mindset of the future and bring our communities back outdoors."
- "DEI is the most important aspect in successful future natural resource conservation. Folks need to be on the same page and be able to listen and understand each other no matter their differences. Being open to different people with opposing ideas is the only way to move forward. The more diverse viewpoints and experiences, the better the outcome will be."
- "Efforts toward conservation and protecting the environment are not sustainable if we continue to only cater to an aging population of white males. DEI is the solution to effectively continue the work of protecting our wild things and wild places."
- "DEI is important to engage historically marginalized groups who should receive equal benefit of the state's natural resources. "

Current Efforts are Good, but not Enough, with Suggestions for Actions

Finding 4. Staff identified areas in which there are DEI efforts that needed to be created, expanded, speeded up or adapted to better meet the goals of DEI, and suggested next steps.

- "Although some progress is being made, I do think there is more to be made, particularly with the significant abundance of indigenous environmental and conservation knowledge throughout the state."
- "Taking this survey made me realize how much more I and my agency can do."
- "We are making movement forward, but it is slow and has little true backing."

- "The Good Ole Boy network is finally fading and diversity is improving. It hasn't made it to upper management/leadership levels yet but hopefully the next generation will be more open to diverse leaders. Tomorrow's leaders are much more considerate of the environmental impacts of human activities rather than just consumerism of natural resources."
- "Any sort of plan that has worked for others or will work to encourage DEI participation from groups, hiring strategy, and encourage DEI candidate job applications would be very appreciated if shared."
- "One thing that would help us recruit new and diverse audiences is making state parks free. Right now the cost associated with visiting a park (both in entrance fees and any needed equipment) is a big barrier in my area."
- "The agency needs better resources to understand the demographics in our state and the needs and desires of those interested in wildlife as opposed to just participating in wildlife activities."
- "DEI work requires dedicated funding, FTEs, buy-in from all levels of the agency, policy improvements/additions, and integration into existing as well as addition of new positions to be successful."

Barriers to DEI efforts because of traditions, laws, regulations, agency policies, science/conservation-based orientation, or focus on existing constituents.

Finding 5. Staff raised specific concerns about how DEI appears to conflict with historical traditions, laws, regulation, agency policies or other efforts, a science and conservation based orientation and focus on existing users and hunters and fishermen.

- "Conservation and environmental issues should be solely science based and should not reflect how people's feelings are."
- "We are supposed to be a science-based agency."
- "My agency is not proactive when it comes to addressing DEI. We continue to focus and invest time and energy on traditional constituencies and do not work aggressively to engage/understand other non-traditional constituencies."
- "For the longest time the agency sought to increase one specific demographic that participates in the outdoors on a low level. We missed out on other demographics such as Asian Americans as a result of the narrow focus."
- "I do not select or base a purchase of items on that, I believe that it is illegal to base a state agency purchase on a "diversity or race/gender basis". State agencies purchase, recruit and hire, based on a non-biased selection process. "

- "[A state] made English the official language of the state and against [state] law for the government to print materials in languages other than English, ergo of course there wasn't a lot printed in other than English as it is illegal to do so."
- "As conservationists, I think most folks understand the importance of diversity when it relates to ecology and management. That said, I think that we often fall into extremes when it comes to DEI (diversity specifically). Either we want diversity just to have diversity (or because we're told we need diversity) or we have no interest in diversity because it seems like it does not apply. "

Negative or Strong Objections to DEI Efforts

Finding 6. A minority of staff had significant or strong objections that will hinder DEI efforts unless addressed directly. The objections have been grouped into the following rationales:

Not my job/Not a problem

- "Everyone has the opportunity to interact with the environment."
- "Everyone is welcome to use our facilities. Anyone who spends money at the parks helps fund conservation so it is important to include everyone."
- "Just let me come to work and do my job!"
- "Again, I have nothing to do with this in my job. I personally am fed up with the "wokism" and feel it is doing more harm than good. People should be judged on skills/knowledge - not color of skin, where they came from, or what they do in private."
- "Our public information and programs target all [state residents] that are interested or potentially interested in harvesting fish and game and there is no need to seek out certain ethnic groups. Tribes are involved in the Board of Game and Fish processes, commercial fishing just the same as anyone else. [Agency] has a history of a "good old boys club"; however, that history is mostly linked with inappropriate ties to the industry (ie. upper level management staff working in the best interest of the commercial or sport fish industry)."

Agency shouldn't be doing it/other priorities are more important

- "I believe there is entirely too much time and effort placed on this topic, especially when it comes to hiring. We should focus on hiring the best individual for the job. None of these other items should matter. "
- "I feel DEI isn't a part of our agency and its mission."
- "We are a conservation agency, tasked with protecting, conserving, and enhancing the wildlife and their habitats of the State. Let's not forget our goal and become distracted by this DEI fad."
- "The level of diversity in this and likely other natural resource agencies is determined by the level of diversity in the applicant pool e.g., the reason why the percentage of

blacks in the agency is at about 5% is because only 5% of the applicant pool is black. Institutional barriers, unconscious bias etc. doesn't have a chance to impact. We're barking up the wrong tree. It's external factors that determine agency diversity. At some point the DEI movement will see the light."

- "Conservation should not be tailored to a specific group. We are all in this together."
- "It's a waste of time to worry about it. No matter where you drop anchor, there will be a segment of people that think that they are getting the shaft. Yet, as unimportant it is to the agency, someone has manufactured an artificial level of importance just to whip up some angst."

They can engage if they want to, but don't

- "If any person wants to enjoy the outdoors, [Agency] will help them do that. Everyone is treated the same who comes through our doors."
- "We can't force people to be interested in conservation or the environment. No one is excluded from learning or participating in outdoor education."

Reverse discrimination, "wokism" or memes

- "DEI is just a way to racially divide us and give special treatment to people who aren't white. It's the very definition of racism. People are people and the DEI crowd should really stop trying to force racially motivated propaganda down our throats because no one is listening and it just feels like everything is based on race or gender instead of the person's character and skill set. No one cares about the justifications that crowd pushing it comes up with for it either."
- "DEI sometimes borders on a violation of the U.S. Constitution. I think EVERYONE should have equal opportunity for jobs, promotions, etc. and that the best person for the job should be hired.....REGARDLESS of race, identity, etc. Having quotas on hiring to ensure sex ratios, LGBTQ, minorities, etc. should be illegal! A person who is better qualified than a person who is less qualified and belongs to one of the DEI groups should be hired/promoted etc."
- "Go WOKE, Go Broke!!! Quit confirming"
- "STOP TRYING TO INCLUDE EVERYONE BY SEPARATING US! When you purposely target specific groups, you automatically exclude others."
- "DEI is about politics and virtue signaling, not science. It specifically focuses on equal outcomes based on race, sex, religion, etc., which is very different from supporting equal opportunity for all. It is by definition prejudiced. DEI refuses to acknowledge that individual people, and therefore their outcomes, are (and always will be) different and instead focuses on groups while minimizing the individual. Rather than bring people together, DEI pits different groups against each other and tears existing functioning societies apart, while putting purveyors of DEI at the top of the power structure. It is, in the end, nothing but a grift."

Findings Specific to DEISAQ Subscales

Community Awareness, Engagement, Resources and Linkages

Finding 7. DEI efforts to better serve and include culturally diverse, underserved, or underrepresented communities are viewed as important for agencies to be pursuing in order to better meet conservation goals.

Community Awareness

- "I think that there needs to be an increase in listening to folks from DEI communities, rather than telling them what to do."
- "There is a lot we can learn from tribal groups and other diverse groups on how to maintain our land and utilize our resources for the most gain to benefit humans and nature."

Community Engagement

- "If 6% of the state hunt or fish and 98% identify with non-consumptive wildlife viewing why are the commissioners always [businesses, hunter advocacy groups]. Why don't we see Audubon or other groups represented that are typically more diverse than agencies? "
- "I believe we as an agency can do a much better job at engaging with diverse and underserved communities in the state in order to develop a better understanding of the needs and wants of our culturally/ ethnically diverse constituents."
- "We are failing at conservation when we do not engage everyone. Our agency needs to look towards the future, not the past. If we want to have conservation, recreation, and outdoors people in the future, we need to trash some of our old-school thinking based on 19th century and early 20th century conservation ideas and European models. "
- "It's important to engage diverse groups so that conservation is a valued priority for the general public in the future."

Community Resources and Linkage

- "We need contributions from culture-based content producers to give us the media, stories and speak on historical relationships with Consv and Env, but also provide a call to action towards stewardship and enjoyment of these resources."
- " Socioeconomics is a big problem for minorities, as they're marginalized (where they live, access to information and more). There's a significant gap that could be merged if wildlife conservation agencies saw the significant value in serving all communities - and that starts by making an honest commitment and doing what it takes to connect with minority populations and engage them."
- "We need help bridging the gaps, especially if we want to beat the technology driven mindset of the future and bring our communities back outdoors."

Outreach

- "The agency is hyper-focused on engaging the public that participates in consumptive outdoor activities (hunting, fishing, etc), and does little to reach out to the non-consumptive public, many of which fall within diversity categories. The outreach to non-consumptive and diverse public needs to go hand in hand to be in any way successful into the future."
- "We need to incorporate tribal views, aka, TEK, and empower diverse groups to participate in [state] decision-making process and make diverse populations aware of the career path within the department. Be more proactive in terms of reaching out to different kinds of groups."
- "Need more material in different languages."
- 'There also needs to be direct collaboration with diverse partner agencies.'
- "[Agency] should do more to reach out to diverse, urban schools and organizations."

Utilization by people from culturally diverse and underrepresented populations

Finding 8. Utilization of agency services by these populations is seen as a measure of success of the previous subscale areas, and thus it is necessary to identify and address the barriers to utilization.

- "Bridging the gap between under-represented groups with conservation and outdoor recreation has been difficult. We continue to provide opportunities with little improvements in participation."
- "New to the idea of reaching out to underserved community leaders, engaging them and learning from them. We have a recreation and conservation fund these communities can apply to for funding to support outdoor initiatives with their community members."
- "Our agency's challenge is to find the barriers to engaging with POC, ethnic, and culturally diverse groups and collaboratively work on dissolving those barriers. We are just learning how ethnic and culturally-diverse groups perceive the environment and desire to interact with the environment."

Staff Development and Staffing Policy Subscale

Finding 9. Having a diverse staff, with an increased number of people from underrepresented communities will increase the agency's effectiveness, relevance and credibility.

- "I am the only Spanish speaking employee at [name] State Park. We need to have more"

- "I do believe that the more DEI found in a natural resource management agency, the more representative decisions about conservation and environment will be of the community's desires."
- "The more diversity of employees that we have will bring more ideas on how to better create solutions/protections. "
- "The people in the state believe that the agency, employees promote are a group of old white boys that reach only white people in the state and promote only their activities of interest."
- "There is a severe lack of [state] Native people on the staff of the [state agency], and the insights and expertise of [state] Native people in fish and game management are crucial for our agency moving forward."
- "I would love to see the Agency speed up the [DEI] process of engaging in meaningful practices. It is impacting the turnover rate, especially amongst younger staff who expect to see DEI efforts."

Finding 10. It is clear that agencies must find ways to increase the number of people from underrepresented populations on staff by improving recruitment strategies and the pipeline into agency jobs.

- " Efforts should focus on education, outreach, and recruitment to get people the resources necessary to get involved and effect change and to make them aware of how they can have a career in environmental or natural resource management. Part of the recruitment strategy should be informing youth how to prepare for obtaining these types of positions concerning education, volunteering, internships, resume building, interviewing, etc."
- "Diversity in the workforce needs to begin in the school system. Applicants need to be qualified and experienced, not just ethnically diverse."
- "The agency certainly doesn't appear to be doing anything to recruit diverse applicants or to encourage individuals from diverse backgrounds to enter into the profession."
- "This is a systemic issue and the agency, state and university do not work collaboratively to co-create a diverse workforce. The biological sciences are simply too white."
- "We need to make diverse populations aware of the career path within the department."

Finding 11. Agencies need to develop strategies to increase the number of people from underrepresented groups on staff.

- "The agency needs to look at the existing barriers to employment for BIPOC applicants to the agency. Data from HR shows that around 35% of applicants are from BIPOC

individuals, yet none if any get to the interview. What is lacking more - education or experience?"

- " If we truly wanted to keep it (hiring) equal and fair, we'd do phone interviews or off-camera interviews, so we never judged the person by the way they looked. All candidates would be judged solely on their answers to interview questions."
- "Most of our entry-level positions go to young white males that are good at talking to white males. Once they have a "foot in the door" they get field opportunities that others don't get. We need to work harder to get diversity into these entry-level positions."
- "The other issue is that hiring in the department is based around big cities like [name], and then we fly people out to [rural areas] during the year. Since we do not provide accommodations in [city where hiring occurs] for people to stay, it is actually fairly difficult to hire someone from the remote community because they can't really afford to stay in [city] for the brief early or late season work."
- "There needs to be a coordinated and tangible effort to recruit and hire diverse applicants from entry-level to director-level. "

Finding 12. Lack of people from underrepresented groups is glaringly obvious at the leadership level and adversely affects DEI efforts.

- "It would be helpful to have a more diverse group of people representing the agency at a high level, such as director staff and commission. I do not often feel represented by the higher levels of the agency and I imagine many of the constituents feel the same."
- "There is no representation of diversity at the highest levels of management and most definitely not on the majority of hiring boards."
- "Currently, most leadership and executive staff are white, male, consumptive recreationists....the culture at [agency] will never change as long as the leadership lacks diversity in both cultural and mindset (focused on consumptive recreation vs non-consumptive) and continues to show very little interest in increasing diversity internally"
- "Our agency is mostly white males and it is run like that. Sometimes I feel like there is no way for a female or minority to be promoted into an upper leadership position. If you are not a hunter or angler, there is a culture of exclusivity."
- "I have participated in meetings where [agency] leadership (generally all white males) have expressed not just disdain, but actual alarm and derision at the idea of engaging in community-based resource management and monitoring. "
- " The agency does do ok consulting with white-based angling and hunting clubs and associations."

Finding 13. More training on DEI is needed and supported by many staff members.

- Agency staff should be required to read about systemic racism in the conservation and environmental sector. Even if they don't take any action, awareness is essential.
- "I think we need more trainings on DEI and how to practice it within the organization."
- "I wish my agency would offer trainings to encourage awareness of DEI issues."
- "DEI work needs to be integrated into every facet of the work we do. We need a cultural and attitude shift. Trainings for staff are a good way to start."

Finding 14. Internal communications about DEI and DEI efforts need to be improved.

- "My responses reflect my knowledge. My agency may be doing slightly better than I've indicated, but if they are, again they aren't communicating that well. In fact, I think my agency isn't communicating about DEI very well. Its DEI committee ironically does not have a clear and open path to participation and individuals on that committee seem to have been hand-picked."
- "I believe that change is happening and is welcomed (but presents some challenges in messaging and in staff training)."
- "Being in a small remote field office, it is hard to know what our agency has done or who they engage for DEI."

Finding 15. From the qualitative data it is evident that considerable talent exists within WAFWA that can benefit member organizational development. Here is a list of existing programs and capabilities within WAFWA member agencies which could be shared among all members to support further DEI efforts and best practices.

1) Community awareness, engagement, resources & linkage and outreach

- a) Collects data on culturally diverse populations
- b) Inclusive language and imagery online, in print, on social and traditional media
- c) Support for recruiting, hiring, internships
- d) Members of underrepresented groups are consulted with and are on advisory boards, etc., for general planning and for DEI specific efforts, including in urban areas
- e) Dedicated resources to recruiting populations to outdoor activities and making them more accessible
- f) Unit/division specifically for interacting with diverse populations
- g) Implements focus groups with people from underrepresented groups
- h) Specific programs for specific underrepresented groups (women, ADA, BIPOC, LGBTQ, veterans, etc.)

- i) Translation of documents in languages specific to the population
- j) Park grants to local communities to bring outdoors closer to urban, more diverse users

2) Staff development

- a) Efforts to reduce bias in hiring
- b) Staff training on DEI, including free online/on demand training modules
- c) Improvements in representation in hiring and workforce
- d) Many staff hiring groups require, to the extent possible, to have diversity on hiring committees
- e) Childcare policies

3) DEI specific resources

- a) Have written DEI policies
- b) DEI working group
- c) Specific DEI related assignments
- d) Awards for staff for DEI actions
- e) Each division has crafted and is working towards implementation of specific, relevant, actionable, and measurable DEI goals
- f) DEI program coordinator
- g) DEI Committee/working group

4) Agency-wide efforts

- a) In some of our research projects, we are starting to be aware and concerned about how our fish and wildlife management decisions may impact our diverse constituents
- b) Include DEI in agency-wide planning documents (DEI not a separate plan)

Recommendations

Recommendations that come from the assessment will build on identified strengths and can be considered when developing staff, organizational or strategic plans with short-, medium-, long-term goals.

1. Process to engage, maintain and augment DEI Task Group.

One major strength of WAFWA is its DEI Task Group. This group has been instrumental in supporting the DEI journey for WAFWA and its member organizations. One consideration is to make the group larger and perhaps more representative of the regions within the WAFWA footprint. The group might also develop or disseminate its charter as to why it exists and what it can do for the network. The Task Group members could benefit from an orientation to a common definition of DEI, a rationale as to why, and its focus in the short-, medium-, and long-term. It would be critical that this group begin to talk about DEI being in the organization's best interest given the demographic changes anticipated over the next twenty years. Moreover, given how DEI is viewed in certain parts of the country, it may be important that rationale be couched in efficiencies (recruitment and retention costs, customer satisfaction, program utilization, employee engagement, etc.) as much if not more than for the sake of diversity which can fall out of vogue.

Examples:

Writing in Human Resource Executive in 2020, Caruso and Pandya talked about the sudden explosion of DEI committees, but admonished if this is just done for cosmetic purposes the strategy may backfire. They go on to say having a clear purpose, strong sponsorship, and using data are helpful. They warn against:

1. Pressuring historically marginalized people to serve on the DEI committee.
2. Focusing too narrowly, for example just one group.
3. Solving every issue and not separating and ordering goals.
4. Establishing a committee and viewing it as an end and not a means to an end.
5. Considering all employees' perspectives, effectively representing DEI concerns, and getting traction with senior leadership, governing structures, and the board as examples.

[Diversity, Equity and Inclusion in the Workplace | Starting a DEI Committee - Idealist So you set up a DE&I task force. Now what? - HR Executive](#)

Ferguson writing in Lever in 2023 offered some other examples of things to consider, when establishing a DEI council, including:

1. Feature stakeholders from across all business units to form your DEI committee.
2. Orient and align members, delineate goals in terms of short- and long-term projects and tasks, as well as long-term initiatives.
3. Review hiring data to examine the level of diversity, including identifying strengths and hiring best practices.
4. Prepare to work on behalf of all employees and constituents.
5. Establish a safe process to elicit feedback from employees.

[Developing a DEI Committee: How to Build Your Team - Lever](#)

The Zweig Group noted in 2022 how they formed a DEI Committee even though employees were not clamoring for one. They talk about how the D.H. Charles Engineering firm values for continuous improvement formed their group and wanted “to form this group to improve as individuals and as a company and to make the DHC work experience even better for our employees.” And although a small engineering firm, they wanted to bring awareness, identify best practices, to foster a diverse and inclusive environment.

[Creating a DEI task force \(zweiggroup.com\)](#)

In a Pulsely article entitled, “How to Successfully Launch a DEI Committee” the author ponders where the committee should reside, in HR or under the CEO, most saying HR. The article offers strong examples of considerations including starting with data to establish clear objectives, securing executive support, creating a mission statement, using SMART goals, allowing time to participate, and enlisting everyone’s support.

[How to Successfully Launch a DEI Committee \(pulsely.io\)](#)

2. Prioritize WAFWA sponsored DEI activities.

While the subscale scores might be suggestive of what actions WAFWA takes to continue its DEI journey, it will be important to treat any goals as one would any other major project. For example, project management components might include scope, schedule, cost, quality, human resources, communication/change management, risk, and procurement. Similarly, while identifying metrics of success would also be important, both process and outcome should be considered.

Where WAFWA appeared strongest was the community contacts or resources and linkages reported by the respondents. The most prominent area of growth could be around staffing. WAFWA might use its strengths in community contacts to identify, recruit, and

support culturally diverse staff. In addition to being a place to advertise, community contacts might also prove helpful on interview panels, as welcoming resources, and as community/cultural key informants for new or existing staff. Community contacts might also allow WAFWA to enhance cultural awareness as to how historically marginalized and underserved communities view and use the outdoors, even types of programming they would support and advocate for. Certainly, these community resources can inform community engagement and educational strategies, and even ways of messaging culturally diverse communities effectively.

Another way of considering the survey data, is to continue where there is already DEI momentum, resources, or interest. The WAFWA DEI Task Group can mine data for possible training, staff and organizational development, or cultural awareness activities. It was apparent that there was considerable interest in DEI, and it may help employee engagement to afford DEI interested staff an opportunity to present, publish, or consult within the network as a way of growing and inspiring others.

Examples:

Devonish writing of the Cowen Partners DEI experience talks about sequential steps and concerns, including:

- 1. Setting the goals for the organization**
- 2. Finalizing the action points that need to be done to achieve those goals**
- 3. Mobilizing the resources required to complete the actions.**

Devonish goes on to talk about developing a strategy and implementation plan. This, she argues, helps a company articulate goals and a method for pursuing and achieving them. She admonishes the difficulty comes from not outlining how many goals to pursue and in what sequence. She goes on to suggest 3 to 5 goals over using a 1-to-5-year plan. Acknowledging the newness of DEI, suggest organizations take baby steps and ordering them in ways that align with resources available to execute DEI programs.

[Why Strategic Plans Play an Integral Role in Successful DEI Programs \(cowenpartners.com\)](https://www.cowenpartners.com)

In an article named “Why Plan”, the Williams College DEI journey is chronicled. The article states, “...DEI plan is an opportunity for each of our units individually and the institution collectively to articulate and highlight current work happening to foster an environment of greater inclusion and respect, to develop goals for a more equitable future, and to work together as a community to uphold our values and vision. We are not there yet. You help us to move forward. Thinking through these important issues

requires everyone’s participation.” The implication is that humility may go a long way, and the journey might not be linear.

[Why plan? – Institutional Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion \(williams.edu\)](#)

The American Association of Medical Colleges (AAMC) offers a DEI Planning Toolkit. They suggest a nine-step process that organizations can use to launch and organize their DEI journey. The AAMC has been helpful in getting medical and other professional schools to view DEI as an asset. And while writing for universities, there are many examples and takeaways that might be adopted for WAFWA use. This Toolkit lists a litany of resources and stimulating ideas for correctly implementing DEI strategies. Implicit in this article is the notion that there may be more than one way to proceed. Contexts, resources, sponsorships, metrics, staff and organizational development strategies all play a role.

[Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Planning Toolkit | AAMC](#)

SHRM also offers a guide to implementing DEI plans. This guide is chock full of ideas and strategies. Again, noting the benefits to the organization they acknowledge the virtues of DEI from an HR and organizational vista, offering:

“A strategic diversity, equity and inclusion (DE&I) management plan can help an organization make the most of its diversity by creating an inclusive, equitable and sustainable culture and work environment. Workplace diversity is the collective mixture of differences and similarities that include individual and organizational characteristics, values, beliefs, experiences, backgrounds, preferences, and behaviors.

While diversity creates the potential for greater innovation and productivity, inclusion is what enables organizations to realize the business benefits of this potential. Equity refers to fair treatment in access, opportunity, and advancement for individuals. Work in this area includes identifying and working to eliminate barriers to fair treatment for disadvantaged groups.”

<https://www.shrm.org/resourcesandtools/tools-and-samples/hr-forms/pages/guide-to-developing-a-strategic-diversity-equity-and-inclusion-plan.aspx>

The University of Michigan DEI newsletter. The university shares some of its foundational components and signature initiatives. The former includes high-level buying;:

[Building an Institutional DEI Strategic Plan | Diversity, Equity & Inclusion | University of Michigan \(umich.edu\)](#)

3. Identify DEI representatives from member organizations.

Arguably WAFWA can improve on the racial and ethnic diversity of its staff. However, let's understand the diverse staff in one state/province where we might be able to share culturally specific insights, activities, and programming with others. For example, Texas has had a long-standing Latino population and has made some gains. This information might be shared with another area that has yet to engage a growing Hispanic community. Other states may have had good experiences with other immigrant or refugee groups that might be shared with a region newly experiencing in-migration of a given population. For example, Alaska has immigrants and refugees from all over the world who come to work and live. How has Alaska learned to engage these groups? Or can the Texas experience with immigrants be helpful to Alaska? These are questions and quandaries a WAFWA DEI Task Group can entertain and deliberate.

4. Share results (leading with identified strengths) and disseminate best practices.

Extol the subscale and item strengths revealed in the survey. Moreover, review the qualitative comments for pearls of wisdom, there were many. Among the other strengths to be shared include languages spoken by WAFWA member organization staff, the diversity of age and what that implies, the years of customer facing experience, gender, and other forms of diversity that might be engaged to reach new markets, develop new services, and identify emerging advocacy resources. In particular, the qualitative strengths and opportunities revealed a wide range of activities that should bring pride. Similarly, the weaknesses and threats sections might also be widely shared. Someone else's mistake might prove a valuable lesson for others.

Some of the identified strengths (i.e., subscales or specific items), might be shared with local communities, schools, veterans' groups, social organizations, and civic bodies to broaden awareness and enlist support. In addition to WAFWA activities, staff might look to present at community or local meetings, as well as regional and national content related forums. Staff might also be used to recruit at HBCUs, amongst women and veteran groups, and other venues where there is affinity or inclination.

[Why a DEI Committee is Essential for Your Nonprofit: How to Get Started - Nonprofit Leadership Center of Tampa Bay \(nlctb.org\)](#)

[Starting a Diversity and Inclusion \(DEI\) Program Committee at the Workplace - people3](#)

[DEI Committee Good Start Guide | Division of Diversity, Inclusion, and Community Engagement at Rutgers University–New Brunswick](#)

[How to Create a DEI Committee So More Voices Can Be Heard \(usc.edu\)](#)

5. Uncover WAFWA resources for DEI consultation, conferences, staff and organization development, and research and publishing.

6. Celebrate staff participation, candor, and courage.

WAFWA leadership should thank all participating agencies and staff therein. In some cases, there may have been peer pressure to respond, stigma, or other adverse consequences. The candor and frankness exhibited was both refreshing and daunting. However, the not so flattering comments showed peoples' feelings and the fact that they trusted the anonymity and confidentiality of the survey process. Most notable was that several states have very high participation, even some where they anticipated no support.

7. Review DEI opportunities that might occur at the state or province level.

States that sent in fifty (50) or more surveys will get a profile that contains subscale and item averages. They might convene a planning group to identify their strengths and identify areas in which they might grow. They could consider engaging a consultant or trainer to design agency specific goals reflective of their specific survey results. In a virtual world, member organizations may be able to partner with states with similar profiles to reduce cost and enhance interactive learning and development. It may also behoove states and provinces to share with local leaders that they are continuing their diversity or organizational journey by examining where they were strong with respect to diversity as a way of enlisting community support for areas of growth.

8. Include hiring, training and development, community engagement, collaboration and partnerships, mission and vision statements, advisory boards, pipeline development, volunteer, and mentorship opportunities.

What's important to remember, however, is that no cross-subject comparisons are helpful. This was designed as a single subject research effort. Entities should compare themselves to themselves via repeated measures over time (24 to 36 months with the same or similar tool). Fortunately, this tool has proven to be reliable and is designed for repeated use. That is not to say that there won't be or isn't a better tool, but for now the DEISAQ is viable and remains so. It can help discern where progress has been made. Understanding organizations will not necessarily grow in the same direction or pace. This assessment was done to inform growth. This informed growth can be used to let funders, bureau heads, or other governing bodies know that your DEI journey is specific to your context. This journey can be shared with

local groups as mentioned earlier to get their support and buy-in. Below are examples of best practices identified within an organization, they may have utility for WAFWA.

<https://www.lever.co/blog/8-diversity-equity-and-inclusion-best-practices/>

<https://hr.sparkhire.com/best-hiring-practices/6-dei-best-practices-from-global-companies/>

<https://blog.bonus.ly/dei-in-the-workplace>

<https://www.ccl.org/articles/leading-effectively-articles/5-powerful-ways-to-take-real-action-on-dei-diversity-equity-inclusion/>

<https://www.cultureamp.com/blog/5-ways-to-embed-dei-practices>

Bibliography and References

DEI in the Workplace

[One Year Later: How Companies Have Responded to George Floyd's Murder \(forbes.com\)](#)

[15 Key Benefits Of DEI To Communicate With Team Members \(forbes.com\)](#)

[10 actionable ways leaders can prioritize diversity, equity, and inclusion - Bravely \(workbravely.com\)](#)

[5 Tips to Prioritize DEI in the Workplace \(trainingmag.com\)](#)

[8 Companies Prioritizing DEI Initiatives \(paragonone.com\)](#)

[Strategies For Prioritizing DEI In Your Business \(forbes.com\)](#)

[The Value of DEI in the Workplace: Why Your Organization Should Prioritize DEI Initiatives \(collaborativesolutions.com\)](#)

[Four Reasons To Prioritize DEI During A Recession \(forbes.com\)](#)

[Why and How to Prioritize DEI at Your Organization | Forum One](#)

[5 ways to prioritize your DEI strategy when downsizing | The Enterprisers Project](#)

[Five Major Benefits Of Increasing Diversity & Inclusion In Your Organization \(forbes.com\)](#)

Resources below suggested by Robin Goodman,

Chief Diversity Officer, Utah Department of Natural Resources

Quick Reads

[How to Talk about Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion | by Alida Miranda-Wolff | Ascent Publication \(medium.com\)](#)

[Diversity, Equity & Inclusion: 5 Ways to Take REAL Action on DEI | CCL](#)

[Why is Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Important to Organizational Success? \(ideal.com\)](#)

[Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion: Why it Matters | SBU Online](#)

[Why DEI Matters in the Workplace | Justworks](#)

Quick Views

[What Diversity & Inclusion is REALLY About | Simon Sinek](#)

[Why corporate diversity programs fail & what to do instead](#)

[Diversity and Inclusion \(in 2022\)](#)

[5 Barriers to Diversity and Inclusion](#)

[Equality Diversity & Inclusion in 2021 - WHAT'S IT ALL ABOUT?](#)

[Diversity and Inclusion in the Workplace Dupont](#)

DEI in Wildlife and Conservation

[Texas Parks and Wildlife Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plan](#)

[Alaska Department of Fish and Game](#)

[Oregon Department of Fish & Wildlife Workplace Inclusion Plan](#)

[The Wildlife Society](#)

[Women in Wildlife Science: Building Equity, Diversity and Inclusion](#)

[National Wildlife Federation](#)

[Wildlife Conservation Society](#)

[U.S. Fish and Wildlife News: Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility](#)

- [Martha Williams: Embracing Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility](#)
- [Becoming Our Authentic Selves](#)
- [Nature That Nurtures](#)
- [Creating Space for a New Generation of Hunters](#)
- [The Burns Paiute Tribe and the Rarest Grass in Oregon](#)
- [Children Get Their Hands Dirty During “Be the Biologist” Program](#)
- [Teamwork Makes Fishing Accessible](#)
- [The Camden Water Trail: Connecting a City to its Rivers](#)
- [Tracked Wheelchair Now Available at Iron River National Fish Hatchery](#)

[A Voice in the Wilderness: A Pioneering Biologist Explains Why We Must and How We Can Diversify the Scientific Workforce by Dr. Joseph L. Graves](#)

[The Journal of Social Equity and Public Administration \(JSEPA\)](#) is a new peer-reviewed, open access journal sponsored by the American Society for Public Administration (ASPA).

[The Journal of Social Equity and Public Administration: From Vision to Victory](#)

[A Journal Dedicated to Social Equity and Public Administration](#)

[Representative Bureaucracy and Social Equity: Bias, Perceived Fairness and Efficacy](#)

[Structural Racism in the Federal Workplace: An Intersectional Approach to Examining Race-Based Discrimination in Law Enforcement](#)

[Rising Gender Inequities: The Case of Authoritarian Patriarchy](#)

[Dismantling Institutional and Structural Racism: Implementation Strategies Across the United States](#)

[Promoting Social Justice](#)

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Mason, J.L., (1995). Cultural Competence Self-Assessment Questionnaire: A Manual for Users. Portland, OR: Portland State University. <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED399684.pdf>

Epilogue

We want to thank the 1700 people who participated in this survey. We endeavored to understand and remedy issues that prevented others from participating. What follows this report is a secondary analysis that entailed interviews to discern how this DEI assessment and other efforts might be better supported by the WAFWA network. Please read the analysis at the end of this report produced by Greg Wolley and Greg Supriano, Creating Tomorrow's Workforce team, that will add clarity to the previous pages.

Every individual matters. Every individual has a role to play. Every individual makes a difference.” – Jane Goodall

APPENDICES

Appendix 1 - DEI Beyond the Business Case

As WAFWA continues its diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) journey, reminding or level-setting as to *why* might be critical. Not only for this assessment effort, but something that should be disseminated throughout the network. While there may be both great national energy and resistance to this concept, keeping emotion out, there are concrete if not objective reasons as to why this path may be in WAFWA's collective best interest.

Organizational Efficiency

There is a convincing case to be made for efficiency. Organizations that engage and employ talent from underrepresented groups are more productive and creative; they are better at problem solving and increase workforce retention by ensuring a welcoming environment. Going forward, there will be a great demand for talent, culturally diverse and otherwise. Retaining this talent is tied to economic efficiency and stewardship, hallmarks of most public agencies. It has been estimated voluntary turnover costs employers collectively tens of billions of dollars annually. This is because it takes one-third to one-half of a position's annual salary to refill positions in the event employees walk early. If they leave because of a hostile work environment or discrimination, settlements can make this number rise greatly. If budgets matter, so does DEI.

Rapport and Relationship

Engaging and satisfying respective WAFWA member constituents might also serve as a rationale. Organizations that employ staff that reflect the diversity (current and projected) of a service area establish better relationships, which result in greater utilization of those goods or services and can create a stronger sense of ambassadorship or program endorsement. For private companies, this can mean increased market share, and for organizations, such as WAFWA, it may mean greater awareness, compliance, and even advocacy on the part of its constituents, which are all in WAFWA's best interest.

Creativity and Productivity

There is compelling evidence that DEI leads to greater productivity. For example, Scott Page found that diverse groups of problem solvers can outperform groups deemed more talented. Employees within nonprofit organizations bring a wider array of perspectives, which can lead to better solutions to organizational challenges and problems. Again, this can be in WAFWA's and its members' best interest.

Social Justice

Many nonprofit organizations have mission statements or values that speak to social justice. Much of this concern and effort emerged post the death of George Floyd. DEI holds that everyone has value and can contribute. Therefore, organizations need to eradicate structural barriers and practices, and historical factors that have led to under-utilization of marginalized populations. As American society continues to diversify, future workforces will necessarily draw upon a much more diverse labor pool. To ensure an organization gets the best talent possible, they will be required to engage and establish relationships with culturally diverse and underrepresented communities. In this vein, diversity not only includes race and ethnicity, but also concerns age/cohort, disability, veteran status, language, gender, and geography.

Enhanced Morale

Some have talked about enhanced morale as a benefit of DEI. Others have noted how younger and aspiring employees want to work in an organization that pursues DEI. Thus, an opportunity lies ahead. WAFWA as a network needs to assure its member organizations that pursuing DEI is not a capitulation to any external political pressure, but a response to increasing demographic diversity and a public mandate to serve culturally diverse citizens, businesses and organizations and their communities fairly and equally. Again, doing so benefits historically marginalized communities, which is in WAFWA's and its member's best interest.

Embedding DEI

In light of the recent call for social justice, many organizations have embraced DEI. They have hired staff, adapted mission and goal statements, and have attempted to diversify their work forces. However, to make these more than verbal or performative efforts, employee awareness and support will be essential. This support is likely to be more forthcoming when staff are unified in their understanding as to why this is important and in their best interest. One example might be The Forbes Human Resources Council that outlines 15 benefits of DEI including:

1. Inclusive Companies Are More Likely to Hit Financial Goals
2. Diversity Equals Excellence
3. DEI Helps Employees Feel Safe, Respected and Connected
4. Culturally Diverse Teams Innovate Faster
5. DEI Drives Improved Business Outcomes
6. Employees Will Feel a Sense of Belonging
7. All Employees Are Welcomed and Encouraged to Thrive

- 8. The Innovation That Comes from Diversity Is a Competitive Advantage
 - 9. DEI Drives Better Results
 - 10. Inclusion Can Help Combat 'Work-From-Home Burnout'
 - 11. Diverse Cultures Reach a Wider Audience
 - 12. DEI Efforts Are Important to A Company's Values
 - 13. Inclusion Creates a Sense of Psychological Safety
 - 14. Increased Empathy Translates to Increased Team building
 - 15. A Culturally Diverse, Inclusive Environment Retains Employees
- [15 Key Benefits Of DEI To Communicate With Team Members \(forbes.com\)](https://www.forbes.com/15-key-benefits-of-dei-to-communicate-with-team-members/)

Appendix 2 - DEISAQ Survey

(double click to view the complete survey)

DEI SELF ASSESSMENT TOOL

INTRODUCTION

This questionnaire is intended to assess your agency's development related to diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) focusing primarily on service delivery and workforce development.

What are diversity, equity and inclusion?

- *Diversity refers to ways people might differ and includes various characteristics such as: age or generational cohort, socioeconomic status, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, marital or family status, language, and physical ability or appearance.*
- *Equity: The state, quality, and ideal of being just, impartial, and fair. Equity is about fair resource allocation (e.g., access to services, training and education, employment and business opportunities).*
- *Inclusion: The act or state of including or being included within a group or structure. Inclusive environments encourage and value difference and ensure all people feel respected.*

Thank you for your time and participation. The questions reflect a growing body of evidence supporting DEI and are intended to identify organizational and staff development needs. The survey also reveals internal DEI assets and strengths upon which other competencies might be built. Try to answer every question, and understand that some are aspirational in nature. Although your responses will remain confidential, there are no wrong answers, and no way to score poorly.

DEI SELF ASSESSMENT TOOL

COMMUNITY AWARENESS

Keep your current job title in mind when answering the following questions.

1. How well are you able to describe the culturally diverse communities in your state or province?

Not at all Barely Somewhat Very Well

2. How well are you able to describe the strengths of the culturally diverse communities in your state or province?

Not at all Barely Somewhat Very Well

3. How well are you able to describe the social challenges faced by the culturally diverse communities in your state or province?

Not at all Barely Somewhat Very Well

Appendix 3 - WAFWA Letter to Directors

This letter was sent with the survey link to all State, Provincial and Territorial Directors on November 30, 2022.

Dear WAFWA Fish and Wildlife Directors,

The WAFWA Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Committee is very pleased to forward the DEI Survey for your employees to complete. This assessment is designed to identify organizational and staff development activities that might be used to inform change, build upon organizational strengths and assets, and pursue additional competencies related to DEI. In Kansas, we look forward to using these assessment results to determine next steps because we are just getting our DEI conversations started.

For this information to be valuable to WAFWA and our individual states/provinces, it's imperative that you encourage a high completion rate by your employees. Please complete the survey by December 12. This deadline is coming quickly so we'll send you two reminders that you can forward to employees if you choose.

Click this link to take the survey or copy and paste it into your web browser:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/WAFWA2022>

Advancement in DEI practices are in everyone's best interest because it encourages us to identify and promote policies, practices, and behaviors that allow fair and equitable opportunity for everyone to be included and feel a sense of belonging. Diversity may be reflected by one or more of the following characteristics: race, ethnicity, age or cohort, gender, disability, veteran status, faith, or nationality, for example.

Examples of how DEI practices may ***benefit your workforce and agency*** include:

- Enhancing employee retention and organizational efficiency,
- Increasing employee creativity, productivity, problem-solving, and resolution,
- Reducing unconscious biases,
- Acknowledging diverse cultural values, beliefs, and practices,
- Revealing strengths-based perspectives and models,
- Upholding civil rights and reduce legal liability,
- Elevating community engagement and satisfaction,
- Ensuring organizational growth and marketability, and
- Assuring alignment with organizational mission, vision, and goals.

Additionally, the link below gives extra information and coaching points from Dr. Mason:

When you forward this survey to your staff, I encourage you to write a cover letter and borrow as much from this letter as you deem useful.

Important points for your employees will be:

- The survey will be processed and analyzed by our contractor, Dr. James Mason, Organization Cultural Competence Assessment and Training of Portland, Oregon, who will keep responses and comments in the strictest of confidentiality.
- Each state, province or territory will receive their data in aggregated form. In cases of small sample sizes, individuals will be grouped accordingly to retain confidentiality.
- This design is to promote candor and to encourage participants to offer their views freely, even if their response may be deemed unpopular.
- There is no way to score poorly. We all benefit from everyone's honest responses. States/provinces/territories will not be identified and compared with each other, but an individual entity can use its aggregated data to gauge its own progress over time.

Thank you for your investment in your agency and WAFWA. If you have questions, please feel free to contact me at 785-213-0297 or Dr. James Mason at 503-416-8045.

Sincerely,
Brad Loveless
WAFWA Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee Chairperson

Brad Loveless | *Secretary*
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he,him,his

Appendix 4 - Presentation to WAFWA Leadership by Dr. James Mason

<https://youtu.be/ifDZoVdrZAE>

Appendix 5 - Qualitative Study Analysis Data

This appendix includes the qualitative data from Question 33 which can be used for further study and analysis.

Section 1 - Positive and Negative Responses to WAFWA's DEI efforts:

1. *Varied level of acceptance of DEI Efforts*
2. *Reasons for Strong Support for DEI*
3. *Current Efforts are Good, but not Enough, with Suggestions for Actions*
4. *Barriers to/Internal Conflicts with DEI Efforts*
5. *Negative Views of DEI Efforts*

Section 2 - Analysis of Comments Related to Specific Subscales including:

1. *Community Awareness*
2. *Community Engagement*
3. *Community Resources and Linkage*
4. *Community Outreach*

Section 3 - Improving staff DEI, hiring/leadership/training (N=49)

1. *General comments about staffing*
2. *Assuring a Pipeline/Recruiting*
3. *Hiring*
4. *Leadership*
5. *Training*

Section 4 - Needs more internal communication (N=8)

Section 1 - Positive and Negative Responses to WAFWA's DEI efforts

Examples of varied acceptance of DEI efforts

- 1/2 the people are really accepting of others that don't share a rural cultural background, or like country things, and will mentor. The other 1/2 tend to be standoffish as opposed to trying to understand what the diverse member enjoys about their background. Because as a culturally diverse member I don't share a lot about myself because it wouldn't be seen as professional or accepted, furthering how stand-offish others can be.

- Our agency superiors are mixed as to the importance of DEI. Many don't see it as important and do little to improve it. Some actively argue against it. Some just play lip service. Many mid and lower-level employees are very frustrated with the lack of action, support, and improvement in this area. Old cis straight white men still run the world within our agency.
- This is an area we all need to work on understanding
- This work is really important for the future of the agency.
- DEI is important in that we need to make sure there are not any obstacles for peoples of any ethnicity to enjoy the outdoors or work in conservation

Examples of negative views of DEI:

- I have participated in meetings where [agency name] leadership (generally all white males) have expressed not just disdain, but actual alarm and derision at the idea of engaging in community-based resource management and monitoring. For example, in one instance a rural and primarily indigenous community reached out to our agency for support with trying to develop research and monitoring activities to improve community understanding and management of local resources, but managers treated the inquiry as an attack on the state's management authority rather than as an opportunity to engage, educate, or promote citizen science.
- Diversity is a buzz word in our agency but that is all it really is.
- From my experience, people say they want to hear what diverse groups are saying, but it seems to be more for show than for informing change. As long as agency efforts are tied to [mandated approach], DEI, conservation, and the environment will suffer.

Examples of support with reservation:

- This is a great idea, in theory, but it is not realistic to expect everyone in the agency to participate in all of these things. Or even know how much the rest of the agency does. The Information and Education staff deal with a lot of diverse groups with hunter education, workshops, fishing events, the State Fair and other activities. Payroll only works with staff and pays them, regardless of what groups they may be affiliated with.
- From a marketing perspective, it may not make sense to promote our services to every particular group. I agree, though, that all options should be considered, and a variety of backgrounds and perspectives in our agency is good.

- It is important to make progress towards DEI related topics and conservation, while also recognizing the limits of low diversity within our state and associated demographic groups. Opportunities for ethnically diverse groups to interact and partner with our agency's vision/mission will consequently be minimal and we should carefully set goals that are achievable within the constraints of budgetary/funding activities.
- Our Conservation and Education division is the only division that seems to actively attempt to close the gap between our agency and DEI.
- Our department has barely begun to work on this. Way overdue. We're pretty much a white man's-oriented agency.
- I'm concerned mostly about internal buy-in; I think we, unfortunately, have several people on staff who are likely borderline racist. This reflects poorly on the agency, and hinders progress towards DE&I. I'm not sure how we overcome this.

Reasons for Strong Support for DEI

- DEI is important to engage historically marginalized groups who should receive equal benefit of the state's natural resources.
- Efforts relating to DE&I are pivotal in increasing the relevancy of our agency, conservation-based work as a whole, outdoor resources, and opportunities. It seems that the states making strides in these arenas are the ones prioritizing DE&I straight from the hiring process, and actively working to build altruistic relationships with minority groups.
- DEI is extremely important; I would love to see the Agency speed up the process of engaging in meaningful practices. It is impacting the turnover rate, especially amongst younger staff who expect to see DEI efforts.
- DEI work needs to be integrated into every facet of the work we do. We need a cultural and attitude shift. Training for staff is a good way to start.
- [State] is such a diverse state in terms of indigenous traditions. I am not sure how we can address all languages/cultures/needs, but we can certainly do better than we are doing now!
- DEI is important to me, and I see a distinct lack of diversity in conservation. I am happy to participate in this survey and contribute to change where I am able, but honestly: I am not optimistic about meaningful change happening any time soon.
- DEI is important, and I am glad that we are on our way to making our Agency a more Welcoming place for a more diverse audience

- DEI is the most important aspect in successful future natural resource conservation. Folks need to be on the same page and be able to listen and understand each other no matter their differences. Being open to different people with opposing ideas is the only way to move forward. The more diverse viewpoints and experiences, the better the outcome will be.
- Efforts toward conservation and protecting the environment are not sustainable if we continue to only cater to an aging population of white males. DEI is the solution to effectively continue the work of protecting our wild things and wild places.
- For efforts like [state required program] to be successful, embracing and actively pursuing DEI will be critical
- I think DEI is a strength that will be great for conservation and the environment when it is involved.
- I think it is important to include as many societal groups as possible into all aspects of conservation.
- I think it's great that conservation organizations and agencies, and the outdoor community more broadly have started paying attention to DEI and I hope it's not too little too late, so to speak.
- I think we forget that all of the public are our customers and it's important to realize how all the groups of DEI interact. We tend to ignore groups not like us.
- It is going to take everyone from every walk of life, to ensure the sustainability of this planet.
- It seems there is a big push to try and get a workforce that reflects the diversity of the state. This is an important goal

Current Efforts are Good, but not Enough, with Suggestions for Actions

- Although some progress is being made, I do think there is more to be made, particularly with the significant abundance of indigenous environmental and conservation knowledge throughout the state.
- However, we have a loooong way to go toward respecting and representing the diversity in our state. We definitely have a good-ol'-boy leadership system that starts with the Commission. We were on the right track 20 years ago but have become more and more conservative ever since. Today we have nothing but Trumpers running the place. "Climate change" isn't even allowed in our correspondence, much less how it affects DEI.

- I am not in a position that directly encompasses this, but I am always happy to see more tribal involvement.
- If it wasn't for our agency directly intervening into the human encroachment of [a sensitive environmental area] there would be none of them left. [Tribe] are the original natives, and our agency has worked tirelessly to educate local human farmers about the dangers of stealing their land and resources. We aren't completely there yet, but with more DEI training we might finally restore [name of the area] precious land to its original owners.
- Taking this survey made me realize how much more I and my agency can do.
- We are making movement forward, but it is slow and has little true backing.
- Our field needs to do a better job overall.
- I see Hispanic, Black and Asian communities coming to the park more. We need to engage diverse communities more so they come to the parks more and feel comfortable.
- Our agency goes out of our way to engage the public and get them involved in the outdoors, and based on your initial definition of DEI at the start of the survey, does a great job related to that. The biggest barrier to someone not being involved in the outdoors is not having someone help them take that first step. For most people, that's fathers and husbands. Some people don't have that. And oftentimes that is women, so as a result we have the [name program] to "break the ice" into the outdoors, educate, and build confidence. We also engage veteran organizations which disproportionately comprise people with issues like depression/ptsd.
- The Good Ole Boy network is finally fading and diversity is improving. It hasn't made it to upper management/leadership levels yet but hopefully the next generation will be more open to diverse leaders. Tomorrow's leaders are much more considerate of the environmental impacts of human activities rather than just consumerism of natural resources.
- We do provide ADA accessible fishing ramps or piers where possible.
- Change is slow
- I'm pleased the agency is trying to learn more about this
- Again decent, I don't see us as the leader of the movement but can see the light at the end of the tunnel of where we want to be in 5 years.
- We are all continuing to learn as more experiences arise.
- We have work to do here in [state]

- Access (transportation burden/location/time in one's schedule/feeling welcome) and affordability is a key to engaging diverse communities.
- Any sort of plan that has worked for others or will work to encourage DEI participation from groups, hiring strategy, encourage DEI candidate job applications would be very appreciated if shared.
- I believe understanding the traditional relationships with native peoples could help inform modern policy. Traditional approaches to the environment are often sustainability based and focus on a harmonious relationship with wildlife and nature.
- One thing that would help us recruit new and diverse audiences is making state parks free. Right now the cost associated with visiting a park (both in entrance fees and any needed equipment) is a big barrier in my area.
- Stop raising the fees of facilities and camping. We are gentrifying our parks!
- The agency needs better resources to understand the demographics in our state and the needs and desires of those interested in wildlife as opposed to just participating in wildlife activities
- What we need to remember is that many field offices are in rural communities that the demographics don't match that of the state as a whole. I think that by hiring persons into locations that don't reflect their background we need to be careful that we are not setting them up to fail from situations like not having similar persons to interact with and seek support outside of the job. I can see where this would make them feel uncomfortable and not able to enjoy working in that sort of environment.
- DEI work requires dedicated funding, FTEs, buy-in from all levels of the agency, policy improvements/additions, and integration into existing as well as addition of new positions to be successful.
- We do not have the resources or anyone on staff with the ability to adequately communicate with diverse populations. How do I know? We don't currently have anyone who can even communicate internally.
- As with any agency, we have a limited budget and work to serve the groups that use our resources the most. Without additional funding sources, we would have to divert funds to groups that use our resources the least.

Barriers to DEI efforts because of traditions, laws, regulations, agency policies, science/conservation-based orientation, or focus on existing constituents.

- Conservation and environmental issues should be solely science based and should not reflect how people's feelings are.

- I don't think it is very important because we base decisions on science not people's feelings.
- I feel like our biologists work with science and the numbers and try to make decisions to help make our environment most sustainable.
- I personally think we should be using science, not "traditional ecological knowledge" in our work. TEK might as well be called "religion." We are supposed to be a science-based agency.
- I think caution must be used when referencing traditional ecological knowledge in terms of developing scientific policy. Some of the TEK I have heard of are not possible due to the presence of glaciers. It should be scientifically reviewed before being considered.
- Mostly we play to our audience and do our best to educate our customers as well as ourselves
- My agency is not proactive when it comes to addressing DEI. We continue to focus and invest time and energy on traditional constituencies and do not work aggressively to engage/understand other non-traditional constituencies.
- For the longest time the agency sought to increase one specific demographic that participates in the outdoors on a low level. We missed out on other demographics such as Asian Americans as a result of the narrow focus.
- Be more proactive in terms of reaching out to different kinds of groups.
- Yes, what does diversity, equity, and inclusion have to do with conservation or the environment?
- Several questions ask about targeted groups or specific usage by the agency or myself regarding diverse groups. I do not select or base a purchase of items on that, I believe that it is illegal to base a state agency purchase on a "diversity or race/gender basis". State agencies purchase, recruit and hire, based on a non biased selection process. Many questions do not address that. I myself have recruited diverse cultures, genders, minorities, various religions without a bias. ANY hiring selection based on that criteria is illegal, isn't it? As a state agency we produce literature, programs, and events that are open to all the various public members regardless of race, color, creed, religion, gender, etc.
- [A state] made English the official language of the state and against [state] law for the government to print materials in languages other than English, ergo of course there wasn't a lot printed in other than English as it is illegal to do so. You asked about agency outreach to many different groups; we don't do outreach to any specific group. Our candidates are based upon who is qualified for and want to apply for our jobs. The people who apply for our jobs do not match the demographics of the State. There is no selection

bias in our jobs based upon discrimination of one group to another, rather we only hire the most qualified candidate regardless of what group "they" belong to.

- Use of climate change to promote social justice is a farce of science. You better look at all the data before decisions are made at policy level. Science should drive policy, not politics.
- As conservationists, I think most folks understand the importance of diversity when it relates to ecology and management. That said, I think that we often fall into extremes when it comes to DEI (diversity specifically). Either we want diversity just to have diversity (or because we're told we need diversity) or we have no interest in diversity because it seems like it does not apply. I think each of these approaches is inappropriate. The areas in which most of us live and work for this agency are already lacking diversity, and I think it can often be overplayed. However, having diverse backgrounds to discern new or different approaches to management, reach new and diverse users, etc. is an admirable goal. I think we sometimes try to replicate diversity based on the numbers of some much larger scale and can actually hinder the effectiveness of our management actions on smaller scales. In my opinion (which is just that: an opinion), we should certainly seek diversity when and where we can, but we should also not abandon our most common demographics because they are "not diverse." This applies to both our users and our employees. When it comes to hiring employees, I know there's a struggle that individuals in many different groups had to endure to get where they are. Regardless of anyone's particular cultural classification or identity (which are often human made, can be arbitrary, and are not always superficially apparent), I would rather look past all of that and hire who will be the best person for the job, be able to meet all of the demands of the job, and effectively further the agency's mission.

Negative Views or Strong Objections to DEI Efforts

Not my job/Not a problem

- Again, I have nothing to do with this in my job. I personally am fed up with the "wokism" and feel it is doing more harm than good. People should be judged on skills/knowledge - not color of skin, where they came from, or what they do in private.
- Everyone has the opportunity to interact with the environment.
- From my perspective we include everyone without the need for special classification. We are very global in our approach
- Everyone is welcome to use our facilities. Anyone who spends money at the parks helps fund conservation so it is important to include everyone

- I really do not understand the questions about diversity and conservation. All types of people use our public lands and no matter what cultural group they belong to, I treat them all like people. I don't need to specify what cultural group a person belongs to in order to know how I should interact with them. Other than youth, we do not reach out or encourage increased interaction from any specific group. Again, that is because our properties are open for anyone to use in the ways that are specified within the regulations. The cultural community that they belong to is not something that should matter. All are welcome.
- Just let me come to work and do my job!
- Our public information and programs target all [state residents] that are interested or potentially interested in harvesting fish and game and there is no need to seek out certain ethnic groups. Tribes are involved in the Board of Game and Fish processes, commercial fishing just the same as anyone else. [Agency] has a history of a "good old boys club"; however, that history is mostly linked with inappropriate ties to the industry (ie. upper level management staff working in the best interest of the commercial or sport fish industry).
- Too much time is spent trying to indoctrinate people about the DEI dogma...it is over-rated as a problem
- With people from other countries coming here, they have to learn to accept and follow our laws and regulations with regards to conservation and the environment. We do not change to accommodate them. As for hiring you hire the best qualified and suited person regardless of gender, race or anything else, otherwise you do not get the best worker. There are no laws based on race or gender or anything like that that prevent anyone from being involved.

Agency shouldn't be doing it/other priorities are more important

- Again, we have no reason to try and do this. We have to communicate better amongst ourselves. Our communication in this agency is an absolute joke. We could solve 80% of our problems with better communication. I don't know why we aren't doing it, it's not that hard. That is what we need to focus on first.
- I believe there is entirely too much time and effort placed on this topic, especially when it comes to hiring. We should focus on hiring the best individual for the job. None of these other items should matter. All this does is force agencies to hire people that are not as qualified as another person simply because they fall in one of these categories; sometimes creating long term problems for the agency and respective supervisors.
- I feel DEI isn't a part of our agency and its mission.

- I have also noticed that our agency occasionally has to play the "bad guy" and make unpopular decisions regarding resources. This does not engender us well to local groups but changes in the environment require different management regimes. That doesn't help improve our agency's diversity. We also have a budget crisis at our agency and core duties are often cut. It is hard to justify creating regulations in [specific languages] when we are barely able to deliver on resource sustainability.
- In my opinion, this doesn't need to be a priority for this agency. We have a lot of other issues that we need to fix as an agency internally first before worrying about stuff like this. We work locally with diverse groups enough; I don't think any of this needs to be put in as policy by our upper management and state level supervisor. They need to spend more time fixing other things such as purchasing and pay scales/increases!
- We are a conservation agency, tasked with protecting, conserving, and enhancing the wildlife and their habitats of the State of Kansas. Let's not forget our goal and become distracted this DEI fad
- Worry about the health of animal populations. And less about homo sapiens.
- We are a natural resource agency; our focus should be on protecting and managing our natural resources. The DEI efforts have constituted a distraction from this responsibility to the detriment of those resources
- As with any agency, we have a limited budget and work to serve the groups that use our resources the most. Without additional funding sources, we would have to divert funds to groups that use our resources the least.
- Based on looking at 2 years of hiring data, I would say that the level of diversity in this and likely other natural resource agencies is determined by the level of diversity in the applicant pool e.g., the reason why the percentage of blacks in the agency is at about 5% is because only 5% of the applicant pool is black. Institutional barriers, unconscious bias etc. doesn't have a chance to impact. We're barking up the wrong tree. It's external factors that determine agency diversity. At some point the DEI movement will see the light.
- Conservation and environmental topics can have a wide range of interests for which DEI is not the only group where room for improvement may be identified.
- Conservation is a key topic among our team.
- Conservation should not be tailored to a specific group. We are all in this together.
- It's a waste of time to worry about it. No matter where you drop anchor, there will be a segment of people that think that they are getting the shaft. I predict that before this questionnaire is done, I will be asked to provide the very same demographic information that in theory, should make no difference to hiring, promotion, inclusion, or equity. Yet, as

unimportant it is to the agency, someone has manufactured an artificial level of importance just to whip up some angst.]

- Management of natural resources and lands is a major priority.
- Matthew 7:12 [do unto others as you would have them do to you]
- Treat people as one, don't break them out because of some WOKE belief that is going rampant throughout our society these days. I treat everyone in a professional manner regardless of who they are or what their beliefs/lifestyles are.
- Many different people have stake in the natural resources. By looking to all the groups that use them, we get a great understanding of how we should best manage our efforts towards conserving the outdoors for the public.

They can engage if they want to, but don't

- At some point those that feel as if they are not included need to advocate for themselves and engage. The agency I work for has an open-door policy and goes out of its way to make ways to get involved known to the communities, and cannot force people to be involved if they do not want to be, which is okay.
- If any person wants to enjoy the outdoors, [Agency] will help them do that. Everyone is treated the same who comes through our doors.
- We can't force people to be interested in conservation or the environment. No one is excluded from learning or participating in outdoor education.

Reverse discrimination, “wokism” or memes

- DEI is just a way to racially divide us and give special treatment to people who aren't white. It's the very definition of racism. People are people and the DEI crowd should really stop trying to force racially motivated propaganda down our throats because no one is listening and it just feels like everything is based on race or gender instead of the person's character and skill set. No one cares about the justifications that crowd pushing it comes up with for it either.
- Conservation and outdoor recreation are not single-culture areas of interest, but are the areas of interest for many different cultures, tribes and people. Approaching the areas of conservation and outdoor recreation with only attempting to focus on one race, class and gender of people and trying to exclude all others is not the way to successfully achieve the goals of a State Wildlife Agency
- DEI sometimes borders on a violation of the U.S. Constitution. I think EVERYONE should have equal opportunity for jobs, promotions, etc. and that the best person for the job should be hired.... REGARDLESS of race, identity, etc. Having quotas on hiring to ensure sex ratios, LGBTQ, minorities, etc. should be illegal! A person who is better qualified than

a person who is less qualified and belongs to one of the DEI groups should be hired/promoted etc. Why should an under qualified person, if they simply belong to a DEI group, be hired if they are not as well qualified. Once again, hiring someone based on gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, is illegal. The most qualified person should get the job.

- Go WOKE, Go Broke!!! Quit confirming
- I am a firm believer that if anyone wants to participate in conservation and go out into nature, they will do it. I have never found anything in my life that prevented me from doing these activities. As a minority, the "white male dominated" mindset of the liberal mindset of this argument is insulting. I have never felt unwanted or threatened to participate in the activities I want. I have worked in the Division for several years and throughout my public contacts, the people we serve are being disenfranchised by our push for DEI.
- should pass out needles and crack pipes
- STOP TRYING TO INCLUDE EVERYONE BY SEPARATING US! When you purposely target specific groups, you automatically exclude others.
- The species we work with and the environment do not care what race, ethnicity, culture, sex, or any other invented way to categorize and divide ourselves we are. Our focus should be providing the best conservation services we can. Only when DIE issues objectively affect conservation and the environment should it be accounted for, otherwise focusing on it derails caring for our environment for our narcissistic human tendencies.
- Wanting everyone to be included and making sure that all groups are considered is a laudable and appropriate goal for any agency or association charged with managing resources for the entire public. However, DEI has nothing to do with that. DEI is about politics and virtue signaling, not science. It specifically focuses on equal outcomes based on race, sex, religion, etc., which is very different from supporting equal opportunity for all. It is by definition prejudiced. DEI refuses to acknowledge that individual people, and therefore their outcomes, are (and always will be) different and instead focuses on groups while minimizing the individual. Rather than bring people together, DEI pits different groups against each other and tears existing functioning societies apart, while putting purveyors of DEI at the top of the power structure. It is, in the end, nothing but a grift.
- It does not matter what I think, I'm just a middle-aged white guy and am therefore the enemy.

Section 2 - Analysis of Comments Related to Specific Subscales

Community Awareness, Engagement, Resources and Linkage, and Outreach

Community Awareness

- I think that there needs to be an increase in listening to folks from DEI communities, rather than telling them what to do.
- There is so much cultural knowledge that is unwritten that we could benefit from understanding to better execute our mission. We need more funding for social science programs to collect and distribute these practices and more local indigenous peoples on our crews in the field.
- [State] has broad cultural diversity across the state, and the [state] Department of Wildlife would certainly benefit from engaging with different communities or even being aware of how our practices affect different communities.
- There is a lot we can learn from tribal groups and other diverse groups on how to maintain our land and utilize our resources for the most gain to benefit humans and nature.
- There is so much cultural knowledge that is unwritten that we could benefit from understanding to better execute our mission. We need more funding for social science programs to collect and distribute these practices and more local indigenous peoples on our crews in the field.
- Environmental values do have a cultural basis, but assuming values based on cultural affinity may result in stereotyping.
- Also, make the white community understand that we need diversity in the parks.

Community Engagement

- We need to do much better in engaging Native [state residents] in communities, cultural minorities, and language barriers.
- All efforts to engage groups need to be sincere and not just to make us feel good.
- Much of our traditional outreach and engagement has been driven by those who fish or hunt or those likely to fish or hunt (buy licenses) with the larger number of our constituents being non-consumptive “users” our leadership, commissions, professional organizations need to give these groups larger representation and ownership of agency direction and prioritization. If 6% of the state hunt or fish and 98% identify with non-consumptive wildlife viewing why are the commissioners always [businesses, hunter

advocacy groups]. Why don't we see Audubon or other groups represented that are typically more diverse than agencies. The traditional view of our constituency is not willing to share joint ownership with others and is resistant to losing relevancy and this in my opinion is why we cannot progress and engage with non-traditional constituencies, nationalities, languages, etc. is because we want them to conform to our model rather than adapting to meet their needs and priorities.

- We need to do much better in engaging Native [state]n communities, cultural minorities, and language barriers.
- [City] is one of the most culturally diverse communities in America- yet we do not lift a finger to invite them into our work, managed lands or learning opportunities. We don't keep them from it, but we don't make the invitation.
- As an agency I also think we could do better in engaging people with disabilities to get out to nature.
- At times, it is difficult to engage with diverse groups that do not share any interest in nature or the outdoors.
- This agency does the bare minimum required by state policies in terms of engagement with non-white and non-male groups (both internally and externally) while making policy decisions and developing communication plans, such as advisory boards. While the agency highlights some key diversity words in strategic plans, and has a mandated diversity committee, these items were all forced on the agency and wouldn't have happened without state mandates. There are no examples of engagement above and beyond the requirements. There is also a culture in which indigenous peoples are often discussed internally as a nuisance to policy versus a group to consult on equal terms. The agency does do ok consulting with white-based angling and hunting clubs and associations.
- Generally, I feel that our agency should make a larger effort to engage native communities in our state for improved conservation planning.
- I believe it is crucial to have as many people involved in caring for the environment as possible, and for them to feel like they have a stake in the decisions being made.
- I believe minorities believe more in conservation, environment, and climate change than more white people in [state]. So maybe the focus needs to be more on convincing the majority than the minority.
- I believe we as an agency can do a much better job at engaging with diverse and underserved communities in the state in order to develop a better understanding of the needs and wants of our culturally/ ethnically diverse constituents.

- I believe we could be doing so much more to engage our local communities with conservation and environmental outreach and education. It is often neglected because it can be hard work and involve difficult conversations. Engagement starts, like a journey up a mountain, one step at a time.
- I feel like our agency overall is extremely poor at engaging diverse communities. When we do it comes across as extremely "corporate" and see through. Legitimate, honest, effective engagement is lacking.
- I think it's important for agencies to engage urban, ethnically diverse groups that might not traditionally be involved in hunting and fishing to foster an appreciation for conservation.
- I think my agency could do a better job connecting with groups who normally wouldn't be active in the conservation and environmental protection community
- It's important to engage diverse groups so that conservation is a valued priority for the general public in the future.
- It's very important to include all diversity groups in conversations regarding conservation and the environment so I hope to see more diverse policy making groups in the future.
- listen to and consider input from native organizations and groups with respect to traditional knowledge
- Our state is 85% Caucasian, people taking part in outdoor activities are typically Caucasian as well. The majority of minorities live in the metro areas and are not super interested in outdoors related activities. Agency does try to conduct outreach to minorities, but if people do not show up or want to get involved... The struggle is finding ways to actually get minorities involved.
- Little if anything has been done to engage diverse communities in real ways to make significant change. There is a fear in the department culture to engage in these conversations in meaningful ways.
- We are failing at conservation when we do not engage everyone. Our agency needs to look towards the future, not the past. If we want to have conservation, recreation, and outdoors people in the future, we need to trash some of our old-school thinking based on 19th century and early 20th century conservation ideas, and European models. The time is now to make those changes.
- We have a lot of listening to do, to groups that have not traditionally had much of a voice. It is very easy to interpret small successes as being of much greater significance than they are in this environment.

- Native [state] culture is intimately tied to the natural world and is critical for our agency to connect with. It's also important to engage a diverse audience that may not normally be involved in natural resource management and encourage them to become involved. Many diverse groups are not given a chance, or it's out of the norm for them to be involved in activities like hunting, fishing, trapping, or wildlife viewing and opening up opportunities for folks to see what the possibilities are is a challenge. I feel that our organization does a fair job at engaging, however, there is room for improvement and acceptance of these groups.

Community Resources and Linkage

- Wildlife agencies are primarily white. Wildlife is a resource managed by and for that constituent. At best we interface with tribal agencies only to achieve the goals we've already set on their land/waterways.
- There is so much cultural knowledge that is unwritten that we could benefit from understanding to better execute our mission. We need more funding for social science programs to collect and distribute these practices and more local indigenous peoples on our crews in the field.
- As a Hispanic myself, I understand the challenges Hispanics face when it comes to the outdoors, conservation and the environment. Socioeconomics is a big problem for minorities, as they're marginalized (where they live, access to information and more). There's a significant gap that could be merged if wildlife conservation agencies saw the significant value in serving all communities - and that starts by making an honest commitment and doing what it takes to connect with minority populations and engage them.
- More materials in Spanish are necessary to form stronger connections with the Hispanic community. It would also be beneficial to become more vocal about support for the LGBTQ community.
- The only time I have observed engagement with [state] Native communities is during the formal Board of Fisheries meeting, otherwise there is very little outreach being conducted and minimal effort in trying to incorporate traditional and ecological knowledge into how we manage [state]'s wild resources.
- We need contributions from culture-based content producers to give us the media, stories and speak on historical relationships with Consv and Env, but also provide a call to action towards stewardship and enjoyment of these resources.

- We need help on how to work better with minority groups. and those who do it need to be supported as they aren't right now.
- With the rich indigenous history in [state], I think it is important to work collaboratively with tribal leadership on projects that benefit watersheds, wildlife, botany (native plant knowledge is incredible), and landscape level planning. It is exciting to know that more and more folks doing project planning on the ground are building these relationships with the tribes.
- There are a lot of good people in this agency that love what they do, but don't work well with the public either because they lack the social skills/ability, or because there are no readily available resources to access help within the diverse communities. [Name of park] for example, where there are so few employees per park, have to make sure the daily duties are performed just to keep the park open. Public involvement or engagement above summer events and holidays are minimal because with the constant turnover, establishing relationships with vastly different community groups is hard to start and even harder to maintain. We need help bridging the gaps, especially if we want to beat the technology driven mindset of the future and bring our communities back outdoors.

Community Outreach

- We need to incorporate tribal views, aka, TEK, and empower diverse groups to participate in [state] decision making process and make diverse populations aware of the career path within the department.
- Be more proactive in terms of reaching out to different kinds of groups.
- Could improve outreach for non-English speakers and diverse cultural backgrounds.
- I think targeted advertising is great, but again, sometimes you miss the larger aspect of it. Sometimes some people/user groups just don't want to engage...and that's ok!
- Need more material in different languages.
- Overall, it seems there are a lot of meetings and committees, but very few actual staff implementing and doing the actual work to build bridges with diverse communities.
- Should reach out to Native American tribes to get their input on the agency's mission, goals and policies.
- Outreach through schools is best. To sell more hunting and fishing licenses we need to advertise
- The agency is hyper-focused on engaging the public that participates in consumptive outdoor activities (hunting, fishing, etc.), and does little to reach out to the non-

consumptive public, many of which fall within diversity categories. The outreach to non-consumptive public and diverse public need to go hand in hand to be in any way successful into the future

- There are a couple of areas where translated material in Spanish or mandarin can be done. It could be fliers, signs or information material that can be provided to the public.
- There also needs to be direct collaboration with diverse partner agencies.
- [Agency] should do more to reach out to diverse, urban schools and organizations.
- We'll work on projects with tribal agencies for conservation projects, but as far as I know, there are no outreach efforts aimed at any particular ethnic groups, but the youth outreach, which is non-racially specific, is the only outreach program I'm aware of.
- Yes, we need to improve our language options for the various and culturally diverse groups that live in [state]. It does create a new dynamic of fiscal responsibility and accountability to provide those options and in what volume. That can be determined as we progress.
- The biggest barrier to someone not being involved in the outdoors is not having someone help them take that first step. For most people, that's fathers and husbands. Some people don't have that. And oftentimes that is women, so as a result we have the [name of specific] program to "break the ice" into the outdoors, educate, and build confidence. We also engage veteran organizations which disproportionately comprise people with issues like depression/ptsd.
- As a state agency we produce literature, programs, and events that are open to all the various public members regardless of race, color, creed, religion, gender, etc.
- We have worked with other contractors to assess our readiness to work with DEI and relevancy amongst those groups??

Utilization by underrepresented, underserved, and historically marginalized groups

- I see Hispanic, Black and Asian communities coming to the park more. We need to engage diverse communities more so they come to the parks more and feel comfortable.
- Bridging the gap between underrepresented groups with conservation and outdoor recreation has been difficult. We continue to provide opportunities with little improvements in participation.

- New to the idea of reaching out to underserved community leaders, engaging them and learning from them. We have a recreation and conservation fund these communities can apply to for funding to support outdoor initiatives with their community members.
- Our agency's challenge is to find the barriers to engaging with POC, ethnic, and culturally diverse groups and collaboratively work on dissolving those barriers. We are just learning how ethnic and culturally-diverse groups perceive the environment and desire to interact with the environment.
- Our DEI audience is growing in participation.
- There are some cultural groups that in general chose to not participate in outdoor activities.
- There's a lot that could be done, particularly conservation equity in urban locales.

Section 3 - Improving staff DEI, hiring/leadership/training (N=49)

General comments about staffing

- DEI is CRITICAL to have a successful agency/business/park. Staff should represent the state demographics but parks and rec in general seem to cater only to white males. A very predominant white male workforce is what the agency has and typically has always been. That is not an accurate depiction of what the population of [state] looks like.
- [Agency] does not hire enough indigenous folks. Their voices need to be more integral to our state fisheries and wildlife management.
- For our agency, there is an imbalance in our staff compared to wider population disproportionately with more white males, especially in the science related positions
- I am the only Spanish speaking employee at [name] State Park. We need to have more
- I believe that our agency can do a much better job of having its staff reflect the diversity of our state, particularly Asian, American Indian, LGBT+, and Black Americans, I do believe that the more DEI found in a natural resource management agency, the more representative decisions about conservation and environment will be of the community's desires.
- [Agency] is still largely a white, good old boys club based on traditional use of natural resources. In order to better serve our natural resources and the people of [state], we need to do much better in the realm of DEI.
- No maternity or paternity leave, no subsistence leave... seems very prehistoric
- The more diverse of employees that we have will bring more ideas on how to better create solutions/protections. If we were all like-minded and culturally the same we would have

only one solution to offer. With many different backgrounds and perspectives we could come up with a lot more viable options as opposed to one.

- The more diverse we are the better we can achieve a common goal.
- The people in the state believe that the agency employees promote are a group of old white boys that reach only white people in the state and promote only their activities of interest.
- Finally, other races and cultures are essentially unrepresented in employment. Our field is largely white, and there are next to no Asian, Black, Hispanic, etc. workers in our department.
- There is a big lack of LGBTQIA+ representation and focus regarding DEI related to conservation and the environment. Hell the US supreme court ruled in 2019 that employees can't be fired because of sexual orientation but [state] has yet to state that in the hiring packets or Department Operation Manual. Plus [state] post rainbows during pride month on social media and says something along the lines of "we stand with all our employees and constituents but doesn't have the courage to actually say HAPPY PRIDE MONTH
- There is a lack of inclusion among sections within the Division. Also a lack of inclusion between Biologist and non-Biologist
- The "traditional" hunter or angler can be hard to convince that allowing in new users doesn't directly correlate to opportunities lost for existing users... This is evident even within our agency (staff sometimes hold similar thoughts). I'm concerned mostly about internal buy-in; I think we, unfortunately, have several people on staff who are likely borderline racist. This reflects poorly on the agency, and hinders progress towards DE&I. I'm not sure how we overcome this.
- There is a severe lack of [state] Native people on the staff of the [state] Department of Fish and Game, and the insights and expertise of [state] Native people in fish and game management are crucial for our agency moving forward.
- The Good Ole Boy network is finally fading and diversity is improving. It hasn't made it to upper management/leadership levels yet but hopefully the next generation will be more open to diverse leaders. Tomorrow's leaders are much more considerate of the environmental impacts of human activities rather than just consumerism of natural resources.
- I would love to see the Agency speed up the [DEI] process of engaging in meaningful practices. It is impacting the turnover rate, especially amongst younger staff who expect to see DEI efforts.

- We need to do much better in engaging Native [state] communities, cultural minorities, and language barriers. I wish we had people on staff to help with these issues.
- A big piece of the lack of welcome toward diverse users in our parks is the attitude of our Law Enforcement officers (State Parks Officers, I don't have much experience with our Game Wardens). I have watched new officers start out kind and welcoming and become some of the most biased individuals I know as they were influenced by other LE folks in our agency. Welcoming people to our parks should not involve LE specifically making drives near groups of Hispanic families or asking Customer Service staff racial profiling questions when they see a group of young African Americans come into a park HQ. Some of these groups have a history of distrust of law enforcement officers to begin with based on a long history of mistreatment. Being monitored in this way reinforces that pattern of distrust.
- The predominant culture in [state] was publicly racist until [date]. Attitudes have not changed very much since then. This makes it one of the whitest places in the nation and limits our success when trying to increase diversity.
- We should not be bending over backwards to try and diversify our staff. If certain ethnicities don't want to work in conservation, then why try and cater. There should be no obstacles and I would hope no prejudices in the hiring process, but to try and favor one person over another because of their ethnicity is the exact definition of prejudice...
- Someone shouldn't get the job just because they are more diverse. The more qualified person should get the job. If the more diverse candidate is hired and they have less credentials they are most likely not going to fulfill the duties required of the job
- DEI needs to consider existing employee's rights as well as new employees and only hire the best candidate for the job regardless of desired traits
- My responses reflect my knowledge. My agency may be doing slightly better than I've indicated, but if they are, again they aren't communicating that well. In fact, I think my agency isn't communicating about DEI very well. Its DEI committee ironically does not have a clear and open path to participation and individuals on that committee seem to have been hand-picked. Finally, I hope that DEI practices and communication around it improves.
- Finally, this survey raises concerns for me about creating a situation where credentials will be considered less than ethnicity or other diversity types in filling positions. We need more diversity, but this needs to be balanced with equity AND not necessarily with affirmative action.

Assuring a Pipeline/Recruiting

- Most agencies are very diverse when looking at backgrounds, economics, age, education, geographic origin, philosophies, experience, etc. Efforts should focus on education, outreach, and recruitment to get people the resources necessary to get involved and effect change and to make them aware of how they can have a career in environmental or natural resource management. Part of the recruitment strategy should be informing youth how to prepare for obtaining these types of positions concerning education, volunteering, internships, resume building, interviewing, etc.
- Probably the only diversity we see in applicant pools is male or female, old or young.
- [Agency] does a very poor job recruiting and collaborating with [state] Native Communities. I would like to see more involvement with Indigenous people in our work force and in the outreach materials we produce.
- Diversity in the workforce needs to begin in the school system. Applicants need to be qualified and experienced, not just ethnically diverse.
- the agency certainly doesn't appear to be doing anything to recruit diverse applicants or to encourage individuals from diverse backgrounds to enter into the profession.
- Our current work demographic is very homogenous. In my opinion, we have some work to do in the recruiting process to spread the word to more diverse groups about hiring opportunities in our agency.
- This is a systemic issue and the agency, state and university do not work collaboratively to co-create a diverse workforce. The biological sciences are simply too white.
- It is difficult to hire a diverse workforce when the majority of the applicants come from only one or two demographics.
- We need to incorporate tribal views, ata, TEK, and empower diverse groups to participate in agency's decision-making process and make diverse populations aware of the career path within the department.
- Most of the people we hire were raised as "outdoor enthusiasts" by their parents - which in our area is mostly "non-diverse" people - we are beginning to attract more and more "minority groups" to outdoor recreation - which in time will lead to a more diverse workforce - but it will likely take 20 years to become fully reflective of our new demographics - once the kids grow up, go to college, get a degree, etc. (before we hire them)
- Our state universities are failing at showing students what jobs are out there after school. It is the worst it has ever been. If the universities aren't going to do their jobs at promoting conservation fields after school, then our department will need to take a more active role.

Hiring

- I wish we had people on staff to help with these issues.
- Certain ethnic groups are not connected to conservation due to culture and that makes it quite difficult to recruit both customers and employees from certain groups so it appears agencies are not recruiting them. That simply is not the case. If the pool to pick from is not inclusive, there are other factors besides lack of outreach or publicizing.
- The agency needs to look at the existing barriers to employment for BIPOC applicants to the agency. Data from HR shows that around 35% of applicants are from BIPOC individuals, yet none if any get to the interview. What is lacking more - education or experience?
- I've served on many interview panels in the years I've worked for the agency. You do get some diversity in the applicant pools, but not alot. We receive candidates applying from all over the U.S. and that does not change the diversity of the candidate pool. I'd also say that unless someone outwardly has a different skin tone or appearance, we hire the best candidate with the best qualifications. I appreciate that about our agency. If we truly wanted to keep it equal and fair, we'd do phone interviews or off-camera interviews, so we never judged the person by the way they looked. All candidates would be judged solely on their answers to interview questions.
- Most of our entry level positions go to young white males that are good at talking to white males. Once they have a "foot in the door" they get field opportunities that others don't get. We need to work harder to get diversity into these entry level positions.
- The other issue is that hiring in the department is based around big cities like [name], and then we fly people out to [rural areas] during the year. Since we do not provide accommodations in [city where hiring occurs]] for people to stay, it is actually fairly difficult to hire someone from the remote community because they can't really afford to stay in [city] for the brief early or late season work.
- There needs to be a coordinated and tangible effort to recruit and hire diverse applicants from entry-level to director-level.
- There's only 2 or 3 black Americans, there are some Hispanic persons, but they're few and far between. It looks like a lot more women are being hired on in the agency, even the new commissioner.

Leadership

- It would be helpful to have a more diverse group of people representing the agency at a high level, such as director staff and commission. I do not often feel represented by the higher levels of the agency and I imagine many of the constituents feel the same.
- Include more people of color in leadership
- There is no representation of diversity at the highest levels of management and most definitely not on the majority of hiring boards
- We have many folks in agency and divisional leadership that are past retirement age but continue to stay on. Real change can only happen when they leave the agency.
- At least from what I've seen, [agency] seems pretty white, and it seems to get whiter and more male as you get higher in the organizational structure. For a lot of different reasons, it seems like it would be a good idea to get more [state] Natives into positions of leadership within [agency].
- [Agency] is a pretty homogeneously white bunch of people. Everyone in a leadership role is white. I don't think there's a single Asian person who works for the department.
- Currently, most leadership and executive staff are white, male, consumptive recreationists.... the culture at [agency] will never change as long as the leadership lacks diversity in both cultural and mindset (focused on consumptive recreation vs non-consumptive) and continues to show very little interest in increasing diversity internally
- Demand promotional opportunities for minority employees who are willing to excel
- Much of the staffing especially at higher level leadership is predominately white and male. We live in highly diverse communities however; our workforce does not reflect this.
- Numerous audit findings regarding lack of diversity on executive staff and the commission.
- Our agency is mostly white males and it is run like that. Sometimes I feel like there is no way for a female or minority to be promoted into an upper leadership position. If you are not a hunter or angler, there is a culture of exclusivity
- The Department is working towards gender inclusivity but has complete disregard for ethnic diversity. An examination of all employees above range 16 will show there is a much larger presence of female employees in comparison to ethnic diversity. I would like to see the results of that comparison
- The long-term staff are generally an old boys club. It is challenging to break that history.
- There is virtually no representation from [state] Natives in department leadership.

- We need to continue efforts to increase diversity in leadership including ethnic/cultural representation, women, and LGBTQ
- Inequality for women especially in leadership positions and pay is still a huge issue.
- I have participated in meetings where [agency] leadership (generally all white males) have expressed not just disdain, but actual alarm and derision at the idea of engaging in community-based resource management and monitoring. For example, in one instance a rural and primarily indigenous community reached out to our agency for support with trying to develop research and monitoring activities to improve community understanding and management of local resources, but managers treated the inquiry as an attack on the state's management authority rather than as an opportunity to engage, educate, or promote citizen science.
- There is also a culture in which indigenous peoples are often discussed internally as a nuisance to policy versus a group to consult on equal terms. There is no representation of diversity at the highest levels of management and most definitely not on the majority of hiring boards. The agency does do ok consulting with white-based angling and hunting clubs and associations.
- Include more people of color in leadership.

Training

- Agency staff should be required to read about systemic racism in the conservation and environmental sector. Even if they don't take any action, awareness is essential.
- I think we need more training on DEI and how to practice it within the organization.
- I wish my agency would offer training to encourage awareness of DEI issues.
- It needs to be made clear that nature is for EVERYONE. Our employees should have specific training on that and how culturally diverse groups interact with nature.
- There should be more webinars or trainings available to educate staff on DEI and conservation and the environment
- DEI work needs to be integrated into every facet of the work we do. We need a cultural and attitude shift. Training for staff is a good way to start.

Section 4 - Needs more internal communication (N=8)

- Most of the policy questions I do not know what level these are at.
- My responses reflect my knowledge. My agency may be doing slightly better than I've indicated, but if they are, again they aren't communicating that well. In fact, I think my agency isn't communicating about DEI very well. It's DEI committee ironically does not have a clear and open path to participation and individuals on that committee seem to have been hand-picked. Finally, I hope that DEI practices and communication around it improves, but am concerned that this will turn into a "check the box" strategy wherein we get boring, mandatory online training that we soon forget after completion.
- I am so unfamiliar with this in my agency that I really do not know how to answer these questions. As far as I am aware we do not attempt, discuss, or implement any policies or actions relating to DEI.
- I am unfamiliar with how current leadership handles many of these issues so it's difficult for me to answer many of these survey questions. I can only answer from my perspective in my current job and former positions in the agency, which may not truly be representative.
- I believe that change is happening and is welcomed (but presents some challenges in messaging and in staff training)
- I would like to know more if my agency is working with local [state]n groups regarding conservation and utilizing indigenous science.
- If the agency does more of these things, then they do not talk about it and I am not aware of it happening.
- Many agency efforts are isolated to certain "silos". Greater agency wide effort would include all employee participation.
- Most of the policy questions I do not know what level these are at.
- Being in a small remote field office, it is hard to know what our agency has done or who they engage for DEI.

Appendix 6 - DEISAQ Mean Analysis

WAFWA DEI Sub-Scale Mean (N=1772)	
Name of the Item	Mean
Community Awareness: Describe the culturally diverse communities in your state or province (q1)	3.12
Community Awareness: Describe the strengths of the culturally diverse communities in your state or province (q2)	2.87
Community Awareness: Describe the social challenges faced by the culturally diverse communities in your state or province (q3)	2.88
Community Awareness: Geographic locations (q4a)	2.95
Community Awareness: Income levels (q4b)	2.58
Community Awareness: Educational attainment (q4c)	2.52
Community Awareness: Demographic trends (q4d)	2.53
Community Awareness Group's history (q5a)	2.59
Community Awareness: Celebratory events (q5b)	2.56
Community Awareness: Community based organizations (q5c)	*2.38
Community Awareness: Formal leaders (q5d)	*2.12
Community Awareness: Informal leaders (q5e)	*1.93
Community Awareness: Minority business alliances (q5f)	*1.93
Community Awareness: Clergy or religious leaders (q5g)	*1.90
Community Awareness: Advocacy or political groups (q5h)	*2.23
Community Awareness: Know the beliefs, customs, and values regarding nature or conservation held by culturally diverse communities in your state or province (q6)	2.69
Community Awareness: Know outdoor social or recreational habits of culturally diverse communities in your state or province (q7)	2.76

WAFWA DEI Sub-Scale Mean (N=1772)	
Name of the Item	Mean
Community Awareness: Engage volunteers and leaders to enhance hiring, messaging and providing services to diverse communities (q8)	*2.22
Community Awareness: Know where culturally diverse communities turn for reliable information (q9)	*2.13
Community Awareness: Familiar are you with languages and dialects used by culturally diverse communities in your state or province (q10)	*2.34
Community Awareness: Agency personnel (staff, leaders, volunteers) reflect the population of your state (q11)	2.56
Subscale Mean	2.46
*Items < subscale mean	
Community Engagement: Attend cultural or ceremonial functions held within or sponsored by the culturally diverse communities in your state or province (q12)	*1.93
Community Engagement: Contract with or purchase goods or services from culturally diverse merchants in your state or province(q13)	*2.51
Community Engagement: Spend outdoor recreational or leisure time amongst culturally diverse communities (q14)	*2.51
Community Engagement: Feel safe in culturally diverse communities (q15)	3.40
Subscale Mean	2.60
*Items < subscale mean	
Community Resources & Linkages: Agency collaborate with culturally diverse community-based organizations to enhance their knowledge of nature or conservation opportunities or issues (q16)	2.84

WAFWA DEI Sub-Scale Mean (N=1772)	
Name of the Item	Mean
Community Resources & Linkages: Agency include culturally diverse individuals on policy- or decision- making bodies (q17)	2.85
Community Resources & Linkages: Agency collaborate with local or state agencies when designing programs, messages, or services for culturally diverse groups (q18)	2.86
Community Resources & Linkages: Agency inform leaders from culturally diverse groups about your agency (q19)	*2.78
Community Resources & Linkages: Agency consider language access (interpreters, translation) to assure your messages are comprehensible to communities whose primary language is not English (q20)	*2.76
Community Resources & Linkages: Agency develop written materials for non-English speaking communities in your state or province (q21)	*2.80
Community Resources & Linkages: Agency's print and social media include images of culturally diverse people and communities (q22)	3.12
Community Resources & Linkages: Agency sponsor or convene DEI workshops or training activities as it concerns culturally diverse groups (q23)	*2.45
Community Resources & Linkages: Agency environment contain art, reading material, or decor reflecting culturally diverse groups (q24)	*2.55
Subscale Mean	2.81
*Items < subscale mean	
Staffing: Members of culturally diverse groups represented in the leadership of your agency (q25)	2.31
Staffing: Hire diverse students, interns or fellows (q26a)	2.91
Staffing: Hire bilingual staff (q26b)	2.76
Staffing: Engage in DEI succession planning (q26c)	2.44

WAFWA DEI Sub-Scale Mean (N=1772)	
Name of the Item	Mean
Staffing: Have a systemic approach to managing cross-cultural conflict (q26d)	*2.26
Staffing: Prepare new staff to work with diverse clients and communities (q26e)	2.37
Staffing: Convene Employee Resource Groups to reduce cultural isolation for diverse staff (q26f)	*2.13
Staffing: Host diverse holiday celebrations (26g)	*1.95
Staffing: Have a DEI metric included in staff performance reviews (q26h)	*1.97
Staffing: Have DEI as a preferred qualification in all job announcements (q26i)	*2.14
Staffing: Convene activities that assure staff alignment around DEI (q26j)	*2.12
Staffing: Seek diversity in the agency's consultant pool, e.g., HUB program matrix (26k)	*2.30
Staffing: Have racial and ethnic diversity among the executive or leadership staff (q26l)	*2.15
Staffing: Include HBCUs or other culturally diverse schools or organizations in your recruitment strategy (q26m)	*2.11
Staffing: Have a mentorship program to promote inclusiveness and belonging for new and diverse staff (q26n)	*2.05
Staffing Policy: Routinely ask people diversity related questions in the job interview process (q27a)	*2.01
Staffing Policy: Require diverse individuals on interview panels (q27b)	*2.05
Staffing Policy: Orient interview panels to reduce or eliminate hiring bias (q27c)	2.34

WAFWA DEI Sub-Scale Mean (N=1772)	
Name of the Item	Mean
Staffing Policy: Have DEI in its mission, vision or goal statements (q27d)	2.45
Staffing Policy: Translate agency employment materials into diverse languages (q27e)	*2.05
Staffing Policy: Solicit diverse staff input on agency strategy (q27f)	*2.13
Staffing Policy: Identify conservation or outdoor issues important to diverse communities (firearm/hunting safety; clean water; green spaces/heat zones, climate change) (q27g)	2.47
Staffing Policy: Collect and analyze current and projected regional demographics (q27h)	2.36
Staffing Policy: Have a leave policy that reflects the needs of all staff members (q27i)	2.91
Staffing Policy: Limited English Proficiency (LEP) plan (q27j)	*1.79
Staffing Policy: Ensure ADA accommodations for employees with physical and mental and other disabilities (q27k)	3.31
Subscale Mean	2.31
*Items < subscale mean	
Community Outreach: Black or African American (q28a)	2.65
Community Outreach: Asian American (q28b)	*2.56
Community Outreach: European or White American (q28c)	3.69
Community Outreach: Hispanic or Latino American (q28d)	3.05
Community Outreach: Native American/American Indian (q28e)	2.81
Community Outreach: Native Hawaiian/ Pacific Islander (q28f)	*2.34

WAFWA DEI Sub-Scale Mean (N=1772)	
Name of the Item	Mean
Community outreach: Agency incorporate Native American or indigenous traditional ecological knowledge (TEK) into decision making (q29)	*2.52
Community outreach: Native American or indigenous advocacy organizations (q30)	2.63
Community Outreach: Low-income groups (q31a)	2.75
Community Outreach: Youth and adolescents (q31b)	3.45
Community Outreach: Women (q31c)	3.35
Community Outreach: People with disabilities (q31d)	3.02
Community Outreach: People who are seniors or elderly (q31e)	3.17
Community Outreach: LGBTQ+ community (q31f)	*2.34
Community Outreach: People who are homeless (q31g)	*1.88
Community Outreach: Health and allied health professionals (32a)	*2.27
Community Outreach: Ethnic print or social media resources (q32b)	*2.33
Community Outreach: Health and human service agencies (q32c)	*2.39
Community Outreach: Tribal or cultural advocacy organizations (q32d)	*2.56
Community Outreach: . Diverse fraternities and sororities (q32e)	*1.85
Community Outreach: Barber shops and salons, neighborhood eateries (q32f)	*1.73
Community Outreach: Social clubs (e.g., Masons, Elks, Moose, Rotarians) (q32g)	*2.30
Subscale Mean	2.62
*Items < subscale mean	

Post-Survey Feedback Study - Creating Tomorrow's Workforce

By Greg Wolley and Greg Supriano

The level of WAFWA member agency participation varied widely. The largest variations are attributed to misunderstandings by agency directors about the methodology, wherein the survey was not distributed organization-wide. On the other hand, some agencies that anticipated resistance had more employee responses than expected. A post-survey study collected feedback from several agency leaders about the process. Please see the results below.

Post-Survey Feedback Study

We reached out to all WAFWA agencies, inviting agency leaders to share their thoughts on why some agencies had low participation. Five jurisdictions responded either via email or via a telephone interview. The following three categories of implementation challenges emerged from the feedback from agency leaders who participated in the post-survey study.

- 1. Technical Difficulties**
- 2. Logistics and Context**
- 3. Discomfort with the Survey**

Specific Comments on Implementation Challenges

1. Technical Difficulties

Some employees did not submit their survey because one question about job titles had a limit on characters. Employees who used too many characters were unable to submit their survey. A workaround was communicated by the survey team, but some employees did not return to the survey to complete it.

2. Logistics and Context

Timing:

The survey was implemented during December when many employees take time off work.

Survey fatigue:

New online tools have been helpful in collecting information from employees because they make it easy to do surveys. The result has been a large volume of new surveys from a wide range of stakeholders. This has resulted in fatigue because they are so common. For example, another DEI survey was done in 2022

by Colorado State U. on behalf of AFWA. One leader reported receiving surveys approximately once per month from a variety of agencies (American Fisheries, Wildlife, State, etc.)

3. Discomfort with the Survey

Inability to preview a survey draft and give input into the design:

One leader acknowledged the challenges that come with including a large group of people in a project's design. However, they would have been more supportive of the effort if they had a chance to become familiar enough with the survey before distribution to feel prepared to answer staff questions about it.

Resistance to DEI work:

One leader felt some of the questions sounded accusatory or irrelevant and were not a priority for the agency, and therefore decided not to forward the survey to their staff.

The fact that "I don't know" or leaving an answer blank were not options:

There was concern that selecting an answer without fully understanding the question or feeling it was not relevant would bias the survey towards inaccuracy or lack of meaning.

Wording of questions:

For example, the word "policy" can mean a lot of different things to people. If they didn't feel they understood what a certain question meant, they may have discontinued the survey part way through.

Lessons Learned

- Consider expanding the pre-survey final review to a wider group of "testers".
 - To catch any technical obstacles.
 - To surface questions leaders may want answered to increase their comfort level with distributing it to all staff.
- Review level of participation early in the survey period.
 - Engage with agencies with low participation as soon as possible.
 - Plan on developing real time targeted strategies to boost participation based on individual agency blockages.
- Conduct the survey during a time period that does not include popular vacation times.
- Consider adding "I don't know" or similar options to some questions.