

TRANSPORTATION RESEARCH BOARD

Improving Diversity and Inclusion Programs in Public Transportation

February 3, 2022

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Learning Objectives

1. Identify how to develop benchmarks to measure diversity, equity, and inclusion
2. Determine methods for transit agencies to improve equity



Resource Guide for Improving Diversity and Inclusion Programs for the Public Transportation Industry

TRANSIT COOPERATIVE RESEARCH PROGRAM

TCRP RESEARCH REPORT 228

Resource Guide for Improving Diversity and Inclusion Programs for the Public Transportation Industry

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Transportation Research Board (TRB) Webinar
February 3, 2022

KEEN
INDEPENDENT
RESEARCH

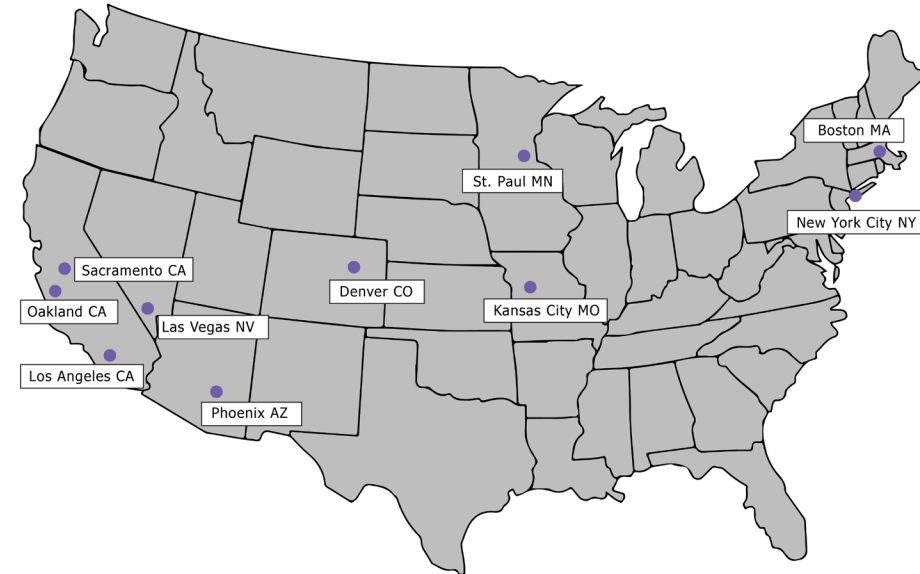
Keen Independent Research



21-person research firm specializing in equity and disparity research

Previous TRB publications:

- *Compendium of Successful Practices, Strategies, and Resources in the FHWA Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) Program*, National Cooperative Highway Research Program, 2019
- *Current Practices to Set and Monitor DBE Goals on Design-Build Projects and Other Alternative Project Delivery Methods*, National Cooperative Highway Research Program, 2014



**KEEN
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Presentation overview

- Project overview
- Methodology
- Study results
- Diversity and inclusion toolkit
- Q&A



Project overview

Contracted in 2019 by Transportation Cooperative Research Program to create an evidence-based diversity and inclusion resource guide (TCRP J-11/Task 35)

Research objectives

- Evaluate state of diversity and inclusion practices and recommend how transit agencies can perform program assessments
- Examine how diversity and inclusion policies have successfully been implemented, create a template for diversity and inclusion programs
- Generate industry-based definitions of “diversity” and “inclusion”
- Explore the legal landscape of diversity and inclusion in public transportation
- Develop an inclusive resource guide that recommends how to best apply research findings, identify impacts associated with program implementation

Methodology

- In-depth interviews with 37 agency leaders, HR professionals and others with diversity and inclusion responsibilities from 12 agencies
- Same agencies selected as participated in TCRP Synthesis 46: Diversity Training Initiatives (published in 2003)

	Location	Participated in 2003 study	Participated in 2021 study
Alameda Contra Costa Transit Agency	CA	■	■
Bay Area Rapid Transit	CA	■	■
Birmingham Jefferson County Transit Authority	AL	■	
Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority	OH	■	■
Hillsborough Area Regional Transit Authority	FL	■	■
Houston Metro	TX	■	■
Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority	CA	■	■
Metropolitan Transit Authority (MTA) NYC Transit	NY	■	■
Pierce County Transit Authority	WA	■	■
Port Authority of Allegheny County	PA	■	■
Trinity Metro Mass Transportation System	TX	■	■
Valley Metro Transit System	AZ	■	■
Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority	Wash. DC	■	■

Study results



- Definitions of diversity, equity and inclusion
- Employment
- Procurement
- Other operations
- Gaps and constraints

Study results: Definitions

Diversity

- A workforce, collection of vendors and served groups with unique characteristics, thoughts and experiences who reflect their communities. Characteristics, thoughts and experiences include categories dictated by law as well as family structure, life experience, communication style and learning style

Inclusion

- An active cultivation of an organizational culture that promotes a sense of belonging, equity and collaboration among all employees, vendors and communities served, and the utilization of these unique differences to the benefit of the agency and all individuals involved

Equity

- The action that drives an organization forward in its diversity and inclusion efforts

Study results: Employment

- Most agencies do not have standardized public definitions for “diversity” and “inclusion”
- Agencies tend to exceed “check the box” compliance with federal, state and local requirements
- Some agencies go beyond characteristics such as race/ethnicity and gender to include sexual orientation, different mental/physical abilities, young adults and ex-offenders (examples)
- They also move beyond “putting people in buckets” to building culture where everyone appreciated for who they are and encouraged to bring “their whole selves” to work
- Many diversity and inclusion resources available, including FTA Circulars

Study results: Procurement



- Many federal requirements affect agency procurement, including Federal Disadvantaged Enterprise (DBE) Program (some version in place for four decades)
- Organizations must set and meet three-year overall goals for DBE participation in USDOT-funded contracts
- Some agencies expand efforts to include supplier diversity programs for non-federally funded contracts, when legally defensible

Study results: Other operations



- Transit agencies need to meet federal requirements concerning equity in services levels and fare pricing
- Many have same responsibilities as cities, including real estate development, local business support, policing and serving homeless populations
- Each issue raises equity, diversity and inclusion concerns

Study results: Gaps and constraints

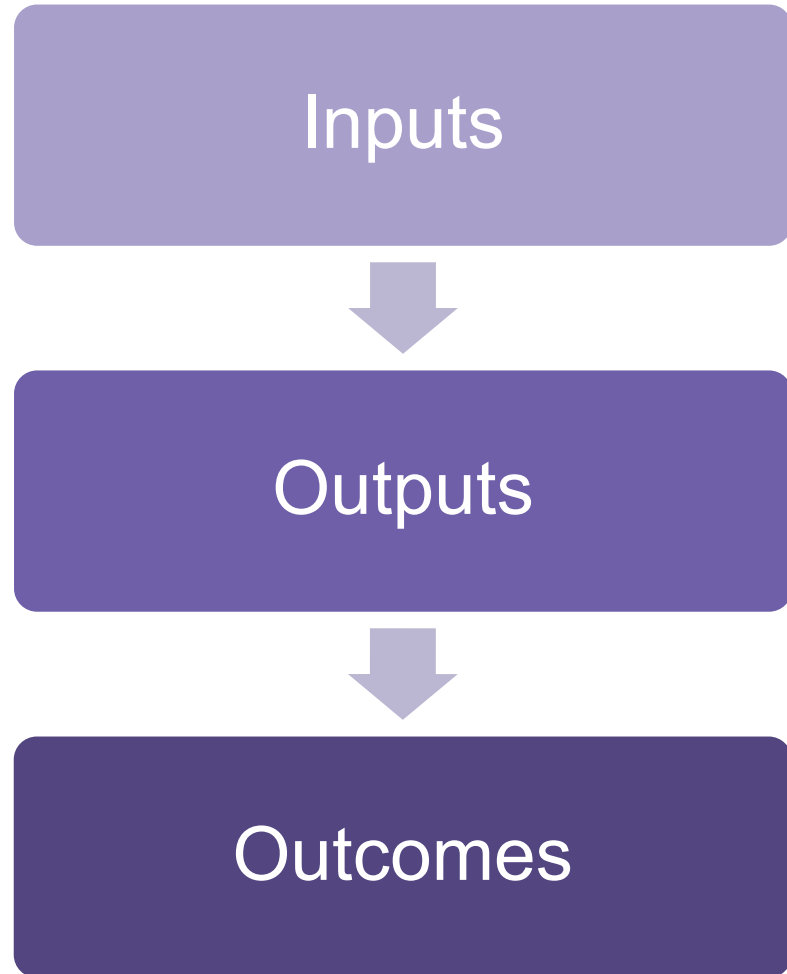
Attempting to ensure diversity and inclusion is difficult and sometimes unsuccessful

Common challenges described by interviewees are

- Practical constraints (e.g., limited availability of diverse skilled labor and vendors, logistical barriers to participation)
- Intra-organizational barriers (e.g., diversity without inclusion, employee and vendor cynicism, effectiveness of EEO programs and grievance systems)



Diversity and inclusion toolkit



Guidelines and practical inputs for transit organizations to

- Benchmark progress
- Seek out incremental steps
- Aspire to more innovative strategies

Two components

- Checklists
- Staff management and procurement resources

Diversity checklist

FORMS OF DIVERSITY CHECKLIST

Fundamentals

- Age and life stage
- Disability
- Gender identity and expression
- Genetic traits and information
- Language
- Nationality and immigration status
- Race, ethnicity and color
- Religious beliefs
- Sexual orientation
- Veteran status

Above and beyond

- Communication style
- Family structure
- Learning style
- Life experience
- Political affiliation and beliefs
- Socioeconomic status

Diversity inputs, outputs and outcomes

Input

Expand definitions of diversity



Output

Reframe how diversity is viewed in hiring and recruitment processes



Outcome

Include more varied voices within organizational discussions



Recruitment and hiring checklist

EMPLOYEE RECRUITMENT AND HIRING METHODS CHECKLIST

Initial efforts

- Conduct and publish results of workforce studies, and incorporate workforce utilization analysis results into hiring practices and goal-setting
- Utilize targeted recruitment of people of color, women, persons with disabilities, LGBT members, veterans and potentially other groups
- Assess minimum qualifications of job postings for institutional barriers, including exams
- Evaluate and monitor candidate interview and selection processes for biases
- Use diverse interview panels
- Develop programs that encourage job placement for persons with disabilities

Expanded efforts

- Provide recruitment announcements and hiring documents in accessible formats, including non-English languages
- Develop apprenticeship and internship programs targeted at training underutilized groups

Recruitment inputs, outputs and outcomes



Workforce initiatives checklist

CURRENT EMPLOYEE EFFORTS CHECKLIST

Initial efforts

- Create and distribute diversity and inclusion policy
- Implement diversity and inclusion training
- Develop and execute a plan to have diverse representation in leadership positions
- Celebrate diverse cultures and holidays through events and discretionary holidays
- Guarantee employees have the technological access and time to engage in diversity and inclusion activities and training
- Encourage formation of informal employee resource groups
- Create formal diversity and inclusion committees

Expanded efforts

- Use positive messaging in diversity and inclusion training, avoid language that produces fear (e.g., penalties)
- Encourage staff to actively lead agency diversity and inclusion efforts
- Assess promotion/succession processes for barriers that may negatively impact diverse employees, including exams
- Formalize and fund employee resource groups
- Provide facilities for all gender identities/expressions

Workforce inputs, outputs and outcomes



Procurement checklist

PROCUREMENT INITIATIVES CHECKLIST

Initial efforts

- Meet FTA administrative and compliance standards for federally funded contracts and operating the Federal DBE Program
- Encourage disadvantaged firms to obtain certification and provide information on the certification process
- Assess any potentially discriminatory effects of procurement practices, including notification of opportunities, unfair qualifications requirements and other bidding processes
- Meet the maximum feasible portion of agency DBE goal using neutral means, such as providing technical assistance, fostering small business participation and simplifying the bidding process
- Require and monitor prompt payment to vendors as well as subcontractors

Expanded efforts

- Consistently monitor the utilization of DBEs and their availability in the local marketplace and report results
- Implement contract equity programs for non-federally funded contracts based on disparity study, and report results

Procurement inputs, outputs and outcomes

Input

Implement equity goals on non-federally funded projects



Output

Diverse and disadvantaged firms gain experience working with the agency



Outcome

Expand options and improve services using the local, responsive vendor base



Services checklist

ADDITIONAL MEASURES CHECKLIST

- Ensure that diverse communities are represented on agency board and advisory groups
- Incorporate equity lens when making decisions on services and operations
- Evaluate overall services and budgets for equity
- Reach out to diverse communities to uncover underserved needs
- Partner with other groups to address role of agency in addressing homelessness
- Ensure language inclusion among customers through non-English announcements, signs in multiple languages and trained bilingual staff
- Assess any bias in transit policing and remedy any disparities
- Address housing and business displacement (or disruption) due to transit construction via financial support and business development resources



Services inputs, outputs and outcomes

Input

Create in-language, culturally relevant informational and marketing materials



Output

Create more awareness and understanding from diverse audiences



Outcome

Generate more transit riders



Staff management and procurement resources

Procurement resources example

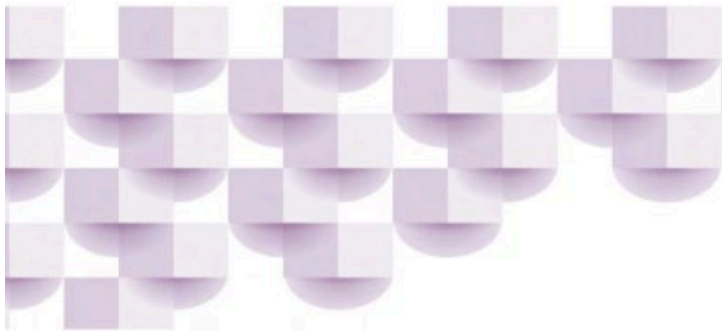
DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION RESOURCES FOR PROCUREMENT				
Name	Description	Free or paid?	Examples of available resources related to diversity and inclusion	Website
Federal Transit Administration	Federal agency with training materials and information regarding EEO and DBE	Free	Recorded webinars, PowerPoint presentations, and videos on topics such as, "DBE Goal Setting"	https://www.transit.dot.gov/regulations-and-guidance/civil-rights-ada/civil-rightsada
U.S. Department of Transportation	Federal agency with information regarding diverse populations	Free	Information regarding persons with disabilities and veterans in the workforce	https://www.transportation.gov/careers/diversity-and-inclusion
National Institute of Governmental Purchasing	Public procurement resource that provides training, certification, and hosts events	Paid	Conferences, reports, and training courses on topics regarding policy and legislation, strategies, and interpersonal skills	https://www.nigp.org
Chartered Institute of Procurement and Supply	International association for procurement and supply professionals that provides networking, resources, and consulting services	Paid, limited open access content	LinkedIn DE&I group networking, workshops, podcasts, and videos on topics such as "Inclusive Procurement"	https://www.cips.org/
<i>Journal of Public Procurement</i>	Academic journal on purchasing and supply management published by Emerald Insight	Paid, limited open access content	Academic articles, such as "Diversity Management and the Organizational Perspective"	https://www.emerald.com/insight/publication/issn/1535-0118

Q&A

TCRP Research Report 228

Transit Cooperative
Research Program
Sponsored by the Federal
Transit Administration

**Resource Guide for Improving
Diversity and Inclusion Programs
for the Public Transportation Industry**



Where to find the resource guide

- www.keenindependent.com
- www.trb.org/Main/Blurbs/182330.aspx
- Search “TCRP Research Report 228” at NationalAcademies.org
- Connect with me at dkeen@keenindependent.com

Questions?



Port Authority of Allegheny County

Improving Diversity and
Inclusion Programs
for the Public
Transportation Industry



Agenda

- Introduction
- Industry Opportunities
- Improvement Areas
- Conclusion

A blurred background image showing a train on tracks. The train is moving from left to right. In the distance, there is a large stone bridge with multiple arches. The scene is set in an urban environment with buildings visible in the background. The overall image has a soft, hazy quality.

Introduction

Introduction

Port Authority of Allegheny County

- 2nd largest public transportation agency in Pennsylvania
- Service area is Allegheny County - 745 square miles
- 2,600 employees
 - 20% Female
 - 40% Minorities

Introduction

Allegheny County Demographics

- 1,250,000 people
 - 79.9% White vs 13.4% Black or African American
 - 43.1% is between the ages of 18 and 64
 - 51% is Female

Introduction

Challenges we face with increasing Diversity

- Large number of transit employees near retirement
- Driver shortage
- Demographics surrounding transit organizations
- Employment Process
- Union contract
- Organizational Culture

Introduction

What we have done so far:

- Hired a Director of Equity and Inclusion
- Disadvantaged Business Enterprise & Diverse Business Program
- Created Employee Resource Groups (ERG's)
- ERG's involved in the community
- Transit / Minority Partners
- Evaluating Results



Industry Opportunities



Industry Opportunities

Transportation Industry:

- Majority of workers are male
- Most common ethnicity group is white
- Large number of employees near retirement

Industry Opportunities

Transportation Industry:

- 28% of the workforce stays in the industry for less than a year
- 4.06% are part of the LGBTQ community
- Millennial's value public transportation



Improvement Areas

Improvement Areas

1. Evaluate organizational culture to ensure it truly values diversity

- How is this communicated and where
- Ensure that leadership is onboard
- Survey employees
- Increase trust with your employees

Improvement Areas

2. Highlight diversity and inclusion

- Update organization documentation and materials
- Website and marketing materials
- Publish a Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Report
- Spotlight minority employees

Improvement Areas

3. Create an Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Council

- Made of employees with different backgrounds
- Meet quarterly to help foster dialogue with diverse team members
- Raise awareness
- Create new ideas for how we can be more inclusive

Improvement Areas

4. Evaluate / update position descriptions and requirements

- Available to a greater number of candidates
- Remove certain requirements
- Attract candidates

Improvement Areas

5. Create inhouse training programs for skilled jobs

- Trade Schools
- Colleges
- Universities

Improvement Areas

6. Partner with local trade schools, colleges and universities

- Offer internship program
- Attend job fairs
- Students where a four-year program may not be the right fit for them

Improvement Areas

7. Offer internal opportunities

- Internships
- Succession Planning
- Mentoring

Improvement Areas

8. Work with local agencies supporting homeless population

- Candidate recruitment
- Work through the typical barriers of gaining employment for homeless

Improvement Areas

9. Coordinate with the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation

- Temporary work
- Part-time work

Improvement Areas

11. Increase focus on attracting LGBTQ employees

- Commit to LGBTQ inclusion in the workplace
- Join LGBTQ professional organizations and career sites
- Participate in LGBTQ events

Improvement Areas

12. Create a more attractive destination for millennials

- Make work feel like home
- Work-life balance
- Engagement
- Vision for the future

Conclusion

Building a diverse and inclusive workplace creates:

- Enjoyable place to work
- Increase productivity and creativity
- Increase tenure and satisfaction
- Helps our business grow and succeed



Thank You

Today's Panelists

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Mallory Avis,
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PortAuthority

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