



City of Olympia

Workforce Equity Strategic Plan 2025-2030

Working together to make a difference.

From the City Manager

On behalf of the City of Olympia's leadership, we are proud to present our first **Workforce Equity Strategic Plan**. This plan represents our pledge to ensure the City of Olympia is an inclusive, supportive, and respectful workplace for all employees. We embarked on this journey because we recognize that our City's strength lies in its people. When every employee feels valued, safe, and empowered, we are better equipped to serve our community with excellence and compassion. We all do better when we all do better.

Over the past three years, we have listened to all our staff from every department. We heard your hopes for a more equitable workplace and your frustrations with barriers that have held us back. We want to thank all employees who courageously shared their experiences and ideas. This plan is our commitment to action. It aligns with Olympia's vision of a healthy, vibrant, beautiful capital city by focusing on the health and vibrancy of our own workplace.

Equity is not a one-time project it's an ongoing commitment. As City leaders, we will allocate the necessary resources, attention, and accountability to bring this plan to life. We will model the changes we expect to see. Olympia's core values of compassion, integrity, and effectiveness will guide us, strengthened by a diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging lens that ensures fairness and belonging are at the center of everything we do.

Together, we will foster an organizational culture where everyone has equal opportunity to thrive, contribute, and grow. We envision a City workforce that at the very least reflects the rich diversity of our community, where policies and practices are free of harmful bias, and where each employee feels the profound sense of belonging that enables them to do their best work. This plan sets that course, with clear goals, strategies, and actions to get us there.

Thank you for your dedication to public service and to each other. We are excited to work collaboratively on implementing this Equity Strategic Plan. The journey will not always be easy, but it is necessary. By working together – across all departments and levels – we will make a difference in our workforce and for each other and, in turn, for everyone we serve.

— Jay Burney, City Manager

Land Acknowledgement

The City of Olympia honors and acknowledges the Indigenous people who have stewarded this land since time immemorial and who still inhabit the area today, the Stacas (Steh-Chass) band of the Squaxin Island Tribe.

Contents

Executive Summary	3
Introduction	4
The City of Olympia Workforce Equity Strategic Plan	5
Goal 1: Employees feel valued and included	6
Objective A: Build an inclusive and respectful culture	6
Objective B: Enhance leadership engagement and accountability	7
Goal 2: Hiring, policies, and processes are consistent and aligne	d with diversity,
equity, inclusion, and belonging	9
Objective A: Optimize workforce capacity and resources	9
Objective B: Align employee Human Resources' functions with diversity, and belonging principles	• • •
Objective C : Create operational processes that are effective and inclusive	11
Laying the Groundwork for What Comes Next	13
Appendix A: Definitions	15
First Order Principles – Our Guiding Commitments	17

Executive Summary

The City of Olympia's Workforce Equity Strategic Plan (2025–2030) is a transformative roadmap for building an inclusive, supportive, and respectful workplace that reflects the City's values of compassion, integrity, and effectiveness. Developed through a participatory process, the plan captures the lived experiences and aspirations of employees across all departments and roles. Grounded in extensive equity assessment steps including interviews, surveys, training, and departmental meetings, the plan offers a cohesive and actionable strategy to embed diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging (DEIB) into every facet of the City's operations.

Vision and Purpose

At the heart of this strategic plan is the recognition that a just and thriving community begins with a just and thriving workforce. The plan outlines the City's commitment to ensure that all employees feel valued, heard, and empowered. It aims to close the gap between equity ideals and daily realities by addressing systemic barriers, fostering leadership accountability, and cultivating a culture of psychological safety and authentic engagement.

Guiding Principles

The plan is guided by First Order Principles (found at the end of this document) – fundamental commitments that guide how we will make decisions and treat one another. These principles will become our lens in decision-making throughout the City.

Implementation and Next Steps

Acknowledging current resource limitations, the City will begin implementation by prioritizing the following high-impact areas:

- Enhancing employee engagement and participation; and then
- Standardizing equitable hiring and onboarding systems

Additional strategies, such as leadership accountability, improved resource allocation, and inclusive operational design, will be phased in as capacity grows. The plan remains a living document, intended to evolve in response to employee feedback, performance metrics, and shifting organizational needs.

Conclusion

The Workforce Equity Strategic Plan is both a call to action and a promise of change. It challenges all City employees to take part in building an equitable workplace, one that honors difference, ensures fairness, and fosters a sense of belonging for all. Through collective effort, continuous learning, and courageous leadership, Olympia is laying the foundation for a more inclusive future starting within.

Introduction

The City of Olympia's Workforce Equity Strategic Plan is a call to action and a roadmap for transforming our workplace into one that truly reflects our values of inclusion, transparency, accountability, and care. Rooted in the lived experiences of our employees and developed through a deeply collaborative process, the plan outlines a clear and achievable framework for meaningful change.

In developing the Workforce Equity Strategic Plan, the Belonging Equity and Action Team (BEAT) analyzed data from every step of our equity assessment process. They asked questions, gathered feedback and considered meaningful and implementable ways to develop our first Workforce Equity Plan. What is outlined in the plan is the culmination of all of our work.

The plan is structured around two overarching goals, supported by five focused objectives and implemented through 10 actionable strategies. Together, they represent our collective response to more than three years of listening, learning, and reflection through staff surveys, stakeholder interviews, department conversations, and the daily experiences shared by our workforce.

This is not a static document. It is a living plan, designed to evolve alongside the organization. It will require ongoing monitoring, regular review, meaningful adaptation, and shared accountability. The City's commitment to workforce equity is not a one-time initiative but a sustained journey, one that calls on each of us to participate, grow, and lead.

This is the beginning of a renewed commitment to creating a workplace where everyone feels respected, supported, and empowered to thrive.

Let's get to the City of Olympia's Workforce Equity Strategic Plan.

The City of Olympia Workforce Equity Strategic Plan

Plan Vision: The City of Olympia is an inclusive, supportive, and respectful place to work.

GOAL 1

Employees feel valued and included

OBJECTIVE A

Build an inclusive and respectful culture

STRATEGY 1

Increase and standardize employee engagement, participation, and co-creation

STRATEGY 2

Create comprehensive and accessible approaches to well-being and work schedules

STRATEGY 3

Integrate diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging into policy, and work culture

OBJECTIVE B

Enhance leadership engagement and accountability

STRATEGY 1

Give leadership the tools and expectations to be visible, involved, and accountable to staff

STRATEGY 2

Create expectations to ensure leadership decisions and actions reflect diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging

GOAL 2

Hiring, policies, and processes are consistent and aligned with Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, Belonging

OBJECTIVE A

Optimize workforce capacity and resources

STRATEGY 1

Increase Human Resources (HR) and other staffing resources and support to align with achieving equity strategic plan goals

STRATEGY 2

Enhance Employee benefits

OBJECTIVE B

Align employee HR's functions with DEIB principles

STRATEGY 1

Create equitable, consistent, and known hiring practices for all staff

STRATEGY 2

Create comprehensive and inclusive onboarding

OBJECTIVE C

Create operational processes that are effective and inclusive

STRATEGY 1

Standardize processes across departments that are fair, consistent, and inclusive

Goal 1: Employees feel valued and included

This goal reflects a resounding message from staff: when people feel respected, empowered, and seen, they thrive and so will the City.

Objective A: Build an inclusive and respectful culture

This objective guides our efforts to embed inclusion, engagement, and well-being into the City's daily work culture. It calls for more intentional and formalized practices that prioritize employee voice, cross-departmental collaboration, and psychological safety. Staff asked to be co-creators in shaping their work environment, and this objective answers that call through three strategic focus areas that together reflect the belief that inclusion is not a one-time initiative, but a practice embedded in everyday structures, policies, and relationships.

Strategy 1: Increase and standardize employee engagement, participation, and co-creation.

The City of Olympia is committed to meaningful engagement and co-creation with our employees. We value open dialogue, shared decision-making, and transparency as cornerstones of a healthy public workforce. By creating inclusive forums, supporting employee-led groups, and standardizing feedback practices, we affirm that employee perspectives are essential to just, effective, and innovative public service. Our commitment ensures that decisions are made *in partnership with the people most impacted by them, our staff*.

- Assess, create, and support employee feedback mechanisms.
- Establish clear standards and strong support for Employee Resource Groups (ERGs).
- Create 1-2 Departmental DEIB teams.

Strategy 2: Create comprehensive and accessible approaches to well-being and work schedules.

The City of Olympia recognizes that fostering well-being is a public value. Through equitable work scheduling practices, wellness programs, and opportunities for meaningful connection across roles and departments, we aim to cultivate a workplace where each person's health, humanity, and life circumstances are honored. When our employees feel supported and balanced, they are empowered to serve the community with resilience, compassion, and excellence.

- Assess Wellness program and capacity and enhance support.
- Prioritize team building events across ERGs/City staff/leadership.

 Create a workgroup to gather information from across the City, and in our policies, on issues around work scheduling practices

Strategy 3: Integrate diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging into policy and work culture.

The City of Olympia is committed to operationalizing DEIB across all levels of our organization. This means aligning our policies, trainings, evaluations, and leadership development with equity principles that reflect the community we serve. Our policies must not only meet the letter of inclusion but reflect the spirit of justice and respect. As public stewards, we are accountable for creating an environment where every employee is recognized, respected, and empowered to contribute their full selves to public service. Its actions and tasks include:

- Provide optional training for all City staff on social justice and DEIB.
- Create methods for DEIB principles to be infused throughout all training.
- Embed DEIB principles into all policies, job descriptions, and performance reviews.
- Create and utilize a standardized competency/maturity model in assessing use of DEIB throughout the organization.
- Create expectations to involve stakeholder groups in review of actions.
- Review and develop language accessibility options and plan.

Objective B: Enhance leadership engagement and accountability.

Throughout the development of the Workforce Equity Strategic Plan, staff across all departments emphasized a consistent theme that leadership engagement and accountability are essential to creating the organizational change they hope to see. From everyday decisions to department-wide policies, employees expressed a desire for leaders who are not only visible and involved, but who also consistently model equitable behaviors, challenge the status quo, and cultivate a culture of transparency, integrity, and inclusion.

At the same time, there was a clear recognition that leadership is human and that change requires tools, structures, and sustained support. Staff expressed empathy for the complexity of leading equity transformation, while underscoring the importance of clear expectations, equitable practices, and authentic follow-through. This dual understanding of leaders as both agents of change and learners in progress informed the strategies designed to build leadership capacity and accountability within the plan.

Strategy 1: Give leadership the tools and expectations to be visible, involved, and accountable to staff.

This strategy addresses the need to give leaders tangible tools and structured expectations to foster visibility, engagement, and accountability. Formal accountability processes and impact frameworks will ensure that leadership actions align with equity goals and reflect the lived experience of staff.

- Create and implement a model for cross-training
- Create and implement job shadowing program
- Create and implement a mentorship program for staff
- Create open house/information sessions of different departments or InsideOly types of sessions
- Create leadership code of practice/ethics that includes issues such as favoritism and power imbalances
- Create and provide training to all employees on the first order principles and ensure that the executive team strives to adhere to the principles
- Create processes and procedures for leadership accountability
- Create staff impact framework for all project ideas and/or similar initiative
- Create a quick reference guide for inclusive languages and common messaging pitfalls
- Train identified staff/leadership on developing communication plans

Strategy 2: Create expectations to ensure leadership decisions and actions reflect diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging.

This strategy strengthens this foundation by embedding DEIB principles into the core functions of leadership. This includes revising job descriptions, performance reviews, and professional development programs to reflect DEIB competencies; creating accessible toolkits and annual opt-in training for leaders; and institutionalizing feedback loops through staff surveys and engagement metrics to track the real-world impacts of leadership decisions.

These strategies affirm that equitable leadership is not a passive trait but a practiced, supported, and accountable responsibility. This plan invests in leadership as both a lever and reflection of the City's equity journey; committed to transformation, grounded in humility, and accountable to the people it serves.

- Embed DEIB principles into leadership training, performance reviews, job descriptions
- Create accessible DEIB toolkits for supervisors/managers/leaders
- Create opt-in DEIB training annually for leaders

Develop processes to utilize staff surveys/feedback to track impacts

Goal 2: Hiring, policies, and processes are consistent and aligned with diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging.

Across departments and roles, staff voiced a strong and recurring call for more transparent, consistent, and equitable systems, particularly in how the City hires, develops, and supports its workforce. From frustrations about promotional pathways to concerns about favoritism and inconsistent decision-making, the message was clear: the City's internal systems must evolve to align with principles of DEIB.

We understand DEIB alignment must go beyond Human Resources (HR). Staff shared repeated concerns about operational decision-making lacking transparency or meaningful participation.

When resourced and implemented effectively, these strategies have the potential to shift the foundation of the organization toward one where equity is embedded, staff are valued and supported, and trust is rebuilt through transparent, inclusive practices.

Objective A: Optimize workforce capacity and resources

Recognizing that many staff already feel stretched to capacity in fulfilling their existing job responsibilities and that implementing this strategic plan adds additional demands, especially on the already short-staffed Human Resources department and other internal support services we elevated this objective as a foundational priority. For the Workforce Equity Strategic Plan to succeed, the City must first ensure it has the capacity and infrastructure to implement the work effectively and sustainably.

This objective acknowledges the critical role that internal departments, particularly HR, Finance, and Information Services, play in embedding equity into the City's systems, policies and practices. Investing in strengthening the City's foundation by aligning staffing levels and professional competencies is key.

Strategy 1: Increase Human Resources and other necessary staffing resources and support to align with achieving equity strategic plan goals.

This strategy focuses on assessing and increasing the staffing and expertise required to operationalize equity. This includes conducting a thorough staffing audit, resourcing positions aligned with plan priorities and ensuring that internal departments have the training and knowledge to integrate DEIB principles in all their work.

- Audit and determine staffing level needs
- Ensure internal facing departments have the training, knowledge, and skills to understand and utilize DEIB principles in all their work.

Strategy 2: Enhance employee benefits.

This strategy addresses another key aspect of capacity: supporting the workforce through equitable benefits and policies. Actions under this strategy include reviewing policies across jurisdictions, soliciting staff input, and implementing flexible scheduling and benefits through a Targeted Universalism lens. Enhancements such as pay differentials for multilingual employees and expanded wellness programs aim to create a workplace that not only values but actively supports employee well-being, engagement, and retention.

- Create inter-departmental team to study other jurisdictional/workplace policies
- Develop methods for staff feedback and current data to prioritize work scheduling requests
- Revise and/or create policy to support changes to flexible scheduling and other employee benefits
- Implement/expand benefits for equity using Targeted Universalism
- Standardize higher pay for employees who speak a second language at their job.
- Enhance the City's Wellness programs
- Create and implement a communication plan that more effectively communicates Castlight benefits.
- Build out Wellness resources on the SharePoint site.

Objective B: Align employee Human Resources' functions with diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging principles

Creating a more equitable, inclusive, and engaged workforce starts with transforming the systems that shape how employees enter, grow, and experience work at the City. HR serves as the gateway to this transformation. When HR practices are intentionally aligned with DEIB principles, they lay the foundation for systemic change across the entire organization.

This objective focuses on ensuring that HR's core functions actively advance equity by removing barriers, increasing transparency, and fostering consistency in how talent is recruited, selected, and supported. It responds directly to staff feedback about unclear hiring processes, perceived favoritism in promotions, and the need for meaningful onboarding experiences that reflect the City's values from day one.

The strategies under Objective B are not just about improving HR, they are about setting a consistent and value-driven tone for the entire employee experience. When HR functions are aligned with DEIB, the organization can better attract, retain, and support a workforce that reflects and serves the community equitably.

Strategy 1: Create equitable, consistent, and known hiring practices.

This strategy commits to building equitable, consistent, and well-communicated hiring practices. This includes redesigning recruitment and interview processes to center DEIB values, offering advanced training for hiring managers, and developing accessible resources to support equitable hiring decisions. Additionally, the strategy reinforces the importance of competitive hiring, requiring justification when such processes are not used, promoting fairness and accountability throughout the system.

- Ensure hiring processes are based on DEIB principles
- Create consistent processes for diverse recruitment strategies that are utilized for all positions
- Redesign the interview process utilizing DEIB principles
- Provide more advanced training on recruitment and hiring
- Create web resources for hiring staff
- Ensure competitive hiring occurs whenever possible and require explanations when competitive processes are not used

Strategy 2: Create comprehensive and inclusive onboarding.

Strategy 2 aims to ensure that every employee begins their City journey with a comprehensive and inclusive orientation experience. By revising the New Employee Orientation, the City will introduce new staff to not only operational expectations but also to the principles of DEIB that are central to its strategic vision.

• Revise New Employee Orientation

Objective C: Create operational processes that are effective and inclusive

Operational processes are the scaffolding of how work gets done—and when those processes are transparent, consistent, and inclusive, they build trust, foster innovation, and support more equitable outcomes. Staff have shared that unclear procedures and siloed decision-making often lead to confusion, inefficiencies, and missed opportunities to engage those most impacted by decisions. This objective responds to that feedback by focusing on the

development and implementation of standardized operational systems that are fair, collaborative, and grounded in shared understanding.

This objective is about more than administrative efficiency, it's about embedding equity into the daily functions and workflows that shape staff experience and City operations. When guidelines and policies are co-created and applied consistently, they increase morale, reduce frustration, and promote equity across departments.

Through this objective, the City aims to create a more cohesive and inclusive operational culture, one where staff feel informed, empowered, and valued in shaping the systems they rely on every day.

Strategy 1: Standardize processes across departments that are fair, consistent, and inclusive.

Strategy 1 outlines the City's commitment to standardizing core operational practices while honoring the unique needs of different departments. This includes reviewing and aligning policies related to equipment ordering, job reclassifications, and financial impact evaluations. As part of this effort, departments will be encouraged to collaborate during the development of projects and decisions, especially when actions may affect other parts of the City. Emphasizing cross-departmental inclusion ensures that operational decisions are not made in isolation, and that diverse perspectives inform outcomes.

- Standardize guidelines, policies, and practices throughout the City as much as possible
- Create fiscal impact analysis and require use by all staff and Council prior to presenting to Council and/or allocating dollars.

Laying the Groundwork for What Comes Next

As we move from planning to implementation, we do so with a strong commitment to ensuring this good work is honored and progress is made and with an awareness of our current realities: tight resources, a reduced budget, and a Human Resources team operating at less than half the staffing levels needed to support a city of our size. Our next steps require focused prioritization.

We move forward recognizing that equity is not something we can wait to begin once all conditions are perfect. Instead, we commit to starting with what we can, where we are aligning resources, building momentum, and holding ourselves accountable to the values expressed throughout this plan. Given this, we begin implementation of this plan with the following actions:

- Assess, create, and support employee feedback mechanisms. Including:
 - Creating and maintaining a digital feedback system
 - Creating workgroup protocols that allow staff to give feedback prior to decisionmaking
 - Developing and maintaining surveys and audits
- Establish clear standards and strong support for Employee Resource Groups (ERGs). Including:
 - Creating and launching employee resource groups
 - Standardizing and expecting ongoing buy-in from supervisors/leads to allow staff to participate in ERGs
 - Providing guidance and regular check-ins with leaders on supporting ERGs
 - Ensuring leaders are aware of ERG and other workgroup opportunities
 - Creating policy ensuring ERGs are accessible for everyone
 - Creating a survey for leaders around ERGs to gauge boosters and blockers. Use the data to adapt plan actions.
 - Create 1-2 Departmental DEIB teams.

While the remainder of the Workforce Equity Strategic Plan cannot be fully implemented at once, it remains a living framework. The City will continue to advocate for funding, staffing, and structural adjustments to support full implementation over time. The City is committed to pursuing them as budget and capacity allow.

Acknowledgements

This Equity Strategic Plan was developed collaboratively with expertise from **The Athena Group**, co-creation by staff, and commitment from City executive leadership. **Our City Manager**, **Jay Burney**, provided vision and sponsorship.

The Belonging & Equity Action Team (BEAT):

A diverse group of employees from across departments led the plan's development. Current, and past members include:

Amber Coleman (Legal)
Amelia Layton (CPED)
Amy Stull (OPARD)

Andrea Windmeyer (Strat Comm)

Jay Burney (City Manager)
Joshua Chaney (CPED | HRU)
Katherine Trahan (CMO)
Kittredge Mullikin (IT)
Kym Foley (PW)

Mark Hartley (CPED)

Mark Rains (Clerk's Office)

Regina Adams (HR)
Salvador Orozco (PW)
Sarah Jones (Finance)
Suki Bell-Sullivan (CPED)
Valerie Roberts (OPARD)
Zulaika Kim (CPED)

BEAT lead: **Keli Drake** (DEI Coordinator)

Former members:

Aaron Ficek (OPD)
Aiesa Johnston (CPED)
Brian Hegge (OPD)

Carrie McCausland (Strat Com)

Cassie Hall (CRU)
Cassie Wood (CRU)
Daisha Versaw (CPED)
Dawn Carvalho (CMO)
Erik Gonzalez (CPED)
Jacob Theis (OPD)

Javier Sola Del Vigo (OPD) Kevin Bossard (OFD)

Laura Keehan (OPARD)
Taylor DeFrees (MSW intern)

Tiffany Hieronymus (OFD)

Toby Levens (OFD)

Virginia Wilford (Finance)

We also acknowledge the support of the **Committee on Diversity & Equity (CDE)**, our Employee Resource Groups (Oly Mosaic Group, Barrier Busters, OlyQT, Women's ERG), and countless City staff who shared honest feedback during surveys, listening sessions, and departmental equity assessments. Thank you to everyone – from front-line employees to department directors – for your commitment to making Olympia an inclusive, supportive, and respectful workplace.

Appendix A: Definitions

Accessibility	The quality of being able to be reached, entered, used, or understood by everyone, including people with disabilities.		
Actions	These are our concrete steps or initiatives that we will take to implement strategies.		
BEAT	The City of Olympia's Belonging and Equity Action Team. Members come from across the City and act as bridges and liaisons for their work team and/or department.		
Compassion	One of the City of Olympia's three stated values. Compassion is a deep feeling for and understanding of suffering and a desire to alleviate it.		
Diversity	The condition of having or being composed of differing elements, especially people of different races, cultures, backgrounds, etc.		
Effectiveness	One of the City of Olympia's three stated values. The degree to which something is successful in producing a desired result; success.		
Equity	Fairness or justice in the way people are treated often, specifically: freedom from disparities in the way people of different races, genders, etc. are treated.		
First Order Principles	The basic requirements we must agree on for our plan and work to function without failing. First Order Principles (sometimes called non-negotiables, or "boundary conditions" are guides for decision making in everything we do.		
Inclusion	The practice or policy of providing equal access to opportunities and resources for people who might otherwise be excluded or marginalized, such as those who have physical or intellectual disabilities and members of other minority groups.		
Integrity	One of the City of Olympia's three stated values. Integrity is the commitment to act in alignment with one's stated values, principles, and ethical standards even when it is difficult, unpopular, or invisible to others.		
Maturity Model	A structured framework that assesses our capabilities and processes to determine our level of maturity or advancement. It provides a clear roadmap for growth, guiding us from our initial stages to higher levels of proficiency.		
Objectives	Objectives fall under strategic goals. These are measurable items that are targets or milestones on the path towards reaching our strategic goals and they serve as a basis for tracking performance and adjusting along the way.		

Power

The ability to decide, define, influence, or change outcomes of any kind on individual, interpersonal, or organizational levels. (Zheng 2023)

Psychological Safety

The individual, team, or organizational-level belief that there will not be punishment or humiliation for speaking up with ideas, questions, concerns or mistakes.

These are broad, long-range aims that define the overall direction we wish to achieve with our Workforce Equity Strategic Plan. They are intended for a five to ten-year period. For a goal to be considered strategic, if must me all four of these criteria:

Strategic Goals

- It should be clear and compelling. It should stretch our sense of what is currently considered possible.
- It should describe a clear finish line. It should provide directions that allow us to know when we've achieved our goal.
- It should not be achievable in just 1 or 2 (or possibly even 3) years.
- It should not describe or strongly suggest a particular solution.

Strategies

These are high-level approaches or plans to achieve the objectives, outlining the path we are taking to reach our strategic goals. It will often address **what** needs to be done and **why**. It will not tell us **how** to do it.

Structural Bias

Bias in processes, policies, or practices. (Zheng 2023).

Targeted Universalism

A policy framework that sets universal goals for all while implementing targeted strategies to address the specific barriers faced by marginalized groups, ensuring equitable outcomes across different populations. Rather than applying one-size-fits-all solutions, it recognizes structural disparities and designs interventions that uplift the most impacted communities first, leading to broader systemic improvements for everyone (powell, Menendian, & Ake, *Targeted Universalism: Policy & Practice*, Othering & Belonging Institute, 2019).

Well-being

The holistic state of employees' physical, mental, emotional, social, and financial health, as well as their sense of purpose and belonging at work.

First Order Principles – Our Guiding Commitments

At the foundation of this plan are **First Order Principles** – fundamental commitments that guide how we will make decisions and treat one another. These principles were developed through staff and leadership dialogues on the kind of organization we strive to be. They include:

- Address Historical Inequities: Olympia's workforce will proactively acknowledge past inequities and work to expand opportunities so that no one is left behind. Inclusion means making space for diverse perspectives even those that challenge the status quo and trusting individuals to know their own experiences. We center belonging in our culture, fostering healing and collective growth rather than blame. No one is expected to be perfect, but we are committed to learning and doing better together.
- Leadership Accountability: Those in positions of authority must act in the best interest of the people they serve. Power will be shared and used transparently. We will reduce disparities and promptly address discrimination or favoritism. Our policies (especially around hiring, promotion, and compensation) will be transparent and fair, building trust by eliminating unjust treatment of employees. Leaders will establish clear mechanisms for feedback from those impacted by decisions, rather than making decisions in isolation. When we achieve this, we do our best work for our community.
- Sustainable Systems that Protect Everyone: Safety and well-being are considered broadly not just physical safety, but psychological and emotional security as well. Our workplace practices and systems should proactively support employees, rather than merely react to problems. We also recognize our responsibility to future generations: decisions will be made with a long-term perspective, balancing immediate needs with sustainable solutions (including addressing climate impacts on our operations). We will create systems that are resilient, just, and adaptive, so that as the world changes, we do not leave anyone unprotected or any values behind.
- Lifelong Learning and Adaptability: Olympia's organizational culture will embrace a growth mindset. We encourage continuous learning and expect everyone staff and leadership alike to challenge assumptions and be willing to change course when needed. This means regularly re-evaluating policies, questioning power dynamics, and ensuring our actions align with our stated values. We will not be complacent with "the way it's always been." Instead, we will innovate and improve, knowing that equity work is an ongoing journey. Even when we achieve goals, we will seek out the next opportunity to deepen our inclusion and effectiveness.



City of Olympia
Workforce Equity Strategic Plan
2025-2030

OlympiaWA.gov • 601 4th Ave E • Olympia, WA 98507-1967