



The Bigger We: DEIB Through the GARE Network & Approach

Stories from Mercer Island and Kent
AWC Annual Conference

June 21, 2023

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Wendy Weiker
Councilmember, Mercer Island

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**Dana Ralph
Mayor, Kent**

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**Janine Christiano
GARE Director of Strategic Partnerships**

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Government Alliance on Race and Equity

A national network of government entities working to achieve racial equity and advance opportunities for all.

- ✓ Membership network – 450 members
- ✓ Transforming the public sector network - 32 states, 450+ cities, counties and agencies
- ✓ Provide tools to put theory into action



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The GARE Approach

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We lead with race

From infant mortality to life expectancy, race predicts how well you will do...



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Why we lead with race

- Racial inequities are deep and pervasive
- Racial anxiety is on the rise – race is often an elephant in the room
- Learning an institutional and structural approach can be used with other areas of marginalization
- Specificity matters

Race explicit, but not exclusive
always bring an “intersectional” analysis

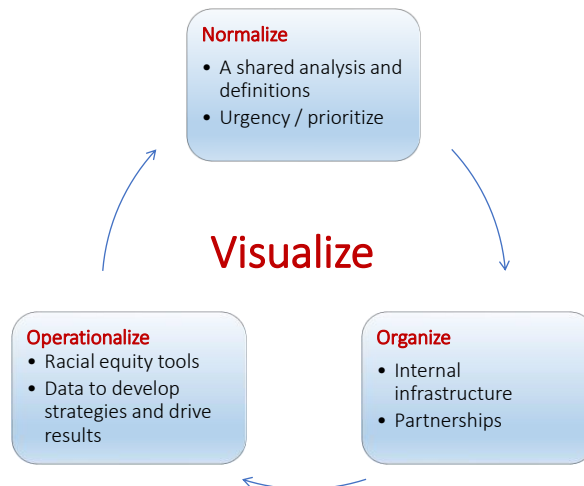
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Racial equity means:

- “Closing the gaps” so that race does not predict one’s success, while also **improving outcomes for all**
- To do so we:
 - ✓ Target strategies to focus improvements for those worse off
 - ✓ Move beyond “services” and **focus on changing policies, institutions and structures**, which strengthens systems for all

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VNOO Practices



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Diversity, Equity and Inclusion



Source: City of Portland Office of Equity and Human Rights

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Panel Introductions

Tell us a little about yourself and what brings you to the work of DEIB?

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How is DEIB being implemented in
your city?

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What are the tools and assets that
have been helpful to the work?

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What are some challenges you've
faced and how have you
addressed them?

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How has GARE been helpful on
your city's journey?

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Questions

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Closing Thoughts

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Thank You!

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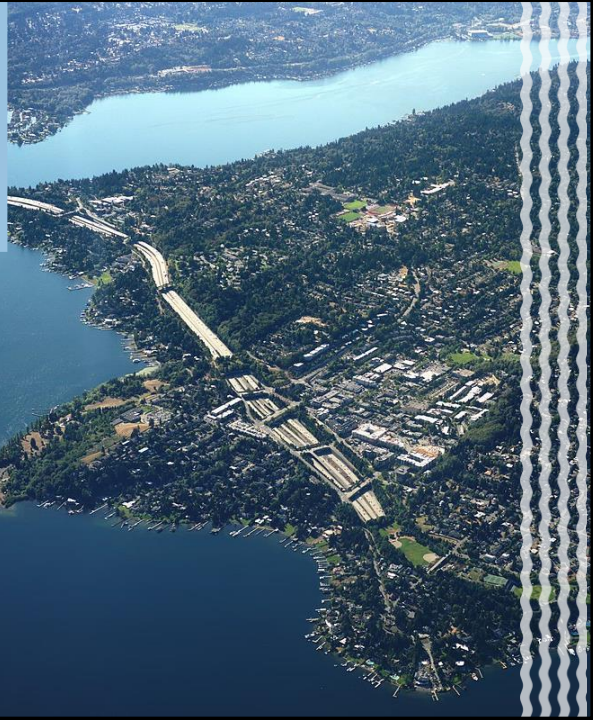
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City of Mercer Island

*Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and
Belonging Partnerships, Progress
& Possibilities*



Wendy Weiker, Councilmember
AWC Annual Conference DEIB session
June 21, 2023



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What can a city leader do about disparity; start with your why then the how:



Top 5 Barriers to DEIB Program Implementation*:

1. Lack of Goals and Metrics.
2. Inadequate Training.
3. No Buy-In From Leadership.
4. Budgetary Restrictions.
5. Cultural and Political Resistance.

*wellright.com

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Mercer Island DEIB playbook components:

Internal and External

- Policy
- Programs
- Partnerships
- Practice



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We're committed to DEIB work: As leaders and in our city's community work

"The City recognizes and supports matters of diversity, equity, and inclusion by participating in cultural competency training, supporting a range of community events, and issuing City Council proclamations which highlight unique experiences of community members across all backgrounds."

Mercer Island Agenda Bills



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Our DEIB impact starts with City Hall:

- Make clear DEIB statements and commitments at City Council and City staff leadership levels internally and externally.
- Celebrate diverse holidays, cultures, and groups with unique and within broader community events & public meetings.
- Provide ongoing bias and discrimination training, training, and more training for elected/appointed leaders and city staff.
- Partner with community-based organizations and professionals in the DEIB field to provide training, public events, community dialogue
- Establish recruitment and hiring practices (ex: "blind" resumes, diverse interview panels, accommodations for people with disabilities) to increase opportunities for underrepresented groups.
- Provide translation capability on your website & communications.
- Keep the conversation, mindset, partnerships, and work going.
- Stay personally engaged, keep learning, and continue speaking up.

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Mercer Island's ongoing DEIB work:

City staff & leadership are next pursuing:

- Continue offering focused celebrations and community events with a lens toward diversity and inclusivity.
- The Youth & Family Services Department workplan includes a goal to expand equity and social justice practices in their work.
- Budget proposal coming for the development of a DEIB plan to identify areas of improvement within the City's policies and procedures.
- Support community and nonprofit partnerships like the one with One MI and the Alliance on Race and Equity (GARE) to utilize training modules and other resources.
- Review and update policies and procedures related to recruiting, hiring, and training new employees with an emphasis on inclusion.

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Further Reading and Resources:

City of Mercer Island DEIB resources:

- MI Agenda Bills focused on DEIB:
 - [Renewed Commitment to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion](#) (June 10, 2020)
 - [Black History Month](#) (February 2, 2021)
 - [Women's History Month](#) (March 16, 2021)
 - [Community Conversations about Race](#) (November 16, 2021)
- City Website Community Engagement Page Translation capability: <https://letstalk.mercergov.org/>

Association of Washington Cities DEIB resources:

- AWC equity resource guide for cities: <https://wacities.org/data-resources/articles/2021/11/30/awc-equity-resource-guide-tools-and-case-studies-for-washington-cities>
- Certificate or Municipal Leadership (CML) DEIB courses: <https://wacities.org/events-education/elearning-by-category?taxonomy=categories&propertyName=category&taxon=%2felearning%2fcml-diversity-equity-and-inclusion>

National League of Cities DEIB resources:

- <https://www.nlc.org/program/race-equity-and-leadership-real/>

DEIB Book lists:

- <https://library.educause.edu/resources/2019/1/dei-book-recommendations>
- <https://www.forbes.com/sites/lauragarnett/2020/07/15/11-books-to-read-if-you-want-to-be-a-more-inclusive-leader/?sh=45c5c26e36e6>

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“If we are to have peace on earth...our loyalties must transcend our race, our tribe, our class, and our nation; and this means we must develop a world perspective.”

Martin Luther King, Jr

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Questions?

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