

Racism as Public Health Crisis Assessment

Summit County, Ohio

December 19, 2021

www.updconsulting.com



Table of Contents

Acknowledgements	2
Background	2
Methodology	4
Data Analysis	4
Qualitative Analysis	5
Findings	6
Focus Area: Community	8
Focus Area: Commitment	14
Focus Area: Culture	18
Focus Area: Climate	20
Recommendations	22
Commit to ongoing, long-term action focused on racial equity	23
Institutionalize equity capacity	24
Leverage interagency collaboration toward a shared RAPHC vision	26
Increase data capacity for transparency and accountability	27
Appendix A: Special Review Committee Members	29



Acknowledgements

We would like to express our gratitude to those community members, organizations, and county government affiliates whose voices laid the foundations for having these conversations by elevating equity disparities within Summit County.

We are thankful for the guidance and support from the County Executive, Ilene Shapiro, as well as, the close collaboration of the champions of this work:

Summit County Council

- Elizabeth Walters, Council President
- Veronica Sims, Council Member
- Mark Potter, Chief of Staff
- Kent Starks, Senior Research Analyst

Summit County Department of Human Resources

- Sharon Reaves, Director and Chief Human Resources Officer
- Lashawrida Fellows, Deputy Director

Summit County Executive Office

• Brian Nelsen, Chief of Staff

Many thanks to the staff who granted us access to data and documents to review. We would also like to thank the members of the Special Review Committee (*see full list in Appendix A*), staff, and external partners who provided us with their feedback through interviews, focus groups, and surveys.

Background

In June 2020, Summit County Council unanimously approved Resolution 2020-174 declaring racism as a public health crisis (RAPHC), which established the SRC whose charge was to determine how best to address systematic and structural racism throughout the municipality's nine townships and twenty-two cities and villages. The County conducted an initial examination of internal operations through dialogue and data analysis to highlight existing promising practices and uncover immediate next steps to address racism in the County. To facilitate the advancement of the county's racial equity journey, Summit County Council subsequently entered into a contract with <u>UPD Consulting</u> (UPD), on July 1, 2021 to provide project management and consultation to the SRC as they work to promote racial equity in the county.

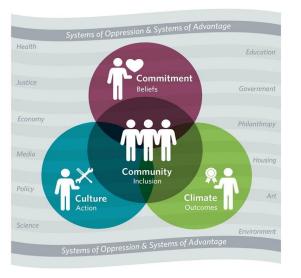
UPD is a minority-owned public sector management consulting firm with broad experience with cities and counties across the country in organizational change management, strategic and action planning, and implementation support. UPD has conducted several needs assessments that center antiracism, equity, diversity, and inclusion.

UPD was engaged by Summit County to assist with three distinct aspects of the County's Antiracism, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (ADEI) agenda: assessing where each of its agencies needs improvement on ADEI outcomes; strategizing the priority, high-leverage changes the agencies and the County as a whole need to make to improve those ADEI outcomes; and developing action plans for managing the fidelity of



implementation of the recommended ADEI strategies. As information and data were discovered by the consulting team and processed with the SRC, the scope and focus of this project shifted to accommodate a deeper dive in assessing internal operations (e.g., human capital and resource allocation) with the understanding that a similar level of focus on the external-facing programs and outcomes (e.g., housing, criminal justice, education) will occur at a later stage in the County's ADEI journey. The rationale behind this approach was twofold. First, the County is a major employer itself with the ability to directly impact the lives of thousands of employees and their families by improving operational practices. And second, in the County's effort to move the region's employers and service providers to improve their practices and ADEI outcomes—organizations not directly accountable to the County Administration—it is imperative that the County demonstrates publicly that it is getting its own house in order as well. These decisions were informed and made in conjunction with the SRC and the project champions.

In assessing organizations and helping Summit County prepare for and implement the work ahead, UPD is intentional in considering all aspects of the equity ecosystem. Through the assessment process, we seek to understand four key components: **Community** (how inclusive the organization is), **Commitment** (the values an organization believes and stands for), **Culture** (the actions it prioritizes), and **Climate** (the outcomes it achieves, regardless of what it says and does). All of these exist within, and are influenced by, societal systems that advantage some while disadvantaging others.



UPD's 4C Equity Implementation Framework

"What we do is more important than what we say we believe." —bell hooks

This assessment addresses several critical questions to guide Summit County in its equity journey including:

- To what extent are County leaders and staff able to identify inequitable policies and practices?
- To what extent has the County examined the effect of systemic inequities over time?
- To what extent does the County know and understand where it is in the change process and how best to move across the Continuum to Becoming an Anti-Racist, Multicultural Institution?¹

¹ Continuum on Becoming an Anti-Racist Multicultural Organization. Adapted from original concept by

UPD CONSULTING

To unpack the critical questions above, we have analyzed the existing practices and policies, lived experiences of staff, and county assets across the four focus areas of the UPD Equity Implementation Framework:

4C Focus Area	Key Questions
Community	 Who has power, influence, and authority? Who doesn't? Whose voices are included? Whose are ignored or silenced? Who makes decisions and by what process (both formally and informally)?
Commitment	 What equity beliefs and values do we stand for? What written commitments have we made to antiracism in our mission, vision, policies, and official communications?
Culture	 Does what we do align with what we say we believe? Is it consistent across our organization? What initiatives have we prioritized with our spending and actions?
Climate	 What disparities and harm exist as a result of our actions or inactions? How do stakeholders of various groups experience the county differently?

The answers to these questions provide key insights about the County's readiness for the difficult and rewarding process of addressing the elements of structural and institutional racism, inequity, othering, and injustice to improve the outcomes and experiences for *all* Summit County residents. Ultimately, the findings and recommendations from this equity assessment are intended to inform the development of an equity plan and implementation priorities.

Methodology

Data Analysis

Analysis of both quantitative and qualitative data provided the information needed to understand the culture, structures, systems, resources, and stakeholders that relate and lead to equitable and inequitable practices and outcomes at Summit County.

Summit County staff and stakeholders provided our team with data related to the critical categories of human resources, procurement, and budgeting. To the extent possible, UPD disaggregated staff-related data by race and ethnicity, gender, management level, and department. To protect the identity of staff, display of the data was suppressed when there were fewer than five individuals represented in the group. Our team conducted analysis to understand whether there were differences across departments and agencies and populations of staff. To gain additional context, we conducted a staff survey focused on power and decision making as well as opportunities and barriers to diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Bailey Jackson and Rita Hardiman, and further developed by Andrea Avazian and Ronice Branding; further adapted by Melia LaCour, PSESD. https://philanos.org/resources/Documents/Conference%202020/Pre-Read%20PDFs/Continuum_AntiRacist.pdf



Highlights from survey participation:

- 827 County staff completed the survey
- Responses from 100 percent of departments and agencies
- The responses were representative of the racial and ethnic populations and management levels across the county

The quantitative data were complemented by the qualitative data collected through interviews, focus groups, and review of key documents as requested. The qualitative data provided important information about the context of Summit County internal operations and the experiences that might not be reflected in the quantitative data.

Data and initial insights were shared with the SRC and project champions, who provided insights, direction, and feedback throughout the assessment process.

Qualitative Analysis

Interviews and focus groups were conducted with Staff of Color (2 sessions), Contractors and External Partners (8 sessions), Directors and Human Resources, Procurement, and Budget Leaders (5 sessions), Middle Managers (2 sessions), and General Staff (3 sessions). Beyond asking participants about their experience working for Summit County government, these sessions were designed to:

- Examine how leaders systematically conduct their internal operations around human capital and resource allocation procedures (e.g., budgeting and procurement) to serve Summit County's residents and staff of color
- Reveal factors that inhibit or enhance equitable experiences of the County's operational functions by employees
- Provide a safe space to have conversations about antiracism, diversity, equity, and inclusion

In total, we spoke with more than 70 individuals across 20 interviews and focus group sessions. Interview, focus group and survey questions are included in the Appendix. Examples of questions asked to stakeholders are listed below:

- What is your perception of Summit County's commitment to creating and maintaining a diverse, equitable, and inclusive workplace? What does this look like in your department?
- How are information and data related to human resources, budget, and procurement collected, analyzed, and communicated to staff across the county?
- What practices or procedures are critical to address for the County to improve ADEI in the County's internal operations in human resources, budget, or procurement?

Our focus group process involved transcript-style note taking. In our analysis, we not only identified where most participants expressed similar experiences and ideas, but also highlighted outliers to provide richer context to our ultimate findings and recommendations. Where appropriate, direct quotes from stakeholder participants were mined and anonymized in order to capture and elevate the multitude of voices.

UPD conducted a review of more than 50 key documents to build an understanding of Summit County's practices and efforts that 1) are aligned with addressing RAPHC and 2) promote an equitable and inclusive Summit County workforce. Documents requested and reviewed fell into four categories:

- 1. **Strategic Planning:** Strategic plans for all departments, and an analysis of any departmental priorities with a direct relation to promoting equity for residents.
- 2. Data and Reports Concerning County ADEI and Racial Equity Focused Work in Summit County: Summit County plans, progress reports, lessons learned around implementation of ADEI goals and/or strategies, and previous consulting reports.² UPD also examined past surveys of community residents measuring perceived levels of importance that ADEI should play in the County's operations (e.g., human capital and resource allocation procedures).³ Additional examples of these documents include the 2017 Summit County Community Health Improvement Plan, Elevate Greater Akron 2.0 plan, Ohio Minority Health Strikeforce Blueprint Report, and the More Work to Do: Promoting Racial Equity in Summit County report.
- 3. **Human Resources:** Organizational charts and human resources policies and procedures related to hiring, training, retention, promotion and other areas related to the county's impact and procedures around human capital.
- 4. **Resource Allocation and Budgeting Procedures:** County Government materials related to its process for funding and incentivizing departments and programs to make progress towards incorporating an equity framework into their fiscal activities (e.g., hiring, promotion, career development, resource allocation, and procurement processes).

Findings

The Continuum on Becoming an Anti-Racist Multicultural Organization describes the six phases of becoming an anti-racist multicultural organization. Consideration of the Continuum helps to give organizations an understanding of where they are and where they have the potential to go. Based on the assessment's findings across the 4C's (Community, Commitment, Culture, Climate), Summit County demonstrates elements of both **Symbolic** and **Identity Change** on its way to becoming a transforming institution by addressing **Structural Change** with the ultimate goal of becoming a **Fully Inclusive Anti-Racist Multicultural Organization in a Transformed Society**. The table below highlights components of the Symbolic, Identity, and Structural Change phases that aligned with the 4C Equity Implementation Framework. The crosswalk of these two frameworks is reflected throughout the subsections of the Findings section of the report.

² The County engaged LNM Consulting in 2020 to interview leadership about culture and opportunities related to advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion within and across Summit County agencies and departments. The work paused in 2020.

³ The County engages the Center for Marketing & Opinion Research LLC (CMOR) to conduct an annual survey of residents to understand residents' perceptions of the county and the importance of funding Summit County issues. This survey was a critical document that informed our insights to the <u>programmatic pillars</u> of the RAPHC declaration.



The Continuum on Becoming an Antiracist Multicultural Organization and 4C Focus Areas

	Symbolic Change Compliance	Identity Change Affirming	Structural Change Transforming
COMMUNITY	 "Open doors" to People of Color 	 Actively recruits and promotes underrepresented groups Begins to develop accountability to racially oppressed communities 	 Ensures full participation of People of Color, including their worldview, culture and lifestyles Builds clear lines of accountability to racially oppressed communities
COMMITMENT	 Unaware of continuing patterns of privilege, paternalism and control Makes some official equity policies 	 Develops intentional "antiracist" identity Acknowledges institutionalized white power and privilege 	 Intentional institutional restructuring, based upon anti-racist analysis and identity Commits to struggle to dismantle racism in the wider community
CULTURE	 Minimal change in culture, policies, and decision making Expanding view of diversity includes other socially oppressed groups 	 Develops analysis of systemic racism Sponsors antiracism training 	 Redefines and rebuilds all relationships and activities, based on antiracist commitments Implements structures, policies and practices with inclusive decision making and other forms of power sharing on all levels of the institutions
CLIMATE	 Excludes "those who make waves" Token placements in staff positions: must assimilate into organizational culture 	 Institutional structures and culture that maintain white power and privilege still intact and relatively untouched 	 Antiracist multicultural diversity becomes an institutionalized asset

While we recognize several promising practices across the County and its departments and agencies as well as the opportunities for growth towards structural change, deeply embedding policies and practices in county government operations that enable all residents of Summit County to thrive will take significant time to implement with fidelity.



Our findings are organized by each focus area of the 4C Equity Implementation Framework: community, commitment, culture, and climate. For each focus area we have included **promising practices** (e.g., current actions that should be continued and expanded to build a more equitable Summit County) and **areas of opportunity** (e.g., current actions that should be revisited and modified to build a more equitable Summit County).

Focus Area: Community

KEY QUESTIONS

Who has power, influence, and authority? Who doesn't? Whose voices are included? Whose are ignored or silenced? Who makes decisions and by what process (both formally and informally)?

PROMISING PRACTICES

Current practices that support sharing power among a diverse group of stakeholders that reflects the Summit County community's demographics and needs include:

- The County offers fee and tuition reimbursement for employment-related undergraduate courses/programs for full time employees, allowing for pathways to continuing education and advancement.
- Building foundational accountability and engagement structures such as the SRC and Executive's Council on Diversity and Inclusion.
- Leveraging the Minority Contractor Capital Access Program (MCCAP) and interest-free capital loans to support minority businesses.
- Providing opportunities for aspiring and accepted vendors to ask questions and get feedback during the process of responding to RFPs.
- Implementing requirements that all non-bargaining classified positions be posted for at least three days and that postings must include minimum salary and/or hourly rate and whether a background check examination, or drug or alcohol screening is required.
- Initial brainstorming of opportunities to improve recruitment such as developing partnerships with training entities (e.g. CDL programs), building pipelines through local universities, making the County more attractive to high schoolers and college students, and exploring pathways to redemption for returning residents to join the County workforce.

AREAS OF OPPORTUNITY

FINDING 1.1

As it pertains to the extent to which underrepresented groups can hold the county accountable, **power, influence, and authority is disproportionately distributed** in the representation of diverse leadership and limited, and often one-sided communication to staff.

Compared to current County demographics, where 22 percent of Summit County's residents are non-white, people of color are underrepresented in approximately 70 percent of the County's 27 departments and agencies which limits opportunities for representation of lived experiences of people of



color in implementation and management of County work that impacts diverse communities.⁴ The visualization below focuses on employee representation by race/ethnicity based on the available demographic data. Each of the columns represents a group of Summit County departments or agencies by the authority they are classified under and the primary bars represent the percent of total employees of color. Underneath each column heading you can find the total number of employees in each authority group. The leaders of color benchmark represents the estimated percentage of leaders within each authority group.⁵ The Summit County non-white population benchmark represents the total percentage of non-white residents within the County.

All Summit County Staff	Administrative Authority	Judicial Authority	Quasi-Independent Agencies
Total Employees: 2713	Total Employees: 1601	Total Employees: 374	Total Employees: 725
Staff of Color 21%	Staff of Color 20%	Staff of Color 25%	Staff of Color 19%
Summit County Non-White Population: 22%			
Leaders of Color: 14%	Leaders of Color: 17%	Leaders of Color: 17%	
			Leaders of Color: 9%

One of the biggest takeaways is that Quasi-Independent Agencies had the least continuity in structure, titles, etc., and also some of the lowest estimated percentages of Leaders of Color within departments. The Judicial Authority stood out for being above the county benchmark for representation of People of Color and one of the highest percentage of leaders of color but caveated by having fewer total employees than the other department groups.

Similarly, tactical communication channels support distribution of information but more structured processes for staff engagement are needed to ensure consistent solicitation and use of staff input. Focus group participants highlighted technology such as Microsoft Teams, email, news releases and staff meetings as mechanisms for sharing information with staff. Regarding collecting input from staff, some departments/agencies have used surveys, team meetings, anonymous suggestion boxes or policy review and comment periods to gather input on topics such as employee wellbeing, returning to the office, departmental activities, or proposed policies.

A number of focus group participants noted that the RAPHC Assessment was one of the first times, if not the first time, that they were asked for their feedback. This was noted by bargaining and non-bargaining staff and people not in senior roles. While some members of upper management offer open door policies to staff, trust must be established (or reestablished) and reinforced for all staff to feel confident in using

⁴ Summit County Workforce Demographic Data provided by Summit County Human Resources (2021), Summit County Population Data provided by Census Bureau's American Community Survey (2019 5-year estimates)

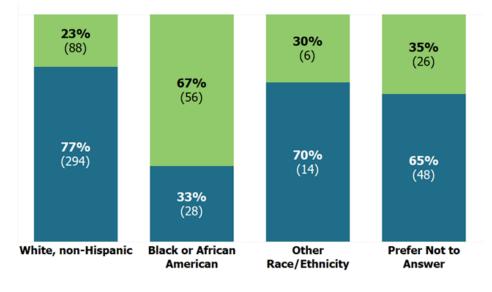
⁵ ** Leaders were selected based on their title, so the estimate may be slightly different depending on actual leadership roles and title differences across departments. **



the policy without concern of consequences and retaliation. Contractors we engaged noted that there are informal ways (e.g., frequent communication, lessons learned conversations) of providing feedback to the County entities with which they work.

While conversations with individual employees provide anecdotal data about employees' perceptions of organizational culture, a **more consistent and structured approach to gathering, analyzing and acting on staff feedback** will allow County agencies to identify trends among groups of employees, see and act on areas for replication and improvement within and across agencies. Opportunities to explore include stay interviews and exit interviews, pulse and/or annual surveys, and strategic discussions and action planning around organizational culture and employee engagement and experience.

When asked if perspectives of racially diverse employees of all levels are included in the decision making at Summit County, disportionately more Black respondents indicated that staff of color's perspectives are not used in Summit County decision making (n=560).



Q9) Perspectives of racially diverse employees of all levels are included in the decision making at Summit County

Legend Disagree/Strongly Disagree Agree/Strongly Agree

To bridge the gap between this question and what factors could be leading to these answers, we used focus groups. From those focus groups we heard:

- Lack of Transparency:
 - "We are a large department, so we follow a chain of command and use hierarchical language when making decisions. The higher-ups make the policy and we just follow the instructions."
- Inconsistent Engagement:

- "A couple of years ago, we had department representatives meet with our deputy manager to express employee concerns to higher-ups. That has stopped because of COVID."
- "I don't feel valued as an employee. I don't feel my input is appreciated."
- Fear of Retaliation:
 - "You aren't going to get an accurate response [from staff] because of fear of repercussions and [uncertainty about] if things are really going to change."

FINDING 1.2

As it pertains to the extent of full participation from staff of color and contractors, **systemic** gatekeeping limits opportunities for employment, advancement, and contracts due to lack of transparency and accessibility.

How positions are posted internally and made known to current staff is inconsistent. Some agencies and departments notify all staff of open positions in the department but staff in other agencies are not aware of when new positions are available. The UPD team heard several anecdotes about tenured staff having the qualifications and meeting requirements for higher-level jobs but being discouraged by consistently seeing the positions going to less tenured, and sometimes less qualified, white staff. It is promising that some offices are aware of and acting on the need for intentional and consistent succession planning; however, equitable succession planning will require ensuring clear and transparent communication, development of staff at all levels and of all backgrounds, and consideration of all internal staff who meet with qualifications of leadership positions that will become available.

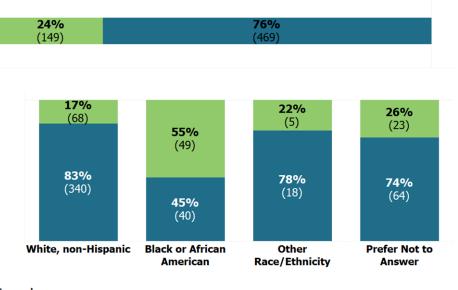
More **robust** and **broad recruitment efforts** are needed to diversify the Summit County staff and procurement pipeline by ensuring that applications are accessible to all candidates and that requirements do not pose unnecessary barriers to entry. Contributing factors identified include limited application pool that results from public perception of public sector employment/need to address stigmas associated with the professions in county government, barriers to entry for employees and contractors, lack of data, and challenges recruiting immigrant residents who are interested in and qualify for position with the County.

Broad access to the postings and positions may be limited by external factors such as connectivity and state and federal requirements. Externally, all job applications must be submitted online. However, nearly 13 percent of households in the Census tracts in the County lack internet access. The lack of internet varies by household income—3.8 percent of households with \$75,000 or more in annual income lack internet access while 26.4 percent of households with less than \$20,000 lack access. Some departments have tried to increase the span of their searches by posting to sites focused on candidates of color, leaving positions open for longer periods of time, reexamining requirements, and allowing experience equivalents in place of education requirements. Despite these changes, recruitment and attraction is still a struggle.

Similarly, while there are efforts underway to improve diversity among the County's contractors, **contracting and procurement can be made more accessible through changes in current processes and policies**. Programs such as MCCAP provide support for businesses to access the current system but these programs do not make any changes to the existing processes. Though the County is planning to provide additional training opportunities to educate businesses and contractors about preparing for the process, the County contracting process is cumbersome and sometimes inaccessible to contractors.

During COVID, the County was introduced to several new businesses, particularly those that responded to the county and federal relief efforts, allowing the County to begin to better understand the landscape of minority owned businesses. The volume of engagement was significant enough to warrant having a staff person give additional focus to engagement with minority owned businesses. To support improvements that make the County's contracting and procurement processes more equitable, they can leverage the opportunity to **dedicate staff time,—whether through roles such as the Business Relations Specialist or an intern—to follow up with businesses** in the County's inventory to gather information on whether they are a minority owned and operated business and feedback about needs and experiences going through the County's processes. Improving this process will improve the County's ability to develop and attract more certified contractors, particularly those of color.

While different areas of the County have started to identify ways to attract, recruit, and hire a diverse pool of candidates and employees, implementation varies across agencies. It is also important to consider that hiring a diverse workforce is the first step; the staff must then be retained. When asked if the leadership of Summit County creates environments that attract and retain employees of diverse backgrounds, 76 percent of overall respondents agreed or strongly agreed. However, **agreement was significantly lower among Black staff**, 45 percent of whom agreed or strongly agreed.



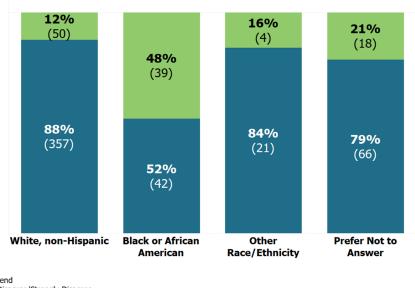
Q6) The leadership of Summit County creates environments that attract and retain employees of diverse backgrounds

Legend
Disagree/Strongly Disagree
Agree/Strongly Agree

As it relates to retention, the **performance review process does not consistently yield actionable feedback that positively influences employees' experiences and is not conducive to identifying opportunities for growth and development**. Leadership identified a need to revisit the performance review process. Policy states that all employees are required to have annual (semiannual for probationary employees) performance evaluations. While some agencies conduct these reviews with fidelity, some staff and supervisors expressed that the purpose was unclear or that the reviews were of a "check the box" action rather than a development tool.



When asked if opportunities for career advancement are accessible to employees of diverse backgrounds, **most staff believe that advancement opportunities are accessible but agreement is lower among Black staff** (n=597).



Q12) Opportunities for career advancement are accessible to employees of diverse backgrounds

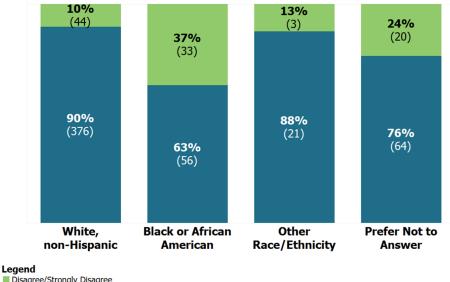
Legend Disagree/Strongly Disagree Agree/Strongly Agree

Some quotes from focus group participants provide additional context to the survey responses:

- "I don't want to apply for different positions. I've only experienced lateral career advancements, even though I score well on assessments. It's disheartening."
- "Performance evaluations are opportunities to tell us staff what they need to do better. It's really a check the box requirement."

When asked if Summit County equitably offers professional development opportunities to all employees regardless of race, gender, or position (e.g., entry, mid-level, executive), **most staff believe that professional development opportunities are accessible but agreement is lower among Black staff** (n=617).





Q13) Summit County equitably offers professional development opportunities to all employees regardless of race, gender, or position (e.g. entry, mid-level, executive)

Disagree/Strongly Disagree
 Agree/Strongly Agree

Additionally, reasons for disciplinary action are outlined in the ordinance, and employees are allowed pre-disciplinary conferences. The hearings are a promising practice that supports providing an opportunity for supervisors to understand employees' needs and circumstances that are contributing factors to the disciplinary action. However, **leaders noted that disciplinary actions are delivered inequitably and inconsistently**. There is anecdotal evidence that staff of color are disciplined at higher rates than their white counterparts.

Focus Area: Commitment

KEY QUESTIONS

What equity beliefs and values do we stand for? What written commitments have we made to antiracism in our mission, vision, policies, and official communications?

PROMISING PRACTICES

Current practices reflect an emerging defined, documented, and embodied set of beliefs and standards related the antiracism include:

- Growing awareness and understanding of the need to constantly work toward improving antiacism, diversity, equity and inclusion among staff and in practices as a way to ensure the best service possible to Summit County residents as evidenced by some departments' inclusion of equity as part of their values.
- Previously engaging county agency leaders in listening sessions to prepare for this work; there was general support for the direction to move toward development of a clear mission, vision and

values. This buy-in will continue to be critical as these guiding components are developed and operationalized throughout the County.

- Developing and implementing Human Resource policies requiring all executive employees to complete ADEI training and anti-harassment training every year, a practice intended to build shared understanding and improve organizational culture and help staff better serve residents.
- Conducting ADEI training among staff and leadership (e.g., Groundwater training) and laying the groundwork to begin the development of a new mission, vision and values grounded within an inclusive and equitable framework.
- Defining and implementing anti-discrimination/anti-harssment complaint policies and procedures, equal opportunity policies, and disability accommodations.⁶

AREAS OF OPPORTUNITY

FINDING 2.1

A lack of Summit County's clear vision and commitment to antiracism, diversity, equity and inclusion objectives limits shared understanding, implementation, and ownership by Summit County departments and agencies.

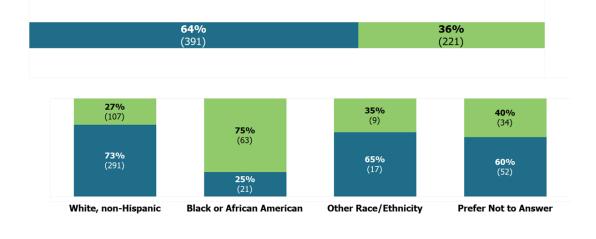
While groundwork is laid to develop a new mission, vision and values grounded within an inclusive and equitable framework, there is currently **limited shared understanding of a cohesive vision and mechanisms for implementation and accountability**.⁷ There is not a codified vision, action plan, and mechanism for data collection, sharing, and accountability related to diversity, equity, and inclusion in the county's staff and practices.

When asked if Summit County has a clear and shared vision for addressing racism and promoting equity among its residents, disportionately more Black respondents do not agree (n=594). In the aggregate over half of the survey respondents (64 percent) indicated that they agreed or strongly agreed that Summit County has a clear and shared vision for addressing racism and promoting equity among its employees. After disaggregation, we see that respondents' answers vary by race. The largest difference is among Black and white employees, with 25 percent of Black respondents indicating that they agree the county has a clear and shared vision for addressing racism and promoting equity among its employees.

⁶ Unlawful harassment is defined as applying to "repeated verbal abuse, circulation of written material that demean or exhibits hostility or dislike toward an individual or group (race, color, age, religion, national origin, ancestry, veteran status, sex, sexual orietnation, gender identity or expressions, disability, marital status, pregnancy, citizenship, or any other characteristic protected by applicable law)."

⁷ Summit County - DEI Leadership Interviews Report - November 2020; LNM Consulting





Q2) Summit County has a clear and shared vision for addressing racism and promoting equity among its residents

Legend Disagree/Strongly Disagree Agree/Strongly Agree

Though there are stated intentions—and corresponding actions—to support minority businesses in the County, there are currently **no specific goals related to equity in procurement**. Note that goals are not quotas. An area of opportunity includes deciding on County priorities and implementing practices that ensure that define the impact desired for contracts with minority owned businesses (e.g., firms owned by disadvantaged minorities, firms with a certain percentage of disadvantaged minority staff).

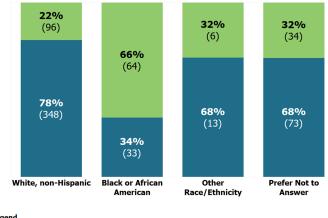
FINDING 2.2

Awareness, understanding and trust of internal practices aligned with advancing ADEI varies drastically among staff across racial groups.

Variation in communication about and consistent widespread implementation of changes to improve diversity, equity and inclusion has led to differing levels of awareness and trust in the commitment to and viability of ADEI efforts. Staff at different levels of the organization view past and present ADEI efforts differently. While staff in upper management have a stronger belief that the County is committed to ADEI internally, there is room for improvement in communicating the purpose and progress of the changes to staff at all levels. Some staff believe that the County and its departments are committed but others—often staff who have been at the County for longer periods of time—note that seeing similar initiatives start and stop several times erodes trust in the County's ability to effectively develop, implement and sustain changes in a way that yields action and results.

When asked if Summit County government as a whole takes action to identify, acknowledge and address causes of inequities, agreement varied among staff by race/ethnicity (n=675).





Q3) Summit County government as a whole takes action to identify, acknowledge and address causes of inequities

Legend Disagree/Strongly Disagree Agree/Strongly Agree

To bridge the gap between these questions and what factors could be leading to these answers, we used focus groups. From those focus groups we heard:

- Unsustained implementation of initiatives and changes to support ADEI contribute to mistrust in the efficacy and intent of the efforts:
 - "I think that the county is committed to ADEI, but I don't think that much has been implemented to make that happen."
 - "Staff are waiting and seeing if we are going to change the talk into real changes in their jobs."
 - "The idea sounds nice but the actions and what it takes to put something in place continuously and see outcomes and really invest...I don't think they know how to do that."
 - "I worry that it's popular to talk about diversity efforts, but how much effort is going into really transforming culture to be inclusive?"
 - "Every couple of years I have a conversation with another consultant about a new great plan which never happens. I can't tell you what the current plan is and what the plan is moving forward."
- Lack of unity and collaboration across departments and agencies:
 - "I haven't seen any step toward making sure that everything is on one accord."
 - "I don't think the agencies, divisions, and different offices see themselves as one entity."

Though public hearings are an established structure and process, there is still a **need for more public information and education about the Summit County government** on topics including its purpose, structure, value as a workplace, and efforts to be community-centered. Build on current efforts such as the development of a community engagement framework to ensure that all aspects of the County are understandable, both to current staff and residents and partners who are looking to become involved with County operations.



Focus Area: Culture

KEY QUESTIONS

Does what we do align with what we say we believe? Is it consistent across our organization? What initiatives have we prioritized with our spending and actions?

PROMISING PRACTICES

Current practices that reflect actions aligned with the County's implicitly and explicitly stated interests in and commitments to antiracism, diversity, equity, and inclusion include:

- Starting actionable discussions and efforts around diversity, equity and inclusion as demonstrated by the work of SRC, department-specific DE committees, and staff participation in ADEI trainings.
- Ensuring the County is building internal capacity to carry ADEI work into the future.
- Use of resources such as time and funding for efforts such as ongoing work of ADEI Committees across some county agencies (though siloed).

AREAS OF OPPORTUNITY

FINDING 3.1

ADEI initiatives within Summit County government lack clear ownership to ensure continuity, have limited collaboration across departments, and are constrained by laws and regulations dictating the locus of control vs. influence (e.g., department, county, state, federal).

Several County staff and agencies understand the need to improve diversity and inclusion among staff; however, efforts are inconsistent and there are **limited plans and structures for longevity**. Past work includes creation of the Executive's Council on Diversity and Inclusion, an ADEI strategy for Summit County workforce and leadership, inclusion of diversity and anti-harassment training as part of the mandatory employee training for all Summit County employees, funds for the <u>MCCAP</u>, partnership with the Greater Akron Chamber on the <u>Inclusion Marketplace</u>, expansion of the Social Services Advisory Board to address several topics related to social determinants of health, development of the Summit County Sheriff Hiring Scholarship and Recruiting Program to increase diversity on Sheriff's staff, and improvements in diversity of appointments to county boards and commissions.

There is **limited collaboration across departments/agencies regarding individual diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives**. A number of departments have current or recent ADEI-related committees or initiatives. Increasing communication across departments on these initiatives and strategic changes presents an opportunity for teams to share objectives, strategies, challenges, successes and lessons learned and potentially take quicker and more effective action in improving ADEI in their department. Some training is available related to ADEI but it is not consistent across all departments. The topic for 2019-2020 was understanding generations in the workplace. Staff have noted that the County does have mandatory diversity training every two years which has been helpful, but could be more intense. There is an opportunity for additional training on unconscious and conscious bias in the hiring process.

Due to the structure of the Summit County government, there are and will be challenges with ensuring accountability of countywide strategies and initiatives unless there is intentional buy-in and action from all aspects of government. There needs to be additional emphasis on the purpose of the county



government and all of its parts, the need to ensure that all departments are model employers, and that the focus is on serving the needs of county residents, including their staff. For example, the actions of the Executive Office may influence but do not determine the actions of the Courts and vice versa; however, a cohesive and collaborative strategy is needed to ensure that effective practices are shared and implemented across the different bodies that are serving and employing a shared set of Summit County residents.

From focus groups we heard:

- "I worry that it's popular to talk about diversity efforts, but how much effort is going into really transforming culture to be inclusive?"
- "The idea sounds nice but the actions and what it takes to put something in place continuously and see outcomes and really invest...I don't think they know how to do that."

There are currently **no requirements for practices that ensure a sustained application of an equity lens in resource allocation**. Examples of such practices include racial equity impact assessments, participatory budgeting or explicit connection of budget requests to equity goals. When considering the resources that are allocated to efforts that are specifically focused on advancing equity, there are examples of specific County practices that allow for staff time to be spent in exploring opportunities. An example is staff participation in the SRC and focus groups associated with this assessment and in ADEI Committees. In the general budget process, agencies are permitted to request the County Council's approval of proposed adjustments to approved budgets for initiatives such as the Upward Mobility work, the RAPHC assessment, and initiatives that agencies believe will better support the needs of residents, their key stakeholders. When considering these adjustments, the County should explore whether the opportunity for adjustments is made known to all departments and review data about what adjustments have been requested, approved, and denied to better understand if resources are continuing to go to equity-focused change.

FINDING 3.2

Our analysis was limited in many ways due to the lack of **robust data collection**, data disaggregation by key demographic categories, and analysis practices to promote sustainability of equitable practices.

While different County departments are aligned with implementing practices around making equity-driven improvements, there remains a need for more robust data collection and analysis to support a consistent and informed understanding of progress and challenges in advancing equitable practices.

The County is not required to collect demographic data about its staff and applicant pool. Demographic data collection practices vary across departments and agencies and are not **consistently collected or reviewed to inform progress towards any ADEI metrics or objectives.** Summit County is in the process of acquiring and rolling out a new human resources information system that will support better data collection but consistent demographic data is currently limited. Data on complaints is not consistently tracked and there is acknowledgement that it will be beneficial to review current and historical data on complaints and grievances.

Earlier we talked about the need for improvement in solicitation of and avenues for staff input, a form of qualitative data. In addition to qualitative data, quantitative data supports our ability to know that we are

UPD CONSULTING

doing what we said we'd do, whether we're doing it well, and where we can improve. When we consider data collection related to human resources, we often look for consistent collection and analysis of data about employee engagement and morale, employee evaluation/performance review, complaints and grievances, employee exits. For procurement, we look for data such as number and size of contracts awarded to minority-owned, women-owned and small businesses, diversity of contractor applicant pools, and application to award conversion rates by vendor type. Having such data and consistently analyzing it not only allows insight into progress toward the organization's goals but also trends that are made visible through disaggregation of data during analyses. A culture that has robust data collection and analysis demonstrates a level of willingness to continuously learn about opportunities to expand effective practices or make improvements. Some of the current data limitations include, but are not limited to:

- Desire for consistency across agencies in collection of staff demographic data (e.g. education level, sexual orientation, veteran status)
- Current exploration of methods to collect accurate demographic data for hiring, turnover, promotion, termination
- Limited staff engagement data available for disaggregable analysis to determine presence of trends in experience, reasons for exit, etc.
- Limited information about type of vendor (e.g. Minority- or Women-Owned Business or Enterprise (MWBE) status)
- No reporting on spending on identified County priorities

From focus groups we heard:

- "I don't have any place to go to see what the [demographic] makeup of my department is."
- "Summit County needs a system that shows spending by vendor and demographics. Hopefully when we set up a new system, we will have codes that tell us what type of business it is."

Focus Area: Climate

KEY QUESTIONS

What disparities and harm exist as a result of our actions or inactions? How do stakeholders of various groups experience the county differently?

PROMISING PRACTICES

Current practices that support institutionalizing practices that seek to understand and limit disparities among stakeholders include:

- Offering employment opportunities that provide job security and stabilizing compensation packages.
- Exploring ways, such as open comment periods of policies or participation in staff engagement actions such as the focus groups of this project, to consistently gather staff input for better understanding of experiences.
- ADEI training offered by some agencies/departments.

AREAS OF OPPORTUNITY

FINDING 4.1

There is compelling evidence that shows **employee experiences vary across departments and racial ethnic groups but many see compelling incentives of being a County employee** that supersede racial equity concerns.

As a reminder, this assessment focused on the internal aspects of Summit County operations in an effort to identify opportunities for the County to continue to build itself as a model employer that demonstrates what it looks like to embody the values of antriacsim, diversity, equity and inclusion. The structures and practices influence everything from the personal and professional experiences of staff, the makeup of experiences represented among the people who make decisions about and carry out the work of providing services to residents, and the ability to bring in and retain people who work to either uphold or dismantle institutional racism. As evidenced in the survey results shared throughout this report, **employee experiences vary across departments and groups with notable differences in the experiences and thoughts between Black staff and non-Black staff.**

Most staff who participated in the survey would recommend the County as a place to work. In response to "On a scale of 0-10, how likely are you to recommend Summit County as an employer to your friends or family?":

- 75 percent of responding staff provided a rating of 7-10
 - 83 percent among white respondents
 - o 60 percent among Black respondents and multiracial respondents
- Staff who gave ratings of 6 or less mentioned low pay, entry based on relationships, limited opportunities for advancement, and disconnect with upper management as reasons for their ratings.
- Staff who gave ratings of 7-10 mentioned competitive benefits and positive work environment, fair wages that could be higher in some cases, positive work environment, job security.

In the survey, staff were able to provide additional context around the rating they selected. A few of the most thematic responses are included below with their respective rating:

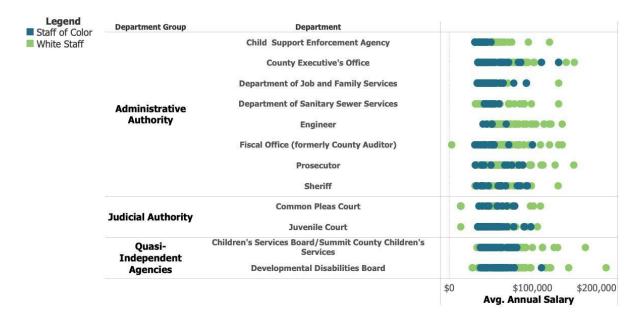
- "We have great leadership and opportunity. We need more training!! I would love to see a more diverse background of employees in all Summit County Offices." (rating: 10)
- "Good working environment; supported by my leadership; work makes a difference; healthcare, retirement, and paid leave benefits are excellent." (rating: 9)
- "The work is challenging, hours are good, teamwork is good, but the pay could be better and there is much favoritism." (rating: 6)
- "I have over the years tried to bring matters of injustice to the attention of leadership, facts, evidence, etc, to no avail. Managers with no vision or expertise and culturally inept continue to thrive." (rating: 4)

FINDING 4.2

Staff of color fall within a tighter salary range, with notably less representation among higher salary levels. Staff at higher ends of the salary ranges are typically more senior staff. Some of the roles require certain levels of education (e.g., Chief Medical Examiner) while others are more related to experience.

UPD CONSULTING

While the average salary across racial groups does not significantly vary, staff of color have salaries within a small range and are notably less represented in the higher salary bands. Directors believe that pay and compensation is an area of improvement. There are some cases across the county where supervisors are paid less than their staff. Focus group participants noted this was sometimes an unintended result of targeted recruiting initiatives to increase diversity, exclusive promotion practices, and issues related to nepotism practices from several years prior.



Salary Distribution for Top 12 Departments with 50+ Staff with Highest Variation

Recommendations

In digesting the information in this report and deciding how and when to move forward with the findings and recommendations, we strongly encourage Summit County representatives to take an intentional and strategic approach to the critical change management work ahead. Awareness of promising practices and areas of opportunities, and desire to take action that advances the County—both its agencies and residents—must be coupled with a willingness and ability to recognize when the County is approaching an "equity detour," a way of being that unintentionally or intentionally perpetuates white supremacist culture and is counter to the County's desire to dismantle racism and its effects.⁸ Here are a few things to keep in mind:

• Addressing racism and its effects requires changes that are adaptive, that address complex challenges that sometimes do not have an obvious solution. Rushing to technical changes, or changes that are made in response to clearly defined issues, increases the risk of feeling that the work of addressing changes is "done" and can lead to a checklist mentality. Choosing to focus solely on quick technical changes that solve an immediate need and not take the needed time to

⁸ White Supremacy Culture by Tema Okun



grapple with adaptive challenges that do not have clearly defined solutions reflects a sense of urgency that algins with white supremacist culture and does not align with becoming an organizaton that effectively works to implement transformative change.

- Making decisions and taking action without sharing power with critical stakeholders undermines efforts for progress. Sharing power effectively does not mean seeking only input from a racially diverse group of senior leaders, allocating the change work to a single department, or permitting a single person to do the work. Rather, it means ensuring that the voices, actions, and skills of people across the entire organization, particularly those that will be affected, are actively sought and included in the processes fueling decisions and actions.
- Dismantling racism is not the job of oppressed groups. Placing the tasks of driving and executing • equity-focused work on a single person of color or group of people of color who are already immersed in the day-to-day of the jobs for which they were hired sets the individual(s) and the organization up for burnout and failure. Systemic change requires the buy-in, support, and effort from a diverse group of individuals representing the majority of the organization.
- Change can, and likely will be, uncomfortable at several points in the process. Oftentimes it is more comfortable for people and organizations to confine themselves to conversations, thoughts and actions that preserve people's right to comfort, decrease risk of conflict, or fail to acknowledge that change driven by the pursuit of antiracism and equity is inherently not objective and will come with failure along the way. Without providing space for the discomfort that comes with these processes and changes, an organization allows itself to maintain the status quo, potentially with some "antiracist-lite" window dressing that causes more harm than good.

Many practices referenced in this report reflect the County's demonstrated commitment to create pathways and experiences where all views, beliefs, identities, and cultures are integrated into Summit internal operations. In our assessment of the County using the 4C Equity Implementation Framework, we have identified several practices that could be scaled to better center the voices and perspectives of staff and residents of color, a likely area of priority given the County's current ADEI objectives. It is critical that the County continue to leverage and devote resources to these promising practices to move toward becoming a Fully Inclusive Anti-Racist Multicultural Organization in a Transformed Society. Our recommendations for the County as they move across the continuum and strengthen their internal capability to ultimately address RAPHC are as follows:

- Commit to ongoing, long-term action focused on racial equity
- Institutionalize equity capacity
- Leverage interagency collaboration toward a shared RAPHC vision
- Increase data capacity for transparency and accountability

Commit to ongoing, long-term action focused on racial equity

Without a clear and collective vision toward the future—a "north star"—systemic and structural change can be nearly impossible to achieve. The findings in this report point to opportunities to dismantle systemic racism by addressing mindsets, policies, and procedures related to human resources, budgeting, and procurement that may or may not be outside of the locus of control of the Summit County Executive, but is within its sphere of influence. By addressing internal operations first, the County will set the foundation to manage and effect the County's programmatic impact on racism and serve as a model to agencies outside of the County's locus of control for how to effectively address RAPHC.



A critical first step in becoming an organization that is intentionally using its newfound antiracist analysis and identity for change is to **clearly define action steps and metrics that align to the findings of this report, the goals of the RAPHC declaration, and the stated values of the County**. It is important to identify the highest leverage strategies that move the needle toward structural change, not just identity quotas to meet.

Commitments and planned actions must be grounded in having racial equity as a core value and in a vision that is informed by those who have been most impacted by inequities. This requires the use of a racial equity framework that clearly articulates racial equity, implicit and explicit bias, and individual, institutional, and structural justice. The action steps and metrics should reflect opportunities to ensure the sustainability of the County's internal and external efforts to advance racial equity. Ensuring that any actions are accompanied by plans to clearly define responsibilities for actions' owners and stakeholders, review and assess their associated metrics, define criteria for if or when efforts should stop, continue, or be adjusted. As the County reviews its actions it is important to continue to revisit the purposes and results of its actions, inactions, and counteractions and ensure that they are grounded in the County's values, goals and strategies.

Once defined, communicating the RAPHC declaration, strategic goals, and their implications to Summit County residents, businesses, and fellow agencies in modalities that are most accessible to them should be the next priority. This will help provide transparency, build buy-in, and create an opportunity for public accountability.

The ADEI efforts of the following organizations are great examples that can help inform Summit County's RAPHC work: Akron's inclusive arts strategy, which engaged the community around the intersection of arts and ADEI; Columbus's RAPHC plan, which has some concrete recommendations on how the community could build on this work; and All Hands Raised (Portland, OR), which is excellent at having strong conversations around racism.

Examples of short-term actions that align with this recommendation include:

- Create a communication plan and knowledge management process for the existing RAPHC and to-be-developed values, goals, and action plans with internal staff and contractors across Summit County government agencies
- Continue to make the meetings of the SRC open to the public, but **increase the public's involvement** in the RAPHC work through dedicated roles in Phase 2 (strategy and implementation planning)

Institutionalize equity capacity

In an organization that focuses on structural change, power is distributed in a way that ensures full participation of people of color and builds clear lines of accountability to racially oppressed communities. In order to move the county's racial equity work forward in a sustainable way, the county must **dedicate capacity and ongoing resources to sustaining a team (of more than one person) to lead interagency and community collaboration for systemic change with the authority to drive accountability**. Existing groups such as the SRC and The Executive's Council on Diversity and Inclusion serve as good starting points; however, a more sustainable approach is recommended with a dedicated office and staff to dismantle

systemic barriers by championing the needs and experiences of underrepresented groups in all county internal and external operations.

The office would need to operate in a way that prioritizes co-designing policies and systemic changes with stakeholders and empowers those stakeholders to hold the County accountable through transparent communication and data; building cross-departmental infrastructure that understands various power dynamics and the history of equity work in Summit County, potential allies and opposition; building the County's racial consciousness and capacity to advance equity internally and externally through ADEI training and resources; and ensuring ongoing progress toward the inclusion of representative reflections of Summit County's residents in the processes and decision making associated with essential County functions including within the office itself.

The District of Columbia's <u>Council Office of Racial Equity</u> (CORE) provides a promising model for racial equity leadership and accountability for Summit County to consider.

CORE creates training, tools, and processes for local officials, staff, and the community to intentionally identify and disrupt implicit biases and systemic inequities in policymaking. We collaborate to explore how policies, practices, and procedures under consideration in the District impacts communities of color and if so, partner to identify solutions to mitigate those negative impacts in order to advance more equitable outcomes.

It is our aim to normalize, operationalize, and invest in racial equity to achieve a more just and inclusive society.

This model serves as a check and balance to ensure that the work of the municipality is vetted against a standard set of criteria that prevents harm caused by racial inequities and unconscious bias. It engages the community as a partner in the planning and design process while also creating transparency to help the county maintain focus on its racial equity commitments.

Similarly, the <u>Office of Equity and Racial Justice</u> (OERJ) in San Diego County is a new office UPD and the Othering and Belonging Institute helped set up to build a similar capacity within the County. Their mission is as follows:

- San Diego County's Office of Equity and Racial Justice partners with the community to co-create transformative, enduring, structural and systemic change in San Diego County government.
- We bridge San Diego County departments and community voices to design bold policies and practices to advance equity.
- We champion belonging for all and advocate for people suffering from structural and systemic racism and exclusion.

The motion to create the OERJ was approved by the County's Board of Supervisors on June 23, 2020 (page 36-39) with an tentative budget of \$1.1M to identify and employ a director and three full-time staff members for the new office that report to the County's Human Relations Commission. An important obstacle to the launch of the new office was identifying sources to fund the initiative. The OERJ is now fully staffed and operating to dismantle systemic inequities across the county. More information about funding sources and staffing details can be provided upon request.



Examples of short-term actions that align with this recommendation include:

- **Developing and implementing structured avenues for gathering employee feedback** on topics including employee experience and feedback on agency priorities on an annual basis at minimum
- Applying design justice participation criteria⁹ to identification of internal and external partners in agencies' RAPHC work
- Leverage employee-driven initiatives to expand opportunities for pipeline development and change culture to increase retention of a racially diverse workforce

Leverage interagency collaboration toward a shared RAPHC vision

Through this assessment process and current racial equity initiatives, the County has begun to build a shared lexicon around racial equity and create a safe space for crucial conversations where people can be heard and understand others' viewpoints. This is a positive first step toward establishing a culture of trust and open mindness that will build "buy-in" with key stakeholders, but the dismantling of systemic barriers will require continued collaboration and strong strategic partnership.

There are several opportunities to **expand interagency and cross-sector partnerships that support addressing RAPHC.** Potential partners for collaboration on and funding of equity initiatives within the County include the City of Akron and other government, non-profit, and business partners. Several recent and current initiatives related to addressing inequity at the city (specifically Akron), county (Summit), and state (Ohio) levels are aligned with the goals of the RAPHC declaration, but there is no intentional partnership with existing assets and initiatives within the county. For example, the 2017 County Health Improvement Plan intentionally identifies areas of alignment with the State Health Improvement Plan; the City of Akron's Racial Equity Task Force is not explicitly connected to the County's efforts. Other examples include Ohio Minority Health Strike Task Force, Summit County Public Health strategic plan and annual report, Summit County Community Health Improvement Plan, Executive's Council on Diversity and Inclusion, Summit County Jail Operations Advisory Council, Summit County Affordable Housing Trust Fund Program, and Upward Mobility.

While many of these initiatives are focused on the programmatic aspects associated with addressing RAPHC, there is also significant potential to work with such partners on informing and realizing more equitable human resources, budgeting and procurement aspects of Summit County government. The strength of strategic partnership provides an opportunity to connect disconnected sectors so the collective can move more effectively and efficiently together. These partnerships open opportunities to augment capacity in facilitating two-way communication feedback loops and promoting transparency with racially oppressed communities to catalyze change to the overall culture and actions in the county starting with leadership then trickling down to staff and county residents.

Examples of short-term actions that align with this recommendation include:

• Serving as an ongoing convener of ADEI committees and agency leaders implementing equity-driven initiatives to understand current and future actions to advance racial equity within Summit County agencies and through the agencies' work

⁹ Sample questions that reflect Design Justice Participation criteria include: 1) Who should participate? 2) What are they motivated by? 3) What do they have to offer? 4) What methods could be used?



• Creating a centralized, exhaustive list of the high-impact training, funding, resources and initiatives addressing the racial equity needs of staff, contractors, and county residents. This list should also track the impact through important information such as objectives, cost, usefulness rating by participants, number of people reached, etc. This list could serve as a resource for other departments and external partners to help them determine which initiatives they should implement.

Increase data capacity for transparency and accountability

As Summit County progresses from the stages of symbolic and identity change to structural change, it is imperative to **create a formalized data collection**, **use**, **and reporting procedures for quantitative and qualitative RAPHC data** including, but not limited to, employee experience, workforce composition, dollars spent on equity initiatives, minority business contract dollar, and contract/staff pipeline program impact metrics. While some departments have specific ADEI key performance indicators (KPIs), not all have metrics/KPIs specifically related to ADEI. However, directors and county leaders have an abundance of anecdotal data about employees' perceptions of organizational culture, procurement challenges, and budgeting transparency, some of which is counter to the narrative of the lived experiences of staff of color as illustrated by the sampling of survey responses and focus group statements within the report findings.

Data is the cornerstone to any growth or change in an organization as it's difficult to make a plan for change if you don't know where you are in relation to where you want to eventually evolve. A more consistent and systematic approach to gathering, analyzing and acting on feedback and data will allow county departments and agencies to identify root causes of systemic barriers and progress towards improvement more effectively. The main tenets of an equitable data analytics program are to:

- Create a transparent process of data collection, analysis, and sharing
- Empower the communities that will be impacted to be the architects and designers of ADEI data analysis
- Work closely with other departments in order to generate new, interdisciplinary insights from the data
- Work closely with the Office for Racial Equity
- Make data open and accessible to all where privacy is not a consideration

These crucial areas of data collection will determine the impact of Summit County's goals. Some human resources data collection opportunities to explore include:

- Stay and exit interviews to analyze organizational culture
- Pulse and/or annual surveys to gauge employee engagement and experience

Similar data collection initiatives could be duplicated for individuals participating in staff or contractor pipeline development programs.

Summit County should prioritize collecting data it will use and use the data it collects. Frequently, organizations spend years collecting data that is never used to drive decision making or transformation. Transparently sharing data with employees and community members conveys a seriousness about change and allows internal and external stakeholders to become invested in the process of change and accountability.

UPD CONSULTING

Data analytics is also an area notorious for exacerbating systems of oppression, such as the use of big data and algorithms to perpetuate systemic biases and the use of deficit-based analysis language to describe differences between population outcomes. When the right tools are in place, and the right questions are asked, it can be a powerful tool for dismantling inequity. However, with no data plan at all, there is no transparency around how and why decisions are made. New Orleans is a great example of a city where data was used to perpetuate harm. After Hurricane Katrina, the city refused to release data that was critical to understanding the health and wellbeing of city residents. More than 10 years after the catastrophe, the <u>city has become an example other locales can follow</u> in the collection and sharing of data by and for the people of the city in a transparent and more equitable manner. Through transparently sharing data New Orleans was able to streamline decision making, digital processing and increase community involvement.

Examples of short-term actions that align with this recommendation include:

- Consider adoption of new technology or configurations of existing technology that streamline data collection and analysis across the county according to RAPHC metric use cases related to human resources, budget, and procurement
- Center the budgeting and reporting process on the impact on stakeholder needs and inequities
- Create a data governance committee focused on equity to create policies and processes that support equitable use of data, including robust data privacy, data sharing, and open data policies.
- Share employee experience data disaggregated by agency to understand opportunities to share effective practices beyond the agency



Appendix A: Special Review Committee Members

Members are listed in alphabetical order by last name

EbaNee Bond	Community Activist	
Crystal Burnett	Summit County Probate Court Designee	
Judge Katarina Cook	Summit County Domestic Relations Court	
Malcolm Costa	President CEO, Akron Summit Community Action	
Jay Curry	Summit County Fiscal Office Designee	
Marie Curry	Managing Attorney, Health Education, Advocacy & Law Program	
Jeffrey Dennis	Sr. Pastor, Mt Calvary Baptist Church	
Kandy Fatheree	Summit County Sheriff	
Lashawrida Fellows	Summit County Exec Designee	
Judi Hill	President NAACP	
Nancy Holland	Attorney at Law	
Curtis Howard	Summit County Juvenile Court Designee	
Lisa Kamlowsky	Asst Superintendent SCB-DD	
Sandra Kurt	Summit County Clerk of Courts	
Teresa LeGrair	President Akron Urban League	
Rana Matar	Summit County Clerk of Courts Designee	
Stephen Muhammad	Minister Mosque #37, Community Activist	
Tania Nemer	Summit County Prosecutor Designee	
Imokhai Okolo	Esq. Jones Day	
Drew Reilly	Summit County Land Reutilization Corporation	
llene Shapiro	Summit County Executive	
Madhu Sharma	International Institute of Akron	
Donna Skoda	Summit County Public Health Commissioner	
Heidi Swindell	Summit County Engineer Designee	
Barbara Sykes	President OLSBC Foundation	
Joe Tucker	Director, South Street Ministries	
Patricia Wicks	Patricia Smoot Wicks Consulting, PATHworks!	