



Metro

600 NE Grand Ave.
Portland, OR 97232-2736

Meeting summary

Meeting: Nature in Neighborhoods Capital Grants Pilot Program Design and Review
Committee Meeting #21

Date: Tuesday, May 9, 2023

Time: 4:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m.

Place: Zoom

Purpose: Review Idea Collection and Vetting Procedures

Outcome(s): Feedback from Idea Collection Process, Confirm Vetting Procedures

Links:

Meeting Video: <https://vimeo.com/826979366?share=copy>

Survey Information sharing and Idea Collection: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/YW3HN3N>

Team Coordination Meeting Colloqate 05-03-23: <https://vimeo.com/824182809?share=copy>

Attendees

Committee Members

Andrew Butz, He/Him

Laura Feldman, She/Her

Blanca Gaytan Farfan, She/Her, East Portland Rising Community Project

Kim Hack-Davidson, She/Her/They/Them

Theresa Huang, She/Her, Urban Greenspaces Institute

Isaiah Jackman, He/Him, Urban Leagues Portland

Absent

Kate Sams, She/Her, Zenger Farms

Kevin Hughes, He/Him, Hillsboro Parks and Recreation

Staff

Brandon Goldner, He/Him

Crista Gardner, She/Her, Metro

Elizabeth Guzman Arroyo, She/Her, Metro

Gabrielle Brown, She/Her, Metro

Humberto Marquez Mendez, He/Him, Metro

Valentina Peng, They/She, JLA Public Involvement

Meeting Summary

The committee reached consensus that they are comfortable conducting the Idea Vetting Process independently.

The group shared feedback on how Metro could improve future programs such as aligning the program timeline with summer, earlier Community Design Advocates (CDA) involvement, more culturally specific promotions/engagement.

Committee members expressed preference for splitting the assigned projects between groups of reviewers (i.e., 50 available projects assigned to four reviewers; with specific projects assigned to each person for specific periods of time) and expressed a desire for check-ins with staff throughout the process.

Welcome and Introductions

Humberto Marquez Mendez welcomed the group and reviewed the Zoom logistics. He welcomed guest Brandon Goldner, a former Metro staff in the program. Humberto provided an update on the completed and upcoming public events.

Meeting Purpose and Role Definition

Crista reviewed the agenda, starting by debriefing the process and collecting feedback on what went well and what could be improved. Crista reminded the committee that this is the last opportunity to review and share feedback on the vetting materials since the group will complete idea vetting after this meeting.

Review of Past and Future Engagement

Crista reviewed the kick-off, idea collection, and tabling events, as well as provided more information on the Community Design Advocates (CDA) that Metro is partnering with including Washington County indigenous groups, community groups working with people with disabilities, Black Parents Union in Beaverton, and Central Cultural. Crista noted that the CDAs help promote the program, which will also be promoted through tabling at events and locations including the Asian American Youth Conference, Eid Celebration, Dia de Los Niños event, and M&M Market Place in Hillsboro/Cornelius. Crista thanked the committee members who have attended the idea collection workshops and invited them to share their experience and feedback.

To date, 91 idea submissions have been submitted and the project team is anticipating 100 before this phase is concluded. Gabrielle and Crista reviewed how the comments and ideas are showing up on the map, which includes paper-form submissions as well. Gabrielle added that the map will be updated to focus on submission ZIP codes rather than area centers to be more accurately placed on the map.

- **Comment:** It is exciting to read through the submissions. I see lots of family-friendly ideas, such as story trails, hiking trails, and adult playgrounds. I'm surprised to see land acquisition-related comments and detailed suggestions on the matter. I also noticed some great ideas that might not be eligible for the program. I want to explore the potential of directing those ineligible ideas to other fitting programs.
- **Comment:** It is inspiring. I'm delighted to see the comments and the unique ideas. It's a fun way to engage with nature. I'm impressed with the submissions.
- **Comment:** The community garden spaces really stood out to me. It highlighted the need for community gathering spaces and fresh produce. There were some comments being submitted in Spanish; I'm wondering if those were direct submissions or manual inputs.
 - **Response:** Some were submitted online and some through paper forms, which are transcribed by Metro. We'll translate in-language submissions to give everyone an opportunity to see what is submitted directly.
- **Comment:** I saw a submission about green spaces as a meditative space, a place to just be in nature. That idea resonated with me.
- **Question:** It is exciting seeing the geographic variety of submitted ideas. I would recommend tracking how much engagement or submission comes out of the culturally specific events for the future. It is encouraging to see the non-English submissions.
 - **Response:** The most popular events were culturally-specific events. There were around 30 submissions from each idea-collection event, but we don't have specific numbers. Staff tracked how many people they interacted with and we can add event attendance to the lessons learned.
- **Question:** I am curious to learn more about the adult-play structure ideas. There was a distribution between recreational ideas and basic functional ideas.
 - **Response:** After May 14th, Metro will work with consultants to create profiles for these submissions.

Crista invited the committee members to share feedback on what went well and what could be improved for Phase 1, including what they liked about the events and throughout the process and what they would like to recreate in the future.

- **Question:** How involved are the CDAs? I'm curious to see how instrumental they were in involvement and idea submission.
 - **Response:** We can look at this for the next time. We'll possibly get the CDAs involved earlier in the process.
- **Question:** For the culturally specific events, are there staff members or CDAs who can speak the language?
 - **Response:** Yes, the staff members who are native Spanish speakers were present at some events. At events without Spanish-speaking staff, we had an interpreter present. But we did not have interpreters available at the Eid Celebration or the Asian American Youth Conference. We're noting the internal resources available for staffing these tabling events and planning ahead on how we can incorporate them next time.
- **Comment:** I recognize that this is a pilot program and there are funding limitations. However, I recommend a longer duration for this program and timing it with summer to provide more time for submissions and activities. Also recommend earlier CDA involvement.
- **Comment:** Schools are natural idea-generation spaces. Working with schoolteachers to help generate ideas can be a powerful tool for engagement with kids and civic engagement.
 - **Response:** There was an event, which took place in a school at Hillsboro, with materials shared for kids to bring home to their parents.
- **Comment:** Vietnamese-speaking interpreters were brought while Chinese-speaking interpreters were not available. The interpreters were not utilized as there was no targeted engagement to promote that this service was available.
 - **Response:** We'll incorporate that in the future. We've had similar experiences with ASL interpreters not being utilized.
- **Comment:** Is there any demographic data for non-traditional abled-body people? It is important to see their perspective. I would also be interested to explore involving and engaging with the houseless community.
- **Comment:** I also echo this idea, I would also like to elevate the outreach to elders. It would be good to involve the elderly communities.
- **Comment:** In general, I feel that this is a well-done process that is inclusive. One area to improve on is the web-landing platform. I like the aesthetic, but the communication points (standards and categories) could be more boldly and clearly presented for folks who use the landing page as the main platform, such as using bullet points.
- **Comment:** The artwork is beautiful and it is great to see the amount of thought and work that went into it. Having the Spanish text on top of the English text was really thoughtful. I appreciate the staff's receptiveness to feedback.
- **Comment:** The variety of outreach activities conducted was good. I was on a walk in the Hillsboro area and the flyer caught my eye in a park. I was also seeing posts on the Facebook page. Continue to boost through the flyer, sharing information, and the variety of languages offered were great.
- **Comment:** I like the children's model station and activity at the events. It is also a good strategy to keep parents engaged for a longer time.
- **Comment:** I also like the play materials. The food and activities helped the events to feel festive. The space set-up was great, they were spacious but also intimate. It created a "treasured" feeling for the attendees.
- **Comment:** I really like the emphasis on the play perspective that is highlighted on the main page of Metro's website. In-person engagements with the committee group was lovely.

Vetting Process Overview

Humberto thanked the group for their comments and feedback. He invited Gabrielle to review the vetting process and the worksheet instructions. Gabrielle reminded the committee that the vetting will be completed by the next meeting. Gabrielle emphasized the importance of this part of the process, since it determines what would be presented to the community for voting and choosing. She recommended that the group review the vetting package as soon as possible so that any questions or concerns can be addressed early. The timeline includes:

- May 14, Idea collection closes.
- May 14 to 21, KNOT and Colloqate will compile the received information.
- May 21 to June 4, jurisdictional and agency partners will complete the first phase of vetting, the feasibility review.
- June 5 to 19, the committee will conduct their vetting on all of the projects to check the criteria of submitted ideas. The project team will summarize and compile the group's responses.

Gabrielle shared that in addition to the package of projects, the group will receive a spreadsheet that holds compiled project information such as potential sponsors and notes from the consultant team providing additional context. The package will include all projects along with the submitted response on what criteria it meets. Since the explanation of the criteria is optional on the submission form, some submissions may not have it.

Partner agencies will determine the feasibility, capital project, and partner-acceptability of the submissions, while the committee will review climate resilience and equity criteria. The scores developed through this process are not the end of the conversation but offer a baseline for further discussion. The most important part is whether the project meets the minimum criteria. Gabrielle highlighted that the program did not require respondents to submit fully developed ideas. She emphasized that part of the vetting process is to think through whether the idea has the potential to improve. She encouraged the group to view it through that lens and let the community choose whether they want to move forward with the project or not.

As far as the time expected for the evaluation process, the applications would hold similar questions as the vetting worksheet. It could take around 20-30 hours to finish reviewing 40 projects. Gabrielle reviewed the rubric for scoring. She emphasized that it is important for the committee to stay consistent in how they rate the projects. Gabrielle recommended using the instructions, additional guidance, and resources to help with the process. Crista noted that there is space for notes on comments on the forms, so including comments and feedback on what is compelling and what can be improved for the submissions could help community members better understand the process and how they can improve.

- **Comment:** Some ideas might be more complimentary to each other, would there be some sort of coupling of projects before we see it? Would it be laid out geographically after we completed the scoring?
 - **Response:** Partner agencies might recommend some pairing, but we also encourage you to make note of those pairing recommendations if you notice anything.
- **Question:** I notice on the spreadsheet that certain projects, such as community gardens or tennis courts, are scored pretty low. Do we want to consider the broader pool of project scorings and adjust our standards to ensure a variety of projects?
 - **Response:** Those are currently examples, so using the standardized rubrics for the projects will provide clear marks on what you're looking for in terms of how the project satisfies the criteria, which influences the score the project receives. The rubric has a clearer breakdown of what the scores mean and how they're defined.
 - Humberto noted that the spectrum of scores might be lower for criteria that may be more technical

since the project is still in the idea generating phase. He invited the committee members to share their experience with grant processes.

- **Question:** How are you going to handle the next steps or follow-up for applicants that are turned down?
 - **Response:** Assuming that the project has a project sponsor, we'll treat it similarly to most of our grant processes in park funding. We'll offer opportunities for feedback and offer a broad overview of general feedback but also detailed feedback through a phone call or meeting to talk specifically about their project and feedback. This is why it is important for the group to note down what is compelling and what can be improved.

Gabrielle noted that the team will grey out projects that are not eligible on the map and community members will see what is moving forward, what is funded, and what they can vote on. Through this online platform, the community can see trends of the projects that are rejected or are moving forward, as well as sharing feedback on that platform. For applicants who are not comfortable sharing their contact information, Metro staff also encourages the community to reach out to them for feedback.

Gabrielle asked the group if they were comfortable with the process as they know it now. Five committee members confirmed that they were comfortable while one shared that they are unsure due to personal schedules and availability.

- **Question:** How many projects will we be looking at?
 - **Response:** Our original idea is to keep it between 40 – 50, which is half of the available projects for half of the committee. This means that each project will have around 4 reviewers. We could also go less, around 30 – 35, but the caveat being there'll only be around 3 responses for each project, which would be more pressure for the reviewer to complete their reviews. Would 40 - 50 feel ok or would 30 - 35 projects feel more comfortable?
- **Question:** Is it possible to do half in case someone cannot get to it? We can also plan for a check-in halfway through the vetting timeline, it would allow different reviewers assigned to similar projects to focus on different projects. In a way that the distribution of the projects are divided equally between the 4 reviewers, create combinations and patterns to create more resilience.
 - **Response:** We'll note that and we can explore that feasibility.
- **Question:** If we do half and were not able to finish reviewing all the applications we get, is there buffer time, or is the deadline pretty tight?
 - **Response:** It is pretty tight. If we approach it with more randomization, flexibility, and support, we can ensure completion.
 - Humberto noted that the applications could have varying levels of detailedness due to the questions being open-ended.
 - Crista noted that the staff is happy to hold time for mid-way check-in if needed.

The committee reached **consensus** to move forward with the vetting process.

Next Steps and Closing

Humberto, Gabrielle, and Crista thanked the group for their feedback and participation. The committee was invited to share feedback or lessons learned through the survey. The committee can expect the project descriptions beginning of June and the next committee meeting will be held on June 27th. More resources will be shared on the website. There were no additional comments or questions.

Appendix A: Zoom Meeting Chat

From Crista Gardner (she, her), Metro to Everyone:
Kate Sams absent; Kevin Hughes absent;

From Crista Gardner (she, her), Metro to Everyone:
Theresa Huang will arrive at 5 pm

From Gabrielle Brown (she/her/Mrs.) | Metro to Everyone:
And one more event: tabling @ M&M Marketplace in Hillsboro, Saturday 1pm-4pm

From Gabrielle Brown (she/her/Mrs.) | Metro to Everyone:
If you want to drop by: 346 SW Walnut St, Hillsboro, OR 97123

From Isaiah Jackman (he/him) to Everyone:
Reacted to "If you want to drop ..." with 👍

From Gabrielle Brown (she/her/Mrs.) | Metro to Everyone:
📊 91 ideas submitted (so far as of 5/9/23, excluding submissions pending translation or ineligible projects)
📊 91 responses to community survey (so far)

From Gabrielle Brown (she/her/Mrs.) | Metro to Everyone:
<https://arcg.is/GfC4y>

From Gabrielle Brown (she/her/Mrs.) | Metro to Everyone:
Roughly 30 from each idea-generating event

From Brandon Goldner to Everyone:
Curious if this map link is public? I LOVE it. And I love how thoughtful the ideas are.

From Gabrielle Brown (she/her/Mrs.) | Metro to Everyone:
Replying to "Curious if this map ..." Yes, it is! And it's also linked from the primary project page.

From Brandon Goldner to Everyone:
Reacted to "Yes, it is! And it's..." with ❤️

From Crista Gardner (she, her), Metro to Everyone:
<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/YW3HN3N>

From Kim Hack-Davidson to Everyone:
Replying to "Curious if this map ..." I'm actually not sure how to find the map from the Metro project page

From Humberto Marquez Mendez, he/him to Everyone:
Welcome, Theresa!

From Theresa Huang (she/hers) to Everyone:
thank you!

From Humberto Marquez Mendez, he/him to Everyone:
Replying to "Curious if this map ..." It should be towards the bottom of the "Share your ideas" tab

From Kim Hack-Davidson to Everyone:
Replying to "Curious if this map ..." Thanks, Humberto! Would you share your screen and show it? I see two survey links (project idea and general idea), but not the map still

From Humberto Marquez Mendez, he/him to Everyone:
Replying to "Curious if this map ..." Of course, I can show anyone interested when we break.

From Theresa Huang (she/hers) to Everyone:
the children model (?) section

From Kim Hack-Davidson to Everyone:
 Reacted to "Of course, I can sho..." with ❤️

From Kim Hack-Davidson to Everyone:
 Replying to "Curious if this map ..." Just found it scrolling further down on the page- thanks! It might be nice to have on the main project page side bar too

From Kim Hack-Davidson to Everyone:
 Bathroom facilities is a great intersection of needs from parks/public space to people experiencing houselessness too

From Isaiah Jackman (he/him) to Everyone:
 Great point Laura!

From Humberto Marquez Mendez, he/him to Everyone:
 Reacted to "Bathroom facilities ..." with 👍

From Kim Hack-Davidson to Everyone:
 Will you send a meeting invite for June 6th and June 27th?

From Kim Hack-Davidson to Everyone:
 I like the idea of reviewing half too

From Theresa Huang (she/hers) to Everyone:
 I think I can manage to do half but am ok if we do 1/3 to make things easier for easier distribution to accommodate people who can't do half

From Kim Hack-Davidson to Everyone:
 I like the idea of randomizing it to mix it up and have different combinations of reviewers

From Crista Gardner (she, her), Metro to Everyone:
 Next steps: Expect project descriptions June 1 - 5
 Vet projects June 5 - 19
 Next meeting: June 27th

From Theresa Huang (she/hers) to Everyone:
 can you post the link again

From Theresa Huang (she/hers) to Everyone:
 sorry I was late to meeting

From Gabrielle Brown (she/her/Mrs.) | Metro to Everyone:
<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/YW3HN3N>

From Theresa Huang (she/hers) to Everyone:
 thank you

From Elizabeth (They/She)| Metro to Everyone:
 Thanks all!

From Valentina Peng (they/she) | JLA Public Involvement to Everyone:
 Thank you everyone! Have a great evening.

Appendix B: Land acknowledgement – Oversight Committee

As we kick off this work on a committee charged with building on the legacy of investments in our region's natural spaces, we want to acknowledge that all of the Metro region, Oregon and the United States are Indian Land. The greater Portland area is built upon the ancestral homelands, villages and

traditional use areas of multiple Indigenous tribes and bands who have stewarded these lands we cherish since time immemorial. The lands at the confluence of the Willamette and Columbia rivers have long served as a major crossroads for the economic, social and political interactions of tribal nations for thousands of years and a place of significance in the homelands and traditional territories of many tribal nations. We owe a special acknowledgement to the many tribes and bands and their descendants who ceded these lands in treaties with the United States. We recognize the strong and diverse tribal nations and Native communities in our region today and offer respect and gratitude for their stewardship of these lands past, present and future. Metro seeks to establish meaningful relationships and explore opportunities to collaborate and consider tribal priorities and interests in our work, including our parks and nature bond work. We are building our understanding of tribal interests in the greater Portland area as we implement our parks and nature work. As we learn more, we hope to refine Metro's approach to land acknowledgements in the future; We recognize land acknowledgements are important and can be sensitive. We are hoping to learn more to integrate this into our work appropriately and in a good way honoring tribal interests going forward.

Agenda



Metro

600 NE Grand Ave.
Portland, OR 97232-2736

Meeting: Nature in Neighborhoods Capital Grants Pilot Program Design and Review
Committee Meeting #21

Date: Tuesday, May 9, 2023

Time: 4:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m.

Place: Zoom

Purpose: Review idea collection, vetting procedures

Outcome(s): Feedback from Idea Collection Process, Confirm Vetting Procedures

Pre-work Review: CDA Update Webinar
(Optional) Review: [event photos](#)
Review: [Community Choice Grants Project Page](#)
 *Note, short URLs
 English: [OregonMetro.gov/CommunityChoice](#)
 Spanish: [OregonMetro.gov/EleccionComunitaria](#)
Review: Project Ideas on [Digital Platform](#)
Complete [PDRC Idea Collection Feedback Survey](#)
Review: [Bias awareness & conflict of interest documents](#)
Review: [Vetting Worksheet](#)
Review: [Vetting Instructions](#)

4:30 p.m. Welcome

4:40 p.m. What are we doing today?
What decisions is the committee expected to make today?
How will those decisions be used?

4:50 p.m. Review idea collection, kickoff events, tabling, and CDA program
What went right?
What could have gone better?
What can we learn and how can we improve?

5:20 p.m. *Break when committee needs it*

5:30 p.m. Discuss Vetting process and timeline, worksheet, instructions

6:20 p.m. Next Steps

- Expect project descriptions June 1 - 5
- Vet projects June 5 - 19
- Next meeting: June 27th

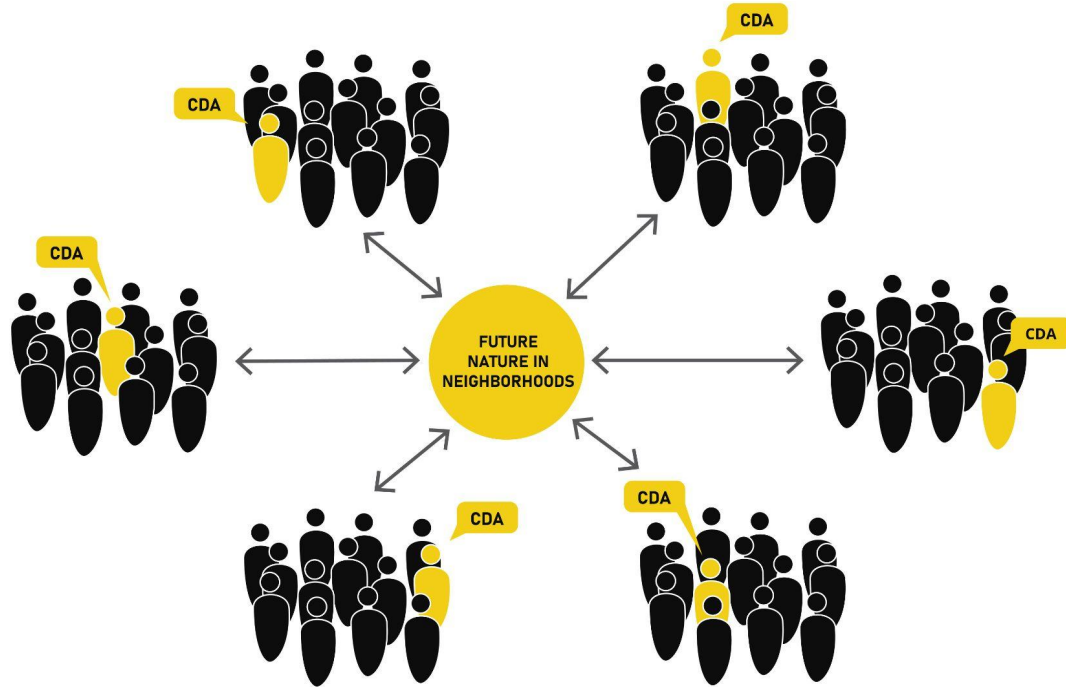
6:30 p.m. Meeting adjourned

Post-work Review, vet, and evaluate project ideas
(Optional) distribute links, digital flyers, and social media for idea collection (closes May 14th)

- [Project Page](#)

- [Idea Submission Form](#)
- [Digital Platform](#)
- [Community Survey](#)
- [Digital Flyer](#)

Nature in Neighborhoods Community Design Advocates!



Beaverton Black Parent Union

"The Beaverton Black Parent Union views connecting to nature as an essential strategy to restoring our ancestral wisdom and culture into modern daily life and healing from the racial traumas of the past."

Black and Green Fellowship

4 week long program for Teens ages 14-17

Soul Stroll

Summer outings getting out into different parks and hikes. Exploring history, learning about soil, trees, and native animals.

50-100 people



Brandon Culbertson

- Northern Arapaho and Sioux Tribes
- Long time Beaverton resident
- Sees a vacuum around indigenous and tribal resources and space and wants to see greater indigenous representation in meaningful ways



Patricia Kepler & James Albrecht

- Accessibility specialists.
- Worked with Metro on accessibility review for updates to park.
- Desire to help make materials and events accessible, provide spaces for people with disabilities to get out and experience nature and create ideas together.



Centro Cultural

- A long time partner
- Excited to help host events and get the word out

Environmental Protectors

Organizers and teachers of how families can protect the waters and land

Working Theory Farm

Edad de Oro seniors to grow their own food, raise chickens, and connect with each other and the land.

Climate Justice Leadership Program

High school students learn about land stewardship and conservation

Backyard Habitat Certification

be trailblazers in western Washington County for a sustainable redesign of our land



MARCH 2023

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11 Info Session
12	13	14	15 Info Session	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
Time for People to get the word out and express interest						
26	27	28	29	30	31	
Conversations and Contract Review -> PCC Term starting ->						

APRIL 2023

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
						1
2	3 -> PCC Term starting -> -> BBPU Out of Town ->	4	5	6 Brandon Onboard!	7	8 Idea Wksp
9	10	11 Patricia & James Onboard!	12	13 -> BBPU Out of Town ->	14	15
16	17	18 BBPU Onboard!	19 Idea Wksp	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30						

2023 VETTING INSTRUCTIONS AND CRITERIA

Nature in Neighborhoods community choice grants

Washington County Coordination Team and Program Design and Review Committee

Through the Nature in Neighborhoods Community Choice Grants, Metro will invest up to \$2 million in projects imagined and chosen by community members in Metro Council District 4 in Washington County. Metro's Nature in Neighborhoods community choice grants put community members in the lead to imagine, design, and choose parks and nature projects. The grant ideas have the power to help shape the future parks and natural areas in their neighborhood.

The Program Design and Review committee (committee or PDRC) will vet project ideas based on the information submitted, the stated vetting criteria, and the review committee's professional and collective judgment. The project idea should meet the purpose of the grant program and be achievable.

The first round of community choice grants is for Metro Council District 4. District 4 includes all the urban areas in Washington County north of Oregon Highway 8 (Tualatin Valley Highway) and areas west of Cornelius Pass Road. Kids 11-years-old and older can submit ideas. These grants are available thanks to voters choosing to invest in parks and nature when they approved Metro's 2019 parks and nature bond measure. Metro staff will vet the projects for geography by zip code and age.

Metro received over 100 project ideas.

The purpose of the vetting by the Washington county partners coordination team is to determine if project ideas are feasible (or could be feasible with additional design work as part of the project development phase) and meet the minimum requirements of the program.

The purpose of the vetting by the committee is to identify those ideas that meet (or could meet with additional design work as part of the project development phase) the minimum qualifications and the purpose, principles and criteria of the Nature in Neighborhoods community choice grants. The committee's evaluation component will be used to prioritize projects for project development in case more than 50 eligible project ideas are submitted during idea collection. The ideas that pass vetting will be offered conceptual design support through a first design workshop. If voted for by the community, the project will then undergo additional design support through a second design workshop.

VETTING INSTRUCTIONS

Washington County Partners

For each project idea, a project description in PDF form will be made available for review at this [link](#).

Project Vetting Worksheet

Project information will also be displayed on the vetting worksheet, including the name, location, and description of the project idea, as well as the submitter's input as to which criteria they believe their project satisfies.

The information on rows 2 – 8 of the worksheet for each project were provided by the idea submitter. Information on rows 9 – 14 were provided by the consultant team. Row 10 lists local partner agencies relevant to the idea's suggested site.

Please use both the submitter's input and your own judgement to evaluate whether a project is feasible and meets minimum requirements.

- If your partner agency is listed on row 10, please complete rows 17 – 22.
- Row 17: Please list your agency here if your agency could potentially be a project sponsor (i.e., it matches your coverage area, mission, etc.).
- Row 18: Could this project be a public-owned capitalizable asset according to standard accounting practices?
- Row 19: Is this project feasible, or could it be feasible with reasonable development work?
- Row 20: Would this project require acquisition to complete? If so, is there a willing seller? (Metro may only fund acquisition of properties with a willing seller.)
- Row 21: Is this project or a similar project already on your current CIP lists or long-term plans?
- Row 22: Please include any additional comments or concerns that would help the PDRC vet this project, help or guide project development, or are relevant to Metro or other partner agencies.

Community Survey

The results of the community survey (aggregate and individual) are included with the vetting worksheet. This survey was intended to allow community members without specific project ideas to share their experiences and desires for parks and natural areas in their neighborhoods.

- Partners are asked to review these results.
- Please note any responses or trends that align with your existing CIP lists or parks plans.
- Share any projects that align with these responses with us, so we can add them to the project list for vetting and project development.

Program Design and Review Committee

[For each project idea, a project description in PDF form will be made available for review at this link.](#) Project information will also be displayed on the vetting worksheet, including the name, location, and description of the project idea, as well as the submitter's input as to which criteria they believe their project satisfies. Please use both the submitter's input and your own judgement to evaluate whether a project meets a given criteria (or could with additional design work).

For each of the project ideas, begin by marking **X for each criteria the project meets or could meet with additional design work**. Then, evaluate and mark **0 (low) to 5 (high) for each criteria set**, for a total rating of between **0 (low) to 25 (high)**. [You may also view all of the project ideas received in pdf form here.](#)

Please note any compelling components and potential improvements for each application. Successful applicants will have the ability to use the committee feedback to substantially improve or expand upon the project idea. Consider the quality and potential of the idea and projects, not just how well the project idea is written.

Evaluation Rubric

While vetting will establish which criteria (if any) a project idea meets, each evaluation score should represent **how well the project idea meets the intent of that criteria set**.

- 0) Does not meet any of the criteria in this set; ineligible project.**
- 1) Meets at least one of the criteria in this set; requires extensive design or modification to reasonably meet the intent of the criteria set.**
- 2) Meets at least one of the criteria in this set; requires some design or modification to reasonably meet the intent of the criteria set.**
- 3) Meets some criteria in this set and meets the intent of the criteria set.**
- 4) Meets some criteria in this set and significantly meets the intent of the criteria set.**
- 5) Meets several criteria in this set and meets the intent of this criteria set in robust and clear ways.**

VETTING CRITERIA

Please reflect on the following evaluation criteria listed by grant idea section.

Community Needs, 0 (Low) to 5 (High)

How is the grant idea important for the organization and community?

Minimum Requirements (completed by agency staff)

Does the grant idea identify a government partner? Is it within the urban growth boundary? Is it a capital project? Is it feasible? If an acquisition project, is there a willing seller?

Climate resilience, 0 (Low) to 5 (High)

How well does the grant idea address the Parks and Nature Bond criteria of climate resilience? In what ways does the grant idea further the region's climate resilience?

Meaningful community engagement and racial equity, 0 (Low) to 5 (High)

How well does the project address the Parks and Nature Bond criteria of meaningful community engagement and racial equity? How and by whom is the need for this proposal being identified? Who is designing and implementing the project? Is diversity, equity and inclusion part of the applicants' vision, mission, or objectives?

Bond Principles, 0 (Low) to 5 (High)

How well does the project address the bond principles?

Bond Purpose, 0 (Low) to 5 (High)

How well does the project address the bond's purpose to protect and improve water quality and fish and wildlife habitat, support climate resiliency and/or increase people's experience of nature at the community scale.

Notes & Comments about Projects

What is important, interesting, or compelling about this project idea?

What questions do you have about this project idea to clarify or to improve it?

Additional guidance from previous grant rounds

To align with the purpose of the grants and the intent of the Nature in Neighborhoods program laid out in Title 13, previous grant review committee have considered for funding community gardens with strong natural resource, wildlife habitat or water quality components, but, in general, programs focused on food or edible gardens will not. Therefore, the Nature in Neighborhoods grants funded only a few garden projects using the 2006 PN Bond from 2006 to 2016. Successful

grant proposals have included a broader connection to nature, such as natural systems, native plants and pollinators, habitat corridors for wildlife.

Implicit bias

In order to ensure a diverse package of grant ideas, members of review committee may have to act against some of their biases. Even though many actions based on biases are unintentional, they can still be detrimental to the evaluation process. The first step in overcoming biases is to become aware of them. Ask yourself these questions:

- What assessments have I made already about the organization from reviewing the grant proposal? Are they grounded in solid information or simply my interpretations?
- Is my perception influencing how well I think the organization will complete the programming outlined in the grant proposal?
- Am I considering that the grant application answers could be based on the organization's or grant writer's dimensions of diversity – ethnicity, age, gender identity, educational background etc.?

PURPOSE, PRINCIPLES AND CRITERIA

Purpose, Principles, and Criteria

The 2019 parks and nature bond outlined the purpose, principles, criteria, and minimum requirements to which Nature in Neighborhoods Community Choice Grants must adhere.

What are the guiding purposes for the Community Choice Grants?

A growing population and changing climate threaten streams and habitat Oregonians have worked hard to protect. Treasured parks and trails need improvements to keep up with demand and to be welcoming to all. And some communities – particularly communities of color and other historically marginalized communities – still await equitable access to the benefits of public investments. This proposed 2019 bond measure will allow the region to continue efforts protecting water quality and wildlife habitat for generations to come.

This program will fund community-led projects, with an emphasis on benefitting historically marginalized communities.

These projects will protect and improve water quality and fish and wildlife habitat, support climate resiliency and/or increase people's experience of nature at the community scale.

All projects must satisfy required bond program community engagement, racial equity and climate resilience criteria ... as well as the Capital Grants requirements set forth below.

What are the guiding principles for the Community Choice Grants?

- Serve communities through inclusive engagement, transparency and accountability.
- Advance racial equity through bond investments.
- Protect clean water for people, fish and wildlife.

- Protect and restore culturally significant native plant communities.
- Protect, connect and improve habitat for native fish and wildlife.
- Take care of what we have.
- Make parks and natural areas more accessible and inclusive.
- Connect more people to the land and rivers of our region.
- Invest in trails for biking and walking.
- Support community-led parks and nature projects.
- Make communities more resilient to climate change.

What are the guiding **criteria** for the Community Choice Grants?

Community Engagement and Racial Equity Criteria

Community Choice Grants investments must satisfy **all of the following community engagement and racial equity criteria**:

- Meaningfully engage with communities of color, Indigenous communities, people with low incomes and other historically marginalized communities in planning, development and selection of projects.
- Prioritize projects and needs identified by communities of color, Indigenous communities, low-income and other historically marginalized groups. Metro has found ways to prioritize these communities in ways that do not violate the law, like outreach or reducing barriers.
- Demonstrate accountability for tracking outcomes and reporting impacts, particularly as they relate to communities of color, Indigenous communities, people with low incomes and other historically marginalized communities.
- Improve the accessibility and inclusiveness of developed parks.
- Include strategies to prevent or mitigate displacement and/or gentrification resulting from bond investments.
- Set aspirational goals for workforce diversity and use of COBID contractors and work to reduce barriers to achieving these goals; demonstrate accountability by tracking outcomes and reporting impacts.

Climate Resilience Criteria

Community Choice Grants investments must satisfy **at least one of the following climate resilience criteria**:

- Protect, connect and restore habitat to support strong populations of native plants, fish and wildlife that can adapt to a changing climate.
- Protect and restore floodplains, headwaters, streams and wetlands to increase their capacity to handle stormwater to protect vulnerable communities from flooding.
- Increase tree canopy in developed areas to reduce heat island effects.
- Use low-impact development practices and green infrastructure in project design and development.

Program Criteria

Community Choice Grants investments must satisfy **at least one of the following five program criteria**:

- Build wealth in communities of color, Indigenous communities, low-income and other historically marginalized communities through contracting and jobs.

- Improve human mental and physical health, particularly in communities of color, Indigenous communities, low-income communities and other historically marginalized communities.
- Nurture a relationship with land and create educational opportunities (including Science, Technology, Engineering, Art and Math [STEAM] opportunities) and promote careers in the environmental and agricultural sector, especially for people and youth of color.
- Demonstrate leadership by Black, Indigenous, and People of Color in project identification, selection, design and implementation.
- Increase accessibility of public, park, and other natural spaces.

Description	Project ID	0001	0002	0003
	Name			
	Project Description			
	Location			
	Inside equity focus areas?			
	Sponsor (Owner? Partnership?)			
	Community Needs			
	Notes from consultant team			
	Reviewer Notes & Comments			
	Community Needs Score (0-5)			
Minimum Requirements (completed by agency staff)	Partnership			
	UGB			
	Feasible			
	Capital			
	Willing Sellers			
Climate Resilience Criteria	Protect, connect and restore habitat to support strong populations of native plants, fish and wildlife that can adapt to a changing climate.			
	Protect and restore floodplains, headwaters, streams and wetlands to increase their capacity to handle stormwater to protect vulnerable communities from flooding.			
	Increase tree canopy in developed areas to reduce heat island effects.			
	Use low-impact development practices and green infrastructure in project design and development.			
	Increase community experience of nature.			
	Reviewer Notes & Comments			
	Climate Resiliency Criteria Score (0-5)			
Racial Equity & Program Criteria	Build wealth in communities of color, Indigenous communities, low-income and other historically marginalized communities through contracting and jobs.			
	Improve human mental and physical health, particularly in communities of color, Indigenous communities, low-income communities and other historically marginalized communities.			
	Nurture a relationship with land and create educational opportunities (including Science, Technology, Engineering, Art and Math [STEAM] opportunities) and promote careers in the environmental and agricultural sector, especially for people and youth of color.			
	Demonstrate leadership by Black, Indigenous, and People of Color in project identification, selection, design and implementation.			
	Increase accessibility of public, park, and other natural spaces.			
	Reviewer Notes & Comments			

	Program Criteria Score (0-5)			
Purpose	Water quality, fish & wildlife habitat			
	Climate resiliency			
	Experience of nature at community scale			
	Reviewer Notes & Comments			
	Bond Purpose Score (0-5)			
Principles	Serve communities through inclusive engagement, transparency and accountability.			
	Advance racial equity through bond investments.			
	Protect clean water for people, fish and wildlife.			
	Protect and restore culturally significant native plant communities.			
	Protect, connect and improve habitat for native fish and wildlife.			
	Take care of what we have.			
	Make parks and natural areas more accessible and inclusive.			
	Connect more people to the land and rivers of our region.			
	Invest in trails for biking and walking.			
	Support community-led parks and nature projects.			
	Make communities more resilient to climate change.			
	Reviewer Notes & Comments			
	Bond Principles Score (0-5)			
	Notes & Comments about Projects	What's compelling?		
What could be improved?				
Total Score (up to 25)		0	0	0
Scorecard Notes & Comments	Was the worksheet easy to use?			
	Was is useful for vetting and evaluation?			
	How could it be improved to make it more useful or easier to use?			
	Additional comments or questions on worksheet or vetting process?			

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

2023 Nature in Neighborhoods

Community volunteers authorized to act on behalf of Metro, such as grant review committee members, “ensure public respect by avoiding even the appearance of impropriety... Metro decisions are based on the merits of the issues. Judgment is independent and objective.” ¹

If a committee member or their immediate family’s “financial interests will be specifically affected by a decision, that official will...withdraw from further participation on the matter... Intervention on behalf of constituents or friends is limited to assuring fairness of procedures, clarifying policies or improving service.” ²

Therefore, any committee member or their immediate family, who is a **staff member or board member of an organization** submitting a grant (pre) application, will recuse **themselves from the scoring and the committee discussion** of that grant (pre) application.

Any committee member or their immediate family, who is a staff member or board member of a **partner organization** with **financial interest** in submitting a grant (pre) application, will recuse themselves from the scoring and the committee discussion of that grant (pre) application.

Any committee member or their immediate family, who is a staff member or board member of a **partner organization** with **no financial interest** in submitting a grant (pre) application, may score and participate in the discussion of that grant (pre) application.

¹ Metro Executive Order No. 66. (January 21, 1997). Code of Ethics.

² Metro Executive Order No. 66. (January 21, 1997). Code of Ethics.

A photograph of two business professionals, a man and a woman, shaking hands in front of a modern building with large glass windows. The man is on the left, wearing a dark suit and a blue tie, looking up at the woman with a smile. The woman is on the right, wearing a light-colored blazer, looking down at the man with a smile. The background shows the architectural details of the building, including a staircase and glass panels.

Everyday Bias

Further Explorations into How the
Unconscious Mind Shapes Our World at Work

An Evolving Understanding of Unconscious Bias
Offers Opportunities for Improving Performance at Your Place of Work

by Howard Ross, Founder and Chief Learning Officer, Cook Ross Inc.

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INTRODUCTION

Hurricanes were exclusively assigned female names until the late 1970's. Since then, the World Meteorological Association (WMA) has alternatively given them male and female names. In May of 2014, the Proceedings of the National Academy of Science released the results of an interesting study from the University of Illinois¹. Researchers analyzed more than sixty years of death tolls from ninety four hurricanes that occurred in the United States between 1950 and 2012. They removed two hurricanes whose death tolls were so dramatically greater than the others that they would skew the data: Hurricane Katrina, which killed approximately 1,500 people in 2005, and Hurricane Audrey, which killed more than 400 in 1957. The researchers then compared the death rates of the hurricanes based on the gender classification of their names.

What they found was fascinating.

It turns out that there is a dramatic difference between the average death rates of the storms named for men (23) and those named for women (45). Was this because the WMA chose female names for the harshest storms? Not unless they had a crystal ball. The names, it turns out, are designated years before the actual hurricanes. The difference, it seems, lies not in the naming of the storms, but in the reaction to the storms' names. "People may be dying as a result of the femininity of a hurricane (name)," said Sharon Shavitt, one of the studies co-authors. "In judging the intensity of a storm, people appear to be applying their beliefs about how men and women behave," Shavitt says. "This makes a female-named hurricane, especially one with a very feminine name such as Belle or Cindy, seem gentler and less violent."

¹ "Female hurricanes are deadlier than male hurricanes" National Academy of Sciences, Jung, Shavitt, Viswanathan, and Hilbe, May 2014 Kiju Jung, Sharon Shavitt, Madhu Viswanathan, and Joseph M. Hilbe

Female hurricanes are deadlier than male hurricanes

PNAS 2014; published ahead of print June 2, 2014, doi:10.1073/pnas.1402786111

Is it possible that people consciously choose to take female-named hurricanes less seriously? Is it likely that during times of emergency preparedness somebody says, or even thinks, “Don’t worry about that one...she’s just a girl!”? Doubtful. It is much more likely that this is yet one more example of unconscious bias at work.

Unconscious or implicit bias is an issue that affects every person and every organization, no matter how inclusive people think they may be, or how diverse their organization has tried to become.

Everyone possesses unconscious biases, and they impact us in ways that we can hardly imagine.

The encouraging news is that breakthroughs in our understanding of this fascinating topic offer new opportunities for organizations that truly wish to create inclusive workplaces and diverse employee populations.



At Cook Ross, we published our first major thought paper on unconscious bias (<http://www.cookross.com/docs/unconsciousbias.pdf>) in 2007. That paper concentrated on the definition, reality and prevalence of unconscious bias. Since that time, our understanding of unconscious bias and its implications for organizational performance has expanded greatly. Our discoveries arise not only from research in the neurological and cognitive sciences, but also—and perhaps more importantly—from our experience with thousands of clients. This work has permitted us to gain a deeper understanding of how individual and group behaviors affect organizational performance.

The collective body of knowledge about this topic has also grown exponentially. The topic has been brought to public view in a way that allows us to address problems with broader strokes, addressing the full impact of unconscious bias.



This paper represents an update in our learnings on unconscious bias since we published the original paper. I will discuss some of those new findings and will also lay out ten distinct ways unconscious bias manifests in the workplace, including a case study from a Cook Ross client, a leading global management consulting company that has leveraged unconscious bias awareness to increase the number of women in senior leadership positions. Lastly, the paper presents practical guidelines for reducing the influence of unconscious bias on decision-making in the talent management process.

UNCONSCIOUS BIAS: WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

The concept of unconscious bias in organizations was initially recognized in the 1960s, against a backdrop of hiring changes that were brought about by federal civil rights legislation and changes in societal social norms. Bias is culturally rooted, and generally directed at value and belief systems different from our own. Bias falls into the realm of the unconscious when it transcends our moment-to-moment perception and awareness. For instance, a person may know “instinctively” when they feel physically threatened without knowing the exact source or location of the threat. Ultimately, the impact of bias may not be different whether it is conscious or unconscious. Both can create inequities in opportunity and treatment, and also very poor decision-making. However, our understanding of how unconscious they are may radically alter our way of dealing with these biases and creating more conscious organizations.

Distinguishing friend from foe is essential to our survival. The ability to do so quickly might mean the difference between life and death. As a result, our minds tend to look for danger first, a clear precautionary function. We are far safer assuming danger and being surprised when it is not there, then in assuming all is safe and finding danger instead. In a survival context, a “false positive” is always safer than a “false negative.” As a result, we may unconsciously look for cues that identify something as threatening in a person we encounter, based on what we have experienced before. This may make a lot of sense in terms of keeping us safe, but when a job candidate with qualifications similar to another person is given a low rating because they “don’t feel” like a good fit, it becomes problematic.

Organizations that wish to create diverse employee populations and more inclusive workplaces have struggled for decades with



cultural bias and with trying to attain “cultural competency.” The essential ingredient in culturally competent organizations is the recognition that re-training the conscious “rational” mind to achieve behavioral change is often largely ineffectual. Leaders in particular need to recognize that we don’t always consciously know exactly what in our organizations needs adjustment. Let me cite an example to clarify.

Research has shown that people tend to believe others more when they have similar accents.² Let us say a person is not aware that they consistently exhibit a preference for team members who speak with the same kind of accent that they do. (Of course, for most people, accents and dialects only exist when they are present in other people who speak differently from them...an unconscious bias in itself!) Creating systems and structures that reveal those patterns and help explore areas of discomfort are critical. Avoiding difficult conversations about bias will lead to poor talent management decisions and many other inefficiencies. Still, views and preferences among people will continue to legitimately

² Shiri Lev-Ari, Boaz Keysar, Why don’t we believe non-native speakers? The influence of accent on credibility. Journal of Experimental Social Psychology 46 (2010) 1093-1096.

differ. We may still prefer our own unconscious or conscious views and our own patterns of thinking and behavior. They feel more comfortable to us. The challenge is that “comfortable” feelings are not necessarily synonymous or strategically aligned with organizational goals and priorities. “Comfortable” could prevent you from getting the best talent and organizational results.

Developing an awareness of our own biases is the foundation for making better decisions. Why? If you are in possession of that awareness, you can take advantage of our growing understanding of unconscious bias and its implications for organizational success and failure. The available body of knowledge has exploded during the past six years as discoveries unfold from research in the neurological and cognitive sciences.

New findings are teaching us more about the brain and consciousness than we have ever known. Some of this work is valuable and is based on solid evidence. Some is not as well reasoned. Too often the approaches that people take in applying research findings to organizational behavior are missing the fundamental basis of what the research findings are actually teaching us.

What one can only surmise from the findings of the best research is just how universal unconscious bias is...in everyone.

While unconscious bias still may not be fully understood, many organizational leaders today at least agree that it is real, prevalent, and a barrier to organizational success. To help bring understanding of unconscious bias to a new level, let’s examine several issues that have been recently researched and brought to public view. Some of these insights are discussed in my books, *ReInventing Diversity: Transforming Organizational Community to Strengthen People, Purpose, and Performance* (2011), and *Everyday Bias: Identifying and Navigating Unconscious Judgments in Our Daily Lives* (2014).

NOT INHERENTLY BAD OR GOOD: IT’S JUST THERE

Our everyday use of the word bias has a distinctly negative connotation. The Merriam-Webster dictionary defines bias as an “unreasoned judgment” or “prejudice.” In working with diversity issues, we have been told repeatedly that bias is bad. Bias carries a stigma. If you are biased, the prevailing discourse suggests you also must be a bigot or one who practices discrimination. Therefore, we must eliminate bias.

We make a fundamental mistake when reducing bias to something purely “bad.” Too often we conflate people’s intentions with the impact of their actual behavior or we make attribution errors. If we believe good people are free of bias, then someone who has bias must be bad and must intend to harm. As a result, people have created “anti-bias” training and



practices. Bias, however, is not inherently bad or good. As discussed in our original paper, bias is a fundamental function of the human mind. It is a danger detector that allows us to navigate the world safely. By attempting to eliminate bias, all too often we have actually driven it more into the unconscious.

In order to expand the conversation, it is critical for us to recognize that these biases can be positive or negative and can have constructive or destructive outcomes.

How does bias occur?

<div>Negative</div> <div>Positive</div>	<div>Constructive uses of negative biases</div> <div>Q2</div>	<div>Destructive uses of negative biases</div> <div>Q1</div>
	<div>Constructive uses of positive biases</div> <div>Q3</div>	<div>Destructive uses of positive biases</div> <div>Q4</div>
	Constructive	Destructive

We are most familiar, of course, with destructive uses of negative bias (Q1). The classic case of someone not being hired or promoted because they belong to a particular group exemplifies this kind of bias. But there are also constructive uses of negative bias (Q2). For example, when we realize that a particular behavior (e.g. raising one’s hand with a knife in it pointed at you) should be avoided or protected against. There may also be constructive uses of positive bias (Q3), as when we recognize that a person with a particular cultural background may be valuable in a certain position in which people from that culture are prevalent. Another example occurs when we decide to hire people with particular “qualifications,” which are simply biases that we have all agreed to and written down. And, finally, there are times when there are destructive uses of positive bias, as when we hire one person because they “feel familiar” and in doing so do not hire someone who is more talented. We live in a web of all of these biases.

CONFRONTING BIAS CONSTRUCTIVELY

Understanding this basic truth is not quite enough. We must be vigilant and recognize biases as they arise. We must not allow the unconscious nature of bias to work as an excuse for the impact of it to continue. For example, we may believe that not having conscious intent is enough to negate the negative impact of something we say or do. We get into an offensive/defensive posture because we don’t have the capacity to look at the issue from anything other than the right/wrong perspective. Past attempts at diversity training have often reflected this moralizing approach. We have tried to show people how wrong they are, thinking that in and of itself would force them to change. The problem is that guilt may seem effective as a motivator, but in reality, it is not. Guilt leads to self-recrimination, which is destructive rather than constructive. More often than not, guilt creates contraction, resistance, forced compliance, and sometimes, backlash.

It has been fascinating to see unconscious bias proliferate as a topic throughout the diversity industry within the past several years. Basically, good and reasoned research done with the purest of intentions gets plugged into the traditional “good person/bad person” paradigm of diversity work. “You may not be biased,” the trainer often says, “but you are unconsciously biased!!”

We believe passionately in the connections between neuroscience research, diversity, and organizational performance. For instance, we know that unconscious bias is present, but how, honestly, can we reasonably castigate someone for reacting in a way that they don’t even realize is happening in the first place? This is not to suggest that people are not responsible for the impact of their behavior. All of us are responsible for our behavior. Our challenge is to determine whether or not our way of creating opportunities for insight and behavior change is appropriate and effective. After all, what the research clearly shows is that “they” are not the ones who demonstrate bias. “We” are the ones who demonstrate bias. All of us, every day. The key is not to drive people toward guilt, but to move us all toward responsibility. The daunting task of leaders is to create mechanisms to help people

develop an understanding of how these subtle and often invisible dynamics might be benefiting them or affecting them in ways that they haven't realized and haven't always intended.

The reality is that good people develop bias. Bad people develop bias. All people develop bias. The question is: how we can see bias in others if we're not even willing to look at it in ourselves? While there is no question that certain groups are more negatively impacted by bias on a grand societal scale, the limiting patterns of unconscious behavior are not restricted to any one group. All of us have these attitudes and exhibit these behaviors. Effective managers and business leaders must focus on their own assumptions and biases if they expect to have the legitimacy and experience to guide others in acknowledging and confronting their bias.

And here lies the fault lines of neuroscience, personal behavior, organizational behavior, organizational performance and societal health (economic and otherwise). The work needs to be conducted on an organizational level, in a manner that allows individuals and groups to solve problems and create value. But we do this with the understanding that the connections stretch from our organizational learning out to society and the world.



NEW RESEARCH FINDINGS

As Brett Pelham, a social psychologist at the American Psychological Association has said:

“Virtually all bias is unconscious bias. We have learned to trust women to be nurturing and men to be powerful, for example, in much the same way that Pavlov’s puppies trusted ringing bells to predict the arrival of meat powder. If we had to think consciously about keeping our balance, digesting, breathing and perceiving the moon as a celestial sphere rather than a floating coin, we would all fall over, throw up, suffocate, and fail to appreciate the moon’s majestic beauty. Being biased is how we get through life without everything being brand new every time we experience it.”

The new reality that science is teaching us is that virtually everything we do is driven by unconscious thoughts, reactions, feelings, and beliefs. In a way, we are far more robotic in our thinking and actions than we have ever realized. In addition, our automatic thoughts happen much faster than our more careful ones. New research findings are teaching us how unconscious bias forms and operates in the brain. The prefrontal neocortex (PFC) is the part of the brain that most distinguishes humans from all other animals. It gives people the capacity for metacognition, or the capacity to think about our thinking. This makes humans more able to contemplate thoughts and behavior than any other animal. Yet, the “computing power” of the PFC is relatively tiny compared to the far more robust autonomic parts of the brain. In order to conserve our mental resources and the internal chemicals (e.g., glucose) that feed the brain, we naturally rely on our “automatic” functions and reactions. It is not efficient for the brain to stop and really think about each stimulus and response. In fact, it is downright dangerous. Imagine, for example, if we had to stop and think about hitting the brake when somebody stops short in front of us while we are driving. How many of us would react quickly enough to avoid hitting the car?

Since the time of Plato, we have generally believed our rational minds need to “control” our emotional or subconscious minds in order for us to function at the highest level. The reverse appears more likely to be true.

Think about it. If somebody asks “1+1=?” you react pretty quickly. If they ask “223 x 175” you move much more slowly. You need more brainpower. You need to compute, not recite from memory. Assumptions about people fitting into stereotypes operate the same way. It is much quicker and easier

to form the unconscious first impression, “She is/ looks/does _____, so therefore she must be like _____” than it is to say, “Let me stop and see what I can learn about her.”



We are beginning to better understand how this organic mechanism works. The memory connections that we make seem to occur in the hippocampus, a part of the limbic system of the brain next to, and closely associated with, the amygdala. The way it works is actually very logical at some level. Let's say I am walking down the street and a man with a red shirt attacks me. In the hippocampus, “red shirt” becomes connected to pain. Three months later, I meet somebody wearing a red shirt and I begin to feel “uncomfortable” with that person. I may not have any conscious memory that my attacker was wearing a red shirt or that my discomfort has anything to do with the attack at all. It just occurs at the moment as fear of potential danger.

Similarly, imagine that you have grown up watching the whole slew of early sitcoms on television that depicted fathers as the “bread winners” and mothers as the homemakers. You might remember at least a few of them: Ozzie and Harriet; Leave it to Beaver; Father Knows Best; etc. Really, the list is practically endless. In your brain, specifically in your hippocampus, women and domestic chores may have become linked. Then years later, a woman comes into a meeting and, without thinking, you say, “Would you mind getting some coffee?” Or, even more

insidiously, if you are a woman, you automatically get the coffee without even being asked to do so! Yes, we even internalize unconscious biases about people like ourselves.

As I stated earlier, we are learning more and more about this subject and how it functions. Let's now look at examples of research published since the 2007 paper that help illustrate these concepts.

THE HIRING PROCESS

Getting a job is of paramount importance for millions of people around the world, and generally receiving an offer requires going through an interview or even many interviews. We know that our beliefs about people—most of them existing beyond our awareness—lead to automatic thinking and behaviors that inevitably appear when interviewing and hiring. Let's have a look at a few touch points where our unconscious bias surfaces in the hiring process.

“PRIMING EFFECTS”

We are discovering that the information and messages we use to inform our decisions are much more subtle and non-rational than we ever realized. Lawrence Williams, a marketing professor at the University of Colorado and John Bargh, a psychologist at the Automaticity in Cognition, Motivation, and Emotion Lab at Yale University, conducted a series of fascinating experiments³ about a phenomenon they refer to as “the priming effect.” They studied test subjects who were asked to conduct job interviews. Everything about the people they interviewed was structured to be as similar as possible except for the fact that some of the interviewers were given warm drinks while they were conducting the interviews and some cold drinks. Based on nothing more than that, the interviewers who were holding the warm drinks scored their interviewees higher than those holding the cold ones. They attributed a “warmer personality” to these people. We are not certain why such attributions were made.

³ Citations for Williams and Bargh's work can be found at the Yale University Automaticity in Cognition Lab Page: <http://www.yale.edu/acmelab/publications.html>

Perhaps our common societal messaging about people having a “cold heart” or a “warm smile” has created a neurolinguistic encoding within our brains. We also know that a cold hand may be interpreted unconsciously as signaling that a person is less friendly, less healthy, less robust, or less confident. Either way, the result is a non-rational way of conducting interviews and scoring job candidates.

Mikki Hebl and Laura Mannix, two Rice University researchers, found a similar dynamic exists when an interviewer was asked to walk out and meet his or her interview subject in a waiting area⁴. If the interviewee was sitting next to somebody who was perceived to be obese, they rated him or her lower in their interview scores. Talk about guilt by association!

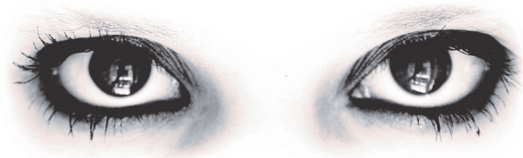
Both of these studies, and many others like them, naturally bother people who believe in fairness and equity in job decisions. After all, how fair is it to be more likely to select somebody simply because they are sitting next to a particular person in the lobby, or because you happen to have a warmer drink in your hand? It seems ridiculous, doesn't it?

However, the more pressing issue to business people may be:

How can we run an effective, productive and profitable organization when we make talent management decisions based on such ludicrous and invisible conditions?

EYES, COFFEE, HONESTY, AND THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

Unconscious bias makes its mark known in many areas involving employees that go well beyond hiring. In another recent study, researchers Melissa Bateson, Daniel Nettle, and Gilbert Roberts at the University of Newcastle-upon-Tyne in Great Britain put signs on the walls of break rooms in companies that asked people to pay for their coffee, tea, and snacks on the “honor system.”⁵ Some of the notes had flowers on them, others photographs of eyes.



COFFEE CLUB

Prices:

Coffee (with or without milk): 50p

Tea (with or without milk): 30p

Milk only (in your own coffee or tea): 10p

Full cup of milk: 30p

Please put your money in the blue tin.

It turned out that people were more honest when the note on the wall had pictures of eyes looking at them rather than flowers. Now why should photos of eyes be more likely to rationally propel anyone toward honesty?

The findings from this study are consistent with a studies conducted by Dan Arielly, the Duke University behavioral economist, who found that students were more honest in grading themselves in tests when they had simply been asked to read the Ten Commandments before taking the test⁶. Feeling like we are being watched or being reminded of our “moral compass” seems to have an impact on us, even when it is simply a piece of paper on the wall or a list to read!

⁴ Michelle R. Hebl and Laura M. Mannix
The Weight of Obesity in Evaluating Others: A Mere Proximity Effect
Pers Soc Psychol Bull January 2003 29: 28-38, doi:10.1177/0146167202238369

⁵ Melissa Bateson, Daniel Nettle, and Gilbert Roberts
Cues of being watched enhance cooperation in a real-world setting
Biol Lett. Sep 22, 2006; 2(3): 412-414. June 27, 2006. doi: 10.1098/rsbl.2006.0509

⁶ Dan Arielly, The Honest Truth About Dishonesty: How We Lie to Everyone--Especially Ourselves, Pub by Harper Perennial June 2013.

ISN'T UNCONSCIOUS BIAS REALLY ABOUT STEREOTYPING?

Now that it has been examined how warm drinks, staring eyes, and the Ten Commandments relate to unconscious bias, let's look at the all-too prevalent thought that unconscious bias is all about stereotyping. It's true that much of what we think of as "bias" has a lot to do with stereotyping, be it racial or addressed to other facets of our identities. However, it may be far more complex than that in reality.

Amy Cuddy, a social psychologist at the Harvard Business School, has conducted some of the most interesting research done on stereotyping.⁷ Cuddy distinguished two basic kinds of bias. One form is based on how warmly we feel toward people and how inclined we are to like them, to be empathetic toward them, and to see them as somebody to whom we can personally relate. The second is based on what we think of the person's competency.



We can see one example of the importance of these distinctions in the current marketplace. One group that has felt the sting of unconscious bias in the recent employment marketplace is people over age 50. While we may have no "dislike" of people in this age group, researchers at Harvard have found that about 90 percent of Americans associate negative

competency traits with the "elderly." What they also found was that these negative ideas were just as prevalent among people who were 60 or older as they were among people 20 or younger. We may "like" somebody very much, and still have strong negative biases about their competency.

All of this research tells us that our decisions that involve stereotyping are neither intentional nor rational. They make no sense; yet, these decisions run our lives, often in unintended ways.

TEN DISTINCT WAYS THAT BIAS SURFACES

Over the course of the past ten years, we have examined hundreds of research studies on unconscious bias. This does not even include all of the anecdotal examples that we have all seen and experienced first hand while working with clients. All of this research leads to the conclusion that there are at least 10 distinct ways that unconscious bias manifests itself in the workplace and in many other areas of life. They are:

1. **Diagnosis Bias:** The propensity to label people, ideas, or things based on our initial perceived opinion. Dozens of studies demonstrate the way our quick decisions about people affect the way we treat them. Simply think of a time when you saw somebody, made an assumption about him or her, and then acted accordingly. How many times have you made assumptions like that about people? The truth is, it has probably happened any time that you've met somebody new. We "scope them out," without having to think about doing it. It is just the way we are "wired."
2. **Pattern Recognition:** The tendency to sort and identify information based on prior experience or habit. This is a fundamental

⁷ Cuddy, Amy J.C., Peter Glick, and Anna Beninger. "The Dynamics of Warmth and Competence Judgments, and Their Outcomes in Organizations." *Research in Organizational Behavior* 31 (2011): 73–98.

protective mechanism of the mind. If we see something in a person that has been dangerous for us—or that we think has been dangerous for us, or even reminds of us something that has been dangerous for us—we don't wait to determine whether or not it will threaten us this time. Instead, we immediately respond. This is very much like staying away from a hot stove after having been burned by one before.

3. **Value Attribution:** The inclination to imbue a person or thing with certain qualities based on initial perceived value. An example of this was an experiment conducted by the Washington Post, when the noted violinist Joshua Bell was asked to play in a subway station in Washington D.C., looking like the typical itinerant subway troubadour.⁸ Almost nobody stopped to listen, even though the night before he had sold out the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts.
4. **Confirmational Behavior:** The tendency to look for what confirms our beliefs and to ignore what contradicts our beliefs while disregarding facts that contradict our point of view. This is often called the “Pygmalion Effect,” or the self-fulfilling prophecy.
5. **Automatic Perception:** The reflexive reaction to a particular person, object or situation based on unconscious associations and expectations. One example of this was a groundbreaking study, conducted at MIT and the University of Chicago, in which identical résumés with “traditionally White” and “traditionally Black” names were sent to companies looking to hire people.⁹ A total of 50 percent more of the people with

traditionally White names were called back for interviews. Similar results were found in studies conducted in Singapore with traditionally dominant Chinese surnames and in Sweden with traditionally dominant Swedish surnames.



Another similar study was recently conducted by Jo Handelsman, a Professor of Molecular, Cellular & Developmental Biology at the Yale School of Medicine. Handelsman gave science professors a one-page synopsis about a potential hire.¹⁰ When the name “John” was put on the document, the candidate was rated a “4” on a 7-point scale and was offered an average starting salary of \$30,328. When the exact same document was distributed with simply the name “Jennifer” replacing “John,” the rating was 3.3 and the salary offered was \$26,508. A stunning aspect of this study was that there was no difference between male and female professors in their relative gender assessments.¹¹

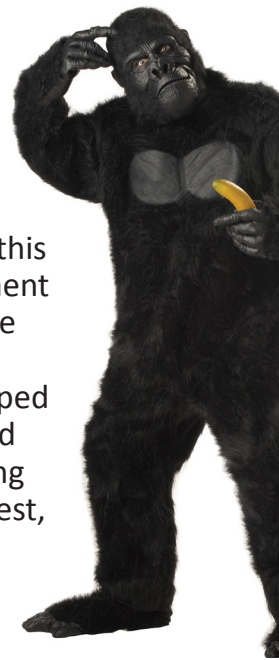
⁸ Gene Weingarten, Pearls Before Breakfast – Can one of the nation’s greatest musicians cut through the fog of a D.C. rush hour? Washington Post, April 8, 2007. <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2007/04/04/AR2007040401721.html>

⁹ Marianne Bertrand and Senhild Mullainathan, Are Emily and Greg More Employable than Lakisha and Jamal? A Field experiment on Labor Market Discrimination. The American Economic Review, Vol 94. No. 4, (September 2004), pp. 991-1013.

¹⁰ Moss-Racusin, C.A., J.F. Dovidio, V.L. Brescoll, M.J. Graham, and J. Handelsman. 2012. Science faculty’s subtle gender biases favor male students. Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences. 109(41): 16474-16479. Anderson, W. A., U. Banerj

¹¹ “Bias Persists for Women of Science, a Study Finds,” New York Times, September 24, 2012

6. **Selective Attention/Inattentional Blindness:** The propensity to see some things and not others dependent upon what a person is paying attention to at a particular moment. This explains why pregnant women tend to see lots of other pregnant women, or when you are thinking of buying a car you seem to see advertisements for that car every time you turn around. It also explains why two people can look at the same picture and see different things. One of the most well known examples of this is the experiment originally conducted by Daniel Simons, a professor in the Department of Psychology and the Beckman Institute for Advanced Science and Technology at the University of Illinois, and Chris Chabris, Associate Professor of Psychology and Co-Director of the Neuroscience Program, Union College.¹² Simons and Chabris developed a video showing two groups of students passing basketballs back and forth and asked the viewers to count the number of times the team in white completed a pass. During the sequence a person in a gorilla suit walks across the scene, stops and beats its chest, and then walks off, and yet few people ever see the gorilla because we are so busy counting the passes!
7. **Priming Effect:** The inclination to respond to something based on expectations created by a previous experience or association. (The “cold drink/hot drink” experiment outlined earlier is a demonstration of this phenomenon.)
8. **Commitment Confirmation/Loss Aversion:** Our tendency to maintain belief or support in something because we have committed to it, and because we want to avoid possible losses. Most of us have experienced this one. We choose somebody for something, perhaps hire him or her, and then are reluctant to admit we made a bad choice. This is kind of like continuing to throw good money into a poker game, even though we know we have a bad hand!
9. **Stereotype Threat:** The experience of anxiety or concern in a situation where a person has the potential to confirm a negative stereotype about their social group. This has often been referred to as “internalized oppression” and was, perhaps, most famously demonstrated in the well-known experiment conducted by Drs. Mamie and Kenneth Clark with black children who, when offered white or black dolls to play with, preferred to play with white dolls.¹³ This important experiment is known to have influenced the U.S. Supreme Court in the 1954 Brown vs. Board of Education school desegregation ruling. In more recent studies, Professor Claude Steele found that simply asking African American students to report their race before taking their SAT tests significantly lowered their scores.¹⁴ Being reminded of being black seemed to internalize a negative performance bias. Similarly, in a 1995 study by psychology professors Margaret Shih, Todd L. Pittinsky and Nalini Ambady, Asian female students were shown to perform significantly higher on math tests when they were reminded of their Asian identity rather than their gender identity.¹⁵
10. **Anchoring Bias:** The common tendency to rely too heavily or “anchor” on one trait or piece of information when making decisions. Nobel Prize winner Daniel Kahneman and his research partner, Amos Tversky, famously identified this bias.¹⁶ For example, do you automatically assume, without questioning, that people who come from elite schools are better qualified than others? Or that certain personality types are “more professional”?



¹² http://www.theinvisiblegorilla.com/gorilla_experiment.html

¹³ Clark, Kenneth; Mamie Clark (1950). “The Negro child in the American social order”. The Journal of Negro Education 19 (3): 341–350

¹⁴ Claude M. Steele and Joshua Aronson, Stereotype Threat and Intellectual Test Performance of African Americans, Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, Vol 69(5), Nov 1995, 797-811. doi: 10.1037/0022-3514.69.5.797

¹⁵ Margaret Shih, Todd L. Pittinsky, and Nalini Ambady, “Stereotype Susceptibility: Shifts in Quantitative Performance from Socio-Cultural Identification,” Psychological Science 10, no. 1 (January 1999): 80–83.

¹⁶ Amos Tversky and Daniel Kahneman, Judgment under Uncertainty: Heuristics and Biases. Science, New Series, Vol. 185, No. 4157. (September 27, 1974), pp. 1124-1131.

CASE STUDY: A GLOBAL MANAGEMENT CONSULTING COMPANY

The Situation: A division of a leading global management consulting company engaged Cook Ross to lead a group intervention for a business line of more than 50,000 employees working worldwide to increase the number of women in senior leadership by focusing on the role of unconscious bias in hiring.

The Cook Ross Work: The effort began by bringing together executive leaders and then a group of 150 senior leaders to engage in dialogue about the impact of unconscious bias on their organizational culture. They subsequently expanded the education effort to include leaders throughout their global system. In addition, an internal train-the-trainer program was created using videoed content and live facilitation. All leaders were exposed to Unconscious bias education. Unconscious bias education was also provided to their accounts, and account leads were held responsible for increasing the diversity on the account teams.

In addition to education, structures and systems were recreated. More jobs were posted so that others outside of those on top of mind could have the opportunity to apply. Each geographical group submitted a diversity strategic plan that they were accountable for delivering on and reporting on it monthly. They also were expected to put together teams to deliver on the plans. All of the human resources functions were tasked with realigning their processes to mitigate bias in the talent management process, and decision-tools were created to encourage more conscious talent management practices.

Top managers also began to make discussions about bias a part of every management meeting and top leaders were vocal in providing leadership for the effort by talking about how their worldview was shaped by their own biases. Individual leaders received coaching to assist them in transforming their leadership approaches.

The Outcome: The division's leadership pipeline gender spread has increased, including a three-fold increase in the number of women applying for, and being accepted into, senior leadership positions. Similar, though less dramatic, increases have been occurring among people of color. As a result, the company is now preparing leaders in most of the other business lines to focus on unconscious bias in talent management systems throughout the organization. This program has expanded to specifically focus on mitigating unconscious bias in the performance management process, as the organization's leaders want to ensure equity in this critical talent management process.

CONSCIOUS OR UNCONSCIOUS: GOOD OR BAD?

All of these manifestations of unconscious bias are operating in us and on us all of the time, without our conscious knowledge. Of course, the question still remains: does it really matter if bias is conscious or unconscious? After all, the net effect on the person whom the bias impacts may be the same. It needs to be made clear that it is necessary to develop both an awareness of our own biases and a rigor in addressing these biases. Too often, it is easier to see bias only in others. Fundamentally understanding the automatic nature of bias requires us to adjust the way we approach dealing with these issues, both with others and within ourselves.

Those who work in diversity have all too often traded in the currency of guilt, either feeling bad about ourselves for our biases or trying to make others feel guilty for theirs. In that context, the core driver

of the conversation has often been to find the “bad people” and cure them of their biases. The goal has been to eradicate bias. As we now can see, it is impossible to eliminate bias.

The goal should be to recognize bias and intervene when and where it interferes with personal, professional, and organizational effectiveness and productivity.

If we believe that it is important to create a just and equitable society and strive to create successful organizations in which everybody can fully contribute and have access to their fair measure of success, it is not consistent for some to people to be discriminated against based on their identification with a particular group. That clearly will not contribute to making smart business decisions, in talent management and other domains. But are the people who feel these biases, those who act this way in all the areas of life...all bad people? Are we bad people? The problem with the good person/bad paradigm is twofold:

- First, it virtually assures that on a collective and individual basis we will never “do diversity right” because every human being has bias of one kind or another.
- Second, it demonstrates a lack of understanding of the reality that bias is as natural to human beings as any function of the mind.

The bottom line is we need it to survive, so we have to work with it.

THE GOOD NEWS: WHAT WE CAN DO ABOUT IT!

A combination of factors has led us to understand, and experience, that the mind is malleable. We seem to have an enormous capacity for neuroplasticity, which involves subtle changes in neural pathways and synapses, which are due to changes in behavior, environment, and experiences. In other words, the old saying “you can’t teach an old dog new tricks” might not even be true for dogs! There appear to be a number of things that we can do to increase our ability to make more conscious decisions. Regardless of someone’s position in an organization or society at large, everyone can take practical and meaningful steps to reduce the influence of unconscious bias on decision-making. Review the steps listed below, which are designated for either individuals or for people who manage others, and pick two or three that speak to you directly.



- **Perhaps the most important of all is this one: You have bias...yes, you...and so do I.** Biases evolve over the course of our lives based on our experiences and the things and people we are exposed to. However, the notion that we can *make* all bias go away is a fantasy. We all have it. All of us. If we didn’t, we wouldn’t survive. Our brains make decisions, and mistakes, without us even knowing it. The more we try to convince ourselves that we are without bias, the more likely we are to overlook and ignore our own blind spots. The more comfortable we become with the reality

of our biases, the more we move away from the notion that they are traits that only bad people possess. This recognition and awareness helps us develop behaviors that limit the negative impact of bias on our lives and the lives of others. As the Swiss psychologist Carl Jung said, “We cannot change anything until we accept it. Condemnation does not liberate, it oppresses!”

It might be helpful to think about our relationships with biases by using the metaphor of the clutch in a standard transmission vehicle. When a driver steps on the clutch to shift gears the engine never stops running. It doesn’t even slow down. It keeps humming along as it always was. However, what the clutch does is to disable the engine’s ability to move the car. I have found this to be a helpful way to look at bias. We do not have to eliminate it in order to mitigate its impact on our behavior. When we notice it, we have the opportunity to choose our behavior in new ways.

- **Consciously develop the capacity to shine a flashlight on yourself.** There is no clear answer as to how much real capacity we have to develop self-awareness.



However, it is clear that checking in with ourselves and learning to watch ourselves in action can bring patterns to the surface. Do you notice yourself reacting consistently

in particular ways or to particular kinds of people? Do certain things, people, or situations consistently trigger an emotional reaction? These kinds of observations can open up a path of exploration that leads to insight and transformation. Research in mindfulness demonstrates that when we slow ourselves down and exercise self-observation, we are more likely to generate awareness from our prefrontal neo-cortex rather than our more automatic limbic system. Perhaps one of the

reasons that many of our most innovative ideas occur to us when we’re in the shower!

- **Develop and practice constructive uncertainty.** We live in a culture that loves certainty. We are often convinced that the more certainty we feel or see expressed about something, the more likely it is to be true. This is why smart people may be more, rather than less, susceptible to unconscious biases. Our intelligence convinces us that we are right. The more we replace our exclamation points with question marks, the more likely we are to be able to see the irrationality of our decision-making.

By observing ourselves in action, we are more able to thoughtfully consider our perspectives. One way to remind ourselves is by using this simple mnemonic, P.A.U.S.E:

- Pay attention to what’s actually happening, beneath the judgments and assessments.
- Acknowledge your own reactions, interpretations, and judgments.
- Understand the other possible reactions, interpretations, and judgments that may be possible.
- Search for the most constructive, empowering, or productive way to deal with the situation.
- Execute your action plan.

See the following page for details about the P.A.U.S.E. mnemonic.

- **Explore awkwardness and discomfort.** Our tendency is to back away from situations that make us feel uncomfortable. Since it appears as though our brain’s default mechanism is to assume “danger in the stranger,” we would be well advised to notice those feelings of fear when they occur. Rather than allow our amygdala (the fear or “fight, flight or freeze” center of the brain) to hijack us, we should take some time to more deeply examine what we are reacting to. Who or what is this person reminding us of?

Pay attention to what's actually happening, beneath the judgments and assessments.

When we slow down and look at what's really happening, we have an opportunity to distinguish between an event and our interpretation of that event. For example, say somebody shakes your hand softly. Do you have a visceral reaction and association with weakness as many people in the United States do? ("Limp!" "Cold fish!") What actually happened is that they used less pressure in the handshake than you are used to with most people. The rest is your interpretation.

Acknowledge your own reactions, interpretations, and judgments.

This is where you have an opportunity to identify your interpretation as an interpretation. You might say something to yourself like, "I can see that when he shook my hand softly, I interpreted that as weakness." As soon as you notice an interpretation, as an interpretation, you have moved to a higher level of consciousness.

Understand the other possible reactions, interpretations, and judgments that may be possible.

There may be any number of other reasons for the behavior. In the case of the handshake, the person may come from a different culture (a significant percentage of people in different parts of the world shake hands more softly than we do in the United States), or may have an injury, or be recovering from an injury. Or they may have arthritis, or—whatever! Looking at all the possibilities reinforces the dis-identification.

Search for the most constructive, empowering, or productive way to deal with the situation.

What makes the most sense? Should I assume that the person is weak because of my initial reaction to his handshake, or should I get to know him a little better before I make a definitive assessment? What should I say? What is the best way to handle the circumstance?

Execute your action plan.

Act consistently with what makes the most sense.



- **Engage with those people you consider “others.”** Because of the nature of our lives, we often find ourselves living with, working with, and relating to people inside a relatively limited bandwidth of human difference. Consciously expanding that bandwidth can give us a broader perspective about people who are different from us. The United States is a more diverse country in 2013 than it was in 2007, and far more diverse than it was in 1997. The diversity of people is increasing, competing for jobs within a tight marketplace and yet, it is imperative that we find ways to engage with those who are different from us in positive ways. Remember that every one of us is an “other” to someone else.



The more we know people for who they are, the less we treat them as what they are.

- **Reframe the conversation to focus on equitable treatment, respect, and good decision-making, and away from only discrimination and “protected classes.”** Review every aspect of the employment life cycle for patterns of hidden bias—screening résumés, interviews, onboarding (bringing new employees on board), assignment processes, mentoring and sponsorship, performance evaluation, identifying high performers, promotion and termination.

Emphasizing the universality of bias allows people to interrelate from a sense of commonality rather than difference. It builds on the human tendency towards homophily, the “love of same,” which leads us to feel more comfortable with people like ourselves.

- **Get feedback and data.** It is almost impossible to rationally look at our own patterns of bias. However, we can review our behavior. Gathering data and getting feedback can be very helpful in determining whether or not there are any patterns of bias in our behavior toward others. If the data show a potential pattern, it should at least be an invitation to look and see whether there is some bias at play. You may want to initiate a résumé study within your industry, organization or department to see whether those with roughly the equivalent education and experience are weighted equally relative to names, race, culture, etc. Conduct an assessment of your organizational unconscious to understand what issues of bias might exist in your workplace. Interviews and surveys with present and former employees also can be helpful in this process. Once people are outside of the culture they often are able to offer valuable insight.
- **Offer customized unconscious bias education based on the needs of different areas in the organization.** When it comes to training and awareness, one size does not fit all. Different functional areas have different cultures, needs, and requirements. In several client engagements Cook Ross has undertaken within the past few years, we have customized approaches to address the specific needs, sometimes even focusing on the specific vocabulary of recruiters, engineers, sales people, marketers, or executive leaders. We also have developed education programs to recalibrate structures for job interviews, performance reviews, and talent assignments/team selection.
- **Support activities that encourage positive images and experiences of members of non-dominant groups.** Research shows that

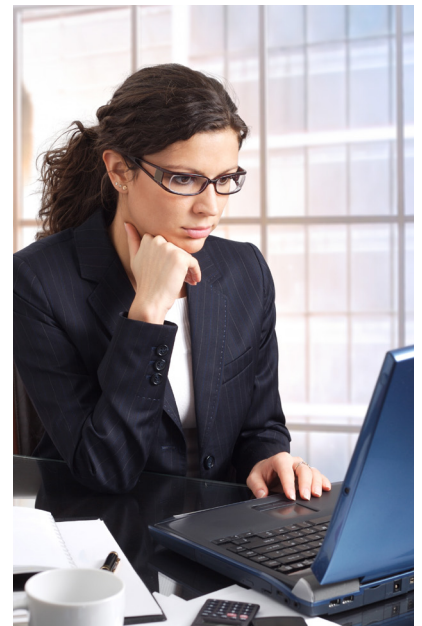


images, posters, newsletters, annual reports, speaker series, podcasts and other exposure can insert positive messaging that can serve to counter negative stereotyping when they are coupled with a genuine attempt to observe behavior and change it. In fact, “positive stereotyping” of this kind has been found to be among the most effective systemic interventions to address patterns of unconscious bias.

- **Reduce guilt and increase responsibility.** While the aversive emotional feeling associated with guilt may discourage an individual from performing a guilt-provoking (and presumably socially undesirable) act in the future, as a long-term strategy is a non-functional reaction. Guilt is what people feel because of what they have done. Responsibility represents an understanding of our impact on others and our commitment to change. When people feel guilty they generally react in one of two ways: by contracting or by feeling bad about themselves. Guilt and shame can make us react to, or get angry at, the source of our guilt. This is altogether unproductive. When we take responsibility, we are able to move forward to correct our mistakes.
- **Develop structures and systems that remove identifiers that might stimulate bias.** Removing names, pictures or other qualifiers can often create a greater sense of equity and inclusion in decision-making.

For example, in the 1970s approximately ten percent of orchestra members were women. As a way to counter-balance this trend, blind auditions were widely developed in which the musician auditioned behind a screen and even walked in on a carpet to mask the sound of high heels.¹⁷ By the mid-1990s, the percentage of women musicians had risen to 35%.

- **Make it a cultural thing.** This may be the most important of all. It is very difficult for an individual to tackle his or her own unconscious biases. If we create an organizational community of consciousness in which people collectively commit to support each other in addressing bias, we are far more likely to have dynamics that we are unaware of brought to our attention. Create environments where different views are welcomed. Build integrated teams and create policies that require colleagues to treat each other with respect and professionalism, not political correctness. In our experience this may be the most impactful result from unconscious bias training when it is done well. It opens up a new, more constructive way to engage in dialogue around issues that we sometimes struggle to talk about.



So far we have been mainly focusing on the ways that individuals can manage their own biases. Now let’s look at some ways to build consciousness into the talent management process.

¹⁷ Claudia Godlin and Cecilia Rouse, Orchestrating Impartiality: The Impact of “Blind” Auditions on Female Musicians, The American Economic Review, Vol. 90, No. 4. (September 2000), pp.715-741.

PRACTICAL STEPS IN THE HUMAN CAPITAL LIFECYCLE

By broadly including people in task groups, they can begin to see themselves as part of a larger, interdependent community in which everyone has skills and equitable opportunities to contribute. Together, as an organizational community, we can look at systems and structures that support better decision-making in areas like recruitment, bringing people on board, assessment and development. Structure creates behavior in organizations and the right structures can encourage more inclusive behaviors.

What are some of the specific behavior that can contribute to more conscious people management? Consider these ideas:

RECRUITMENT

- Note and evaluate your “first impressions.”
- Do you notice an immediate like or dislike of the candidate?
- Do you have anchoring biases about experiences, schools, and personal preferences?
- Avoid distractions or “speed conversations” when talking with potential recruits. Short interactions tend to strongly favor people in dominant groups.
- Attempt to get a deeper understanding of the recruits’ background and the path they took in getting to your door. Non-traditional paths may not show up in traditional ways.
- Make yourself available, both logistically and interpersonally to get a better sense of the potential recruit. Share a personal story. Let them get a better sense of you.
- Track your results for patterns that might reveal biases, including unconscious bias.

ONBOARDING

- Provide cultural, as well as logistic orientation. We often underestimate how important it is to help new employees (especially people from non-dominant

groups) understand the organizational culture and how to successfully navigate it.

- Watch out for early assumptions about a person’s performance. Some people are slower starters than others but they soon catch up and even move ahead of those who seem to be quick learners.
- Make time to personally connect with associates.
- Make yourself available, when possible, to check and see how they’re doing.
- Be systemic, rather than intuitive, in providing opportunities for new associates. Keep track of job assignments and other similar opportunities. Be sure all new associates have multiple opportunities to succeed.

ASSESSMENT

- Make sure there are well-articulated expectations for behaviors and results that can be clearly monitored.
- Use data to balance your “gut” reactions.
- Watch for patterns of assessment among particular groups. Do certain groups tend to receive lower ratings than others?
- Get broad input from different people about an employee. One way to diminish the power of unconscious bias is to include more voices and perspectives in the process of collecting input.
- Be sure you are measuring against “success” rather than your own personal ways of doing things. We are often



unconsciously dismissive of other ways of doing things, not because they are less successful, but because they are not our ways.

- Create a mentorship or sponsorship relationship. Relationships like these not only benefit the protégé, but the mentor or sponsor as well.

DEVELOPMENT

- Expose employees to a broad range of educational and developmental opportunities.
- Create a career development process for your associates, including:
 - Job assignment strategies
 - Clear performance objectives
 - Regular feedback opportunities
 - Ongoing opportunities for growth and development
- Be aware that unstructured processes will tend to benefit the dominant group. Structure allows us to be sure that all employees have opportunities to grow and be successful.
- Monitor your own patterns in assigning tasks. It is easy to slip into patterns that benefit some employees to the exclusion of others.
- Encourage employees to take responsibility for their own development.

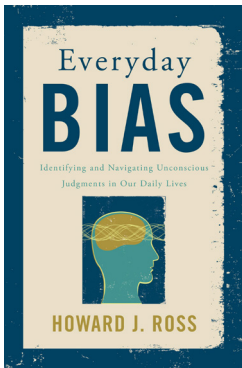
CONCLUSION

Unconscious patterns have an enormous impact on both our individual behavior and on organizational behavior. Only when we find the courage and curiosity to engage in a seemingly contradictory path – consciously becoming aware of and addressing something that is, by nature, concealed – can we begin to see more clearly into our blind spots. As Viktor Frankl wrote:

“Between stimulus and response, there is a space. In that space lies our freedom and power to choose our response. In our response lies our growth and freedom.”¹⁸

Awareness and growth does not happen overnight. Increasing our diversity, inclusiveness, and cultural competency requires us to undertake a long journey of continuously challenging our perceptions and slowing down our impulse to judge instantaneously and reactively. This means we must continually confront unconscious bias. Ultimately, the result will be more conscious, inclusive and humane organizations with greater opportunity for all, more engaged individuals and higher profitability. Isn't that worth the effort?

¹⁸ Frankl, Victor, *Man's Search for Meaning: An Introduction to Logotherapy*, Boston: Beacon Press, 1959.

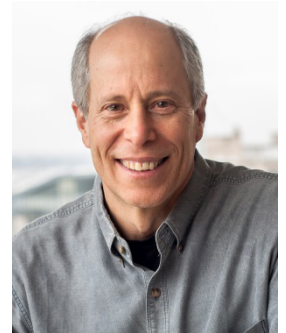


To learn more about unconscious bias and how to address it in your life and organization, check out *Everyday Bias: Identifying and Navigating Unconscious Judgments in Our Daily Lives*, by Howard J. Ross, Published by Rowman and Littlefield, 2014 available at www.cookross.com or amazon.com.

Order now: www.cookross.com | 301.565.4035

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Founder & Chief Learning Officer at Cook Ross Inc., a visionary at heart, **Howard Ross** has served more than 25 years as an influential business consultant to hundreds of organizations across the United States and in 21 other countries, specializing in leadership, diversity, and organizational transformation. As a recognized thought leader, Howard brings invaluable expertise and knowledge on the topic of exploring, revealing and addressing Unconscious Bias. He is the architect of several award-winning training and awareness programs, notably CultureVision and The Diversity Toolkit. He is also the author of *ReInventing Diversity: Transforming Organizational Community to Strengthen People, Purpose & Performance*, published by Rowman Littlefield in association with the Society for Human Resource Management. Howard was the 2007-2008 Johnnetta B. Cole Professor of Diversity-in-Residence at Bennett College for Women, the first time a white man has ever served in such a position at an HBCU (Historically Black Colleges and Universities). He is a frequently invited international speaker for organizations and at diversity and inclusion conferences. Howard can be heard monthly on NPR, as a regular guest on The Kojo Nnamdi Show.



ABOUT COOK ROSS INC.

Cook Ross has over twenty four years of experience in providing an innovative approach to diversity, inclusion, cultural competency, and leadership development through training and consulting products and services. Cook Ross is considered to be a thought leader in the practical application of academic research of the unconscious to organizational diversity & inclusion efforts. For more information, contact us at lookingforanswers@cookross.com.



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Equity, Diversity and Inclusion in Recruitment, Hiring and Retention

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October 4, 2018

Background

The purpose of this fact sheet is to provide guidance to hiring managers seeking to diversify their sustainability staff by applying an equity lens. Recent and historical studies have shown that sustainability and environmental fields lag in their ability to recruit, hire, and retain employees of color.¹ This can be due to a variety of systemic factors including access to social and professional networks and exclusion from the practices of environmental campaigns and organizations, as well as implicit and explicit racial bias in hiring processes.

As our nation, counties, and cities become more diverse and as the challenges that sustainability departments face in addressing climate change grow, it is imperative now more than ever that offices build cadres of professionals that can understand how to work with, support, and galvanize action amongst all diverse communities. The work of sustainability becomes relevant to more people when the perspectives of people of color and low-income communities are represented within the organization and individuals are situated to make decisions that are equitable.

The practices and tools provided in this fact sheet will support USDN members in their evolving practices to achieve increased equity, diversity, and inclusion in their offices by addressing historical discrepancies in recruitment, hiring and retention efforts.

Recruitment

Job descriptions

A job description outlines the responsibilities of the position and desired skills, experience, and abilities to complete a job effectively, but it also communicates the values of your organization. It is worthwhile and strategic to first evaluate how any position being recruited for can advance the equity goals of an organization and how such expectations and responsibilities can be integrated into the job description.

- If the position will work with racially, ethnically and socioeconomically diverse communities, consider adding language like the following:
 - Experience working directly with people from diverse racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic backgrounds.
 - Ability to speak a second language or ability to speak ____ language (if the position will be working with a particular community)
 - Ability to flex communication style to multiple cultural environments
 - Excellent written and verbal communication skills, and ability to present to diverse audiences, specifically racially, ethnically, and socioeconomically diverse communities.

Note: These qualifications are clearer if the cultural elements that are relevant are named. However, they must be written in a manner that does not appear to be a forced disclosure of a protected class².

¹ Taylor, Dorceta. Ph.D. "The State of Diversity in Environmental Organizations: Mainstream NGOs, Foundations & Government Agencies." Green 2.0: <http://www.diversegreen.org/the-challenge/>. July 2014.

² The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission is the federal resource to learn about discrimination law. The list of Federal protected classes is here: <https://www.eeoc.gov/laws/types/>. Your state or local jurisdiction may have identified additional protected classes.

- If the position will be focused on policy, consider the following language:
 - Experience incorporating the perspectives of multiple communities, including [communities of color], in the consideration of impacts and outcomes of a decision-making process.
 - An understanding of the concepts of institutional and structural racism and bias and their impact on underserved and underrepresented communities.
- Highly technical or specialized positions should consider how the position could be structured to support equity goals:
 - Experience considering the impacts of the work on multiple communities, including communities of color, in technical analysis.
 - Experience working on a diverse team
 - Experience working with different communication styles

Member Spotlight: Portland, OR

“We have two outreach and engagement positions that were recently hired for that were designed using our equity lens. Both programs were intended to meet equity goals of the bureau and the Portland Climate Action Plan. One was a mid-level position for our Sustainability at Work program, and the other was an entry-level position for our Public Trash Can program. A depth of understanding of sustainability was less important than great communication skills and the ability to learn quickly and work with others. We realized that we could teach the sustainability components of the job, so it was important to emphasize the ability to build authentic relationships with racially and socio-economically diverse communities in the job descriptions. We also needed people who love engaging with the community and would be able to connect them to important topics in ways that are relevant while also attentively listening to and responding to their needs. Both positions were filled by people of color, and these staff have brought innovative and successful new methods for engagement. The Sustainability at Work Advisor holds office hours in the community at a local nonprofit, and the Public Trash Can program has become a community place making initiative.” – Susan Anderson, Portland, OR

While the membership of USDN is relatively balanced in terms of gender, there are still gender disparities within science and technology fields, which many sustainability related positions include. The following guidance on language for position descriptions from the National Center for Women in Information Technology (NCWIT)³ not only supports inclusion of women, but inclusion of different communication styles found across different cultures:

³ Full PDF of NCWIT Job Description Analysis can be found here:
http://www.ncwit.org/sites/default/files/resources/ncwittips_jobdescriptionanalysis.pdf

BEFORE	RECOMMENDATION
Manages the successful resolution of client issues, including competing demands, sensitive situations, and conflicts with other groups.	Thoughtfully works with the client to resolve issues, including competing demands, sensitive situations, and conflicts with other groups.
Mobilizes team, establishing the tactical plans, projects and objectives needed to accomplish these goals and ensure their attainment.	Mobilizes and encourages team, establishing the specific (or concrete, day-to-day) plans, projects and objectives needed...
Proactively manages the talent in their area, establishing performance goals and objectives, providing ongoing constructive and formal performance feedback and establishing and implementing development plans.	Proactively develops (or nurtures) the talent in their area; co-constructing performance goals, objectives and development plans, and providing ongoing constructive performance feedback.
Manages and resolves the diverse perspectives of stakeholders.	Is sensitive to (or understands) the diverse perspectives of stakeholders and works with them to resolve differences.

Another important strategy is to evaluate the job description for socioeconomic bias. Requirements related to educational background, particularly advanced degrees such as a Bachelor or Master's degree, could be biased against individuals who have relevant professional experience but could not afford a college education.

If a degree is essential, consider if there is bias in the types of degrees mentioned. It may also be most strategic to not specify the type of degree or field of study, unless it is a highly technical position.

- Relevant education background – if you decide to include this portion, consider the range of fields that could be relevant beyond environmental science or ecology. Sustainability professionals come from a variety of backgrounds and benefit from interdisciplinary work environments. Examples of relevant skills from different paths of study:
 - Social work, psychology – important for behavior change and engagement work
 - Communications and marketing – important for engagement and outreach (material development)
 - Business management – developing the business case for sustainability work and communicating this to different audiences, financial modeling and cost benefit analysis
 - Education – important for outreach and engagement work (workshop design)
 - Economics – data and research analysis centered on human experience
 - Public Health – systems approach to various factors impacting individual experiences that support well-being
 - Multicultural studies – culturally competent communication and cross-cultural understanding

Bias checklist

- ✓ Do the minimum qualifications include experiences that can be learned on the job?
- ✓ Are educational requirements being used as a proxy for specific skills that could be attained through some other means?
- ✓ Does the language incorporate communication and management styles that are culturally and gender inclusive?

Diversity, equity, and inclusion statements

By law, you may be required to include an Equal Employment Opportunity Statement in your recruitment. Consider adding your department's equity/diversity/inclusion statement or a value statement that reflects your department's commitment to equity in hiring. This statement should not be added superficially. If one does not exist, work to develop one should be considered as part of a broader diversity strategy for hiring in your department. At the very least the position description should say:

- Department is committed to building a diverse staff and strongly encourages applications from candidates of color, and
- People of color are encouraged to apply.

Outreach

Focused outreach directed towards communities of color can be a highly effective mechanism for increasing the number of qualified applicants of color and balancing the impact of traditional forms of outreach. While broad outreach, like webpage posts and job listing boards, will get a large number of applicants overall, it's important to consider the quality of the reach for the desired pool of candidates — and therefore the return on investment of time and money if such avenues are fee based. Traditional forms of outreach (posts through environmental organization networks) serve to advantage white applicants because they use lines of communication that are expected for those who are already familiar with those networks and in sustainability professions. Relying on traditional forms of outreach can have the unintended outcome of decreasing the percentage of qualified applicants of color in the applicant pool. Such dynamics should also be considered with social media accounts and sending the announcement to schools and other large institutions that may be predominantly white.

Each of the following ways to reach a more diverse applicant base needs to be considered based on its ability to reach candidates with the specific experience and background relevant to the position.

- Community newspapers, news websites run by communities of color
- Multicultural centers or cultural studies departments at local colleges and universities. Ideally a relationship would exist prior to sending; one way is to offer to discuss jobs in government and sustainability with students.
- Historically Black College and Universities (HBCUs), community colleges and schools with a large number of students of color, either graduate or undergrad, alumni associations or current job boards. Look for department contacts in sustainability, planning, or environmental departments.
- Job boards, websites, social media accounts and in-person job or community events hosted by organizations that serve communities of color
- Professional associations (i.e., the National Forum for Black Public Administrators), affinity groups within professional associations (i.e., Latinos and Planning Division, American Planning Association), networks of professionals of color (Environmental Professionals of Color local chapter). Member organizations like the National Society for Black Engineers (NSBE) are usually hosted by a college campus.
- Organizational partners that represent and serve communities of color.
- Affinity or employee resource groups (County Asian Employee Network)

Member Spotlight: Fayetteville, AK

“Our HR department reports that a typical job posting receives 15 applications at the high end for a part-time position and on average, we have less than 1 person of color apply to any City posting. They also estimate that less than 5% of applicants to general City positions are people of color. We received over 26 applications for our (2018) USDN EDI summer fellow, exceeding the general seasonal job numbers. We also had had a much higher percentage of traditionally underrepresented groups, including 1/3 non-white applicants

We targeted our marketing of the position, rather than casting a wide net. For instance, we had face-to-face meetings with a number of groups on campus that are led by students of color and international students and we met with the dean for diversity and inclusion – each of those entities shared the posting within their networks and recommended specific individuals to apply. We had the posting sent out through a listserv that reaches organizations run by students of color, international students, dreamers, etc. We had phone meetings with the student placement office at the local HBCU and with two local community centers in our most racially diverse parts of the region and they all were eager to share the position with their networks. We did reach out to our sister City to the north which is much more racially diverse than Fayetteville and their communications team pushed out the position in their City newsletter and social media platforms.

Because of our success our HR department wanted to talk in depth about how to start incorporating some of the recruiting and marketing practices we employed into their general hiring practices.”

– Peter Nierengarten, Fayetteville, AR

Hiring

Resume reviews and interview panels

When the candidate pool is narrowed to those who are most qualified to perform the duties outlined in the job description, bias, regardless of intent, can often play a role in hiring processes. There are a few things to consider and be aware of through the resume review and interview process that can help neutralize the impact of an individual’s internal biases.

- Briefing session – For resume reviewers and interview panels, spend time to explain your goals for the position and how that ties to the equity work and goals of your organization as part of the criteria for consideration.

Self-Assessment: Do I have bias?

A great resource is the Harvard Implicit Bias Test. This 10-minute test can be included as pre-interview preparation for your hiring panel:

<https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/takeatest.html>

- Resume reviewers and interview panel composition
 - Aim to have diversity on your panel and have a balanced representation of people of color and women at each interview stage. Seek out hiring panel participants from the communities that you partner with or that will be involved in the work the position is performing.
- Bias training – Require all hiring panel members to participate in bias training. This can be as simple as having them review content to make them aware of what bias is and the strategies for addressing bias in an interview process. This handout from the University of Florida serves as a good example: http://training.hr.ufl.edu/resources/LeadershipToolkit/transcripts/Identifying_and_Avoiding_Interview_Biases.pdf

Quick Fact: A recent *Harvard Business Review* article found that if there is only one woman or person of color being considered for a job, the chances of getting hired are weaker. *“The odds of hiring a woman were 79.14 times greater if there were at least two women in the finalist pool,” they write. ‘The odds of hiring a minority were 193.72 times greater if there were at least two minority candidates in the finalist pool.’”*

http://www.slate.com/blogs/xx_factor/2016/04/28/if_you_re_the_only_woman_or_person_of_color_being_considered_for

Member Spotlight: Knoxville, TN

Erin Gill from Knoxville shared how her City is addressing bias in the interview process:

“The City of Knoxville’s Public Service Department implemented a new, more structured approach to hiring in order to help avoid “familiarity bias” or “similar to me bias”. In the new system, (1) Candidates receive a structured interview using a standard set of questions; (2) A diverse interview panel individually scores answers, (3) Interview scores are supplemented by a training and experience questionnaire to create an overall applicant score, (4) Applicants are ranked based on scores and the top five names are sent to hiring managers as openings occur, and (5) jobs are again posted when the list of top-ranked candidates is exhausted.”

Interview questions

The questions asked in an interview are another way to identify a candidate's skills and abilities related to equity skills sets and competencies. Below are example questions that could be included in an interview⁴:

- How do you see yourself contributing to our work on advancing racial equity? (Listen to see if the candidate has past experiences that will add to or enhance the jurisdiction's efforts.)
- Please describe a situation in which you worked on a project with people who were from backgrounds other than your own. What was challenging for you in this work? What did you do to make your work together successful? (Listen to see if the candidate has reflected on the opportunities and challenges of creating inclusive workplace cultures.)
- Please provide examples of ways in which you have worked to eliminate institutional racism in previous jobs. (Listen to see if the candidate has a clear understanding of institutionalized racism and has relevant experience combating institutionalized racism.)

Member Spotlight: Johnson County, KS

Jasmin Moore, while at Johnson County, KS, was a host to a 2016 USDN Building Diversity Fellow. She shared this interview question, which challenged candidates to think about their own story and relationship to the project's health equity focus, while also introducing clear definitions of health equity and inequity from the department:

"Health Equity: Attainment of the highest level of health for all people. *Health Equity means efforts to ensure that all people have full and equal access to opportunities that enable them to lead healthy lives. **Health Inequities:*** Differences in health that are avoidable, unfair, and unjust. *Health inequities are affected by social, economic, and environmental conditions.*

Take a minute to think about when you first became aware of health inequities. If you feel comfortable, please share your story. How did that affect you? Have you worked with or lived in communities who have experienced health inequities?"

Retention

Onboarding

Once your candidate has been hired to a position, it's important to first onboard them with appropriate training to be successful for the job. Government systems often work well for permanent employees, but temporary employees and interns may miss important information in terms of regular onboarding if they are hired

⁴ From: Nelson, Julia and Tyrell, Syreeta. "Public sector jobs: Opportunities for advancing racial equity." Government Alliance for Racial Equity. <http://racialequityalliance.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/Public-Sector-Jobs-Final1.pdf>

differently than other staff. It should go without saying, but ensuring they have access to a computer, a usable work station, are oriented to equipment, the office, and people is essential to a good start. A concerted effort to welcome a new employee to the team, and hosting opportunities for members of the team to get to know one another will accelerate relationship building. Other components of the onboarding process over time can include:

- Discussion on organization culture and norms (i.e., expectations for how to represent the department with the public, communication norms, any expectations on appearance and time).
- Overview of racial equity work, organization functions, and how decisions are made in your agency.
- Connection with a “buddy” or informal mentor to help learn more about what to expect when working for the department and government.
- Connection to activities and networks like affinity groups, lunch and learn sessions, employee gatherings based on their interests.

Such onboarding practices are not specific to employees of color but are important to establish a sense of belonging and welcome for everyone.

Support strategies

Employees of color in predominantly white organizations can face a great deal of social isolation and bias within the workplace. It is important to be cognizant of the unique strengths that each employee of color has, the challenges they may face in the workplace, and methods to support them.

- Build trust – Be open to learning about your employee and their perspective and worldview on sustainability and environmental issues. Be willing to engage on uncomfortable topics, which may include race. Be willing to receive feedback and also provide clear feedback on performance.
- Identify interests – Know what the employee wants to learn and be exposed to. For interns, develop goals that are both work oriented and experience oriented for their short term of employment.
- Build social networks – As a manager, serve as a connector to other individuals and organizations that align with the employee’s interests. Connect to affinity groups, professional associations, and other social groupings that support employees of color. Encourage informational interviews with people at different levels of decision making in the organization.
- Mentors – Identify individuals that can serve as formal or informal mentors to help navigate problems, but also provide assistance in thinking about how to develop professionally. Mentors can be identified through project work, cultural background, or experiences.
- Avoid putting the employee of color in the position to be the sole educator on race. Create an environment that normalizes learning about institutional bias and racism, including self-reflection about one’s relationship to these systems.
- If your employee is drawn to work on diversity and equity, sponsor their participation by endorsing it and supporting them to find balance in their work. Be careful that they are doing this work with a sufficient time and resources and with a group of collaborators to avoid burnout and frustration. Don’t press involvement if the interest isn’t clear.
- Check-in regularly on the experience they are having in the workplace, and if the employee feels they have what they need to be successful.

- Work to identify when dominant culture is impacting the ability of your employee to effectively participate, contribute, or be accepted in the workplace. (i.e., communication styles that favor linear presentation as opposed to non-linear; taking turns vs. jumping in to voice an opinion; responses to showing of different kinds of emotion; defensive responses to bringing up cultural blind spots).
- Normalize self-care especially when a traumatic event has happened or when there is a triggering environment. For example, racially motivated incidents are on the rise across the country and impact people of color differently than white people. Events, even if they are not local, can be very personal because of long-standing racial trauma. Triggering events can also come in the form of microaggressions.⁵ Acknowledging what has happened and creating space for staff to process collectively or individually as they need to will help them to be more present and focused in the long-run.
- Support professional development. Support the employee to seek out and participate in opportunities for training and professional growth.
- Provide learning space. A management style that hovers or micromanages an employee's work prevents staff from gaining confidence in their work product or feeling like they are trusted. Allow the employee to push themselves and focus on what can be learned if a mistake is made.

Member Spotlight: San Antonio, TX

"In my experience, retention is based on making sure the employee feels that they are a part of the team, they are able to share and contribute, they are acknowledged, have opportunity to grow and have some flexibility. I have experienced coworkers leave a position or project, because of the responsibility to be the designated "expert" to the Latino community and not being provided appropriate resources to be genuine or successful. People of color can sometimes be expected to be a cultural expert, a trusted community messenger, translator, and provide cultural training to fellow co-workers amongst other unwritten responsibilities. You feel like a tool instead of feeling empowered to make a genuine change or impact." – Eloisa Portillo-Morales, San Antonio, TX

To be successful, she offered 3 recommendations:

- Dedicated time to build relationships with community organizations that you are expected to connect with. That can mean showing up to their events where we are not driving the agenda.
- Support services such as funding for professional translation services or review for outreach materials.
- Training or Continuing Education to build up cultural skills and competencies.

⁵ For a list of common microaggressions see: <http://sph.umn.edu/site/docs/hewg/microaggressions.pdf>

Stay interviews⁶

Exit interviews occur when an employee has already decided they are ready to end their employment. Stay interviews are a strategy to identify ways to keep a valued employee from leaving. These types of meetings can happen regularly in check-ins, during performance evaluations, or at some other frequent interval. This is a valuable opportunity for a manager to get direct and useful feedback on how to support their employee in the way the employee needs support.

Sample questions:

- What kind of work culture do you work best in? What ideas do you have to create that kind of work culture here?
- What gets in the way of you being as successful as you want to be? What support do you need to get there?
- Do you feel connected to your team members? If not, what has been challenging for you? If so, are there things that we should be doing more of?
- Where do you see yourself growing professionally? Do you see yourself here long-term?
- What types of projects do you find fulfillment in? When are you challenged in a good way?
- What do you want to learn? What goals have you set for yourself?

⁶ For more information see the book: The Stay Interview: A Manager's Guide to Keeping the Best and the Brightest, by Richard Finnegan (2015).

Institutionalization of Racial Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Efforts

Member Spotlight: Dane County, WI

Lisa Mackinnon from Dane County shared that in 2016 they created and funded a new Office for Equity and Inclusion (OEI), a freestanding county department. The purpose of OEI is to improve the county's efforts in promoting racial, gender and disability equity in its workforce, contracting and service opportunities. OEI centralizes equity and outreach efforts throughout county departments and provides support for departments to take on equity initiatives.

The impetus for creating the Office for Equity and Inclusion was a recommendation in the 2015 [Dane County Racial Equity Analysis](#) conducted by the Center for Social Inclusion and the Government Alliance on Race and Equity at the request of the Dane County Board of Supervisors. The Equity Analysis comprehensively examined government operations, policies and practices from a racial equity perspective and enumerated the steps necessary for Dane County to transform into a racially equitable institution. The analysis outlines actions and strategies that, if implemented with urgency, will move the county toward eliminating racial inequities. Among its findings were that there were hiring disparities in hierarchy, function, job classifications and across departments. One of the key steps OEI will take with respect to hiring policy is to attract a more diverse pool of applicants for jobs.

In implementing any of the above strategies, you may find that there are institutional barriers that prevent you from creating the internal systems and practices needed to support your endeavors in a replicable and scalable way.

Using an equity lens on hiring efforts can be a helpful tool to advance change at a larger institutional level. These efforts take time but will support your long-term equity objectives. Here are a few suggested actions to get you started:

1. Ask for disaggregated data from your HR department for all of the hires for the last ten years. This information should exist to be compliant with Civil Rights law.
 - a. What does the data show across race? What is the nature of the recruitment, hiring, and retention disparity?
 - b. Does the department workforce reflect the racial diversity of the community served?
 - c. Are management and leadership racially diverse?
 - d. Do employees of color stay with the organization?
 - i. How much are employees of color paid in comparison to white counterparts in similar positions?
 - ii. How frequently do they get promoted? How long does it take to get a career advancement opportunity?
 - e. How does this compare to the jurisdiction as a whole?
 - f. What information has already been collected to understand the disparity and why it exists?
2. Identify current tools and initiatives that are intended to support equity, diversity, and inclusion.

- a. What are the jurisdiction-wide strategies and goals around recruitment, hiring, and retention?
 - b. What has been accomplished so far?
 - c. If it isn't successful, why not? Do efforts specifically address institutional racism and bias?
 - d. How does your jurisdiction's Affirmative Action framework support or hinder your efforts?
3. Develop a strategy
- a. Develop a narrative that uses data (quantitative and qualitative) as the base for describing the problem and the need. Incorporate your experience as to why the current system is not current meeting your needs, and what you would like to see done.
 - b. Identify who are potential partners in other departments in advancing equitable hiring that can help you in your department.
 - c. What goals can your department set and implement for itself beyond diversity training?
 - d. How will you evaluate your progress over time? What data do you need to track?
 - e. What do you need to advocate for to strategically advance your efforts with Human Resources?

Conclusion

Good management practice is also an active mechanism for advancing equity. The resources listed above are relevant to all employees, regardless of race and can improve talent retention and performance. However, bias and institutional racism will affect employees of color differently than white staff and may even affect each employee of color in the workplace in a different way. So, it is important that any hiring manager who has staff of a different race continue to advance their own learning on cultural competency and systems of privilege and power. This ongoing education will support effective management of high-performing teams and individuals.

Eight conditions for successfully fostering a diverse and inclusive workplace:

1. Leadership must accept and value that a diverse workforce will bring a diversity of perspectives and approaches to work.
2. Leadership must be committed to persevering in the face of inherent challenges that these different perspectives and approaches will bring to an organization.
3. There must be an expectation of high performance from everyone.
4. The organization should design jobs that allow people to grow and be educated.
5. Openness and tolerance for debate must be encouraged by the organizational culture.
6. All workers must be made to feel valued and empowered.
7. The organization must have a clear and well-recognized mission that includes diversity.
8. The organization must be structured to promote the exchange of ideas and welcome constructive challenges as a part of its culture

From: Thomas, David A., and Robin J. Ely. "Making differences matter." Harvard Business Review 74, no. 5 (1996): 79-90.

Resources

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