

Open Buffalo Race, Power and Privilege (RPP) Program

Recommendations for Community Services for Every1 and Agency Responses and Commitments

The following report outlines recommendations from Open Buffalo to institutionalize anti-racism within Community Services for Every1 (Community Services). The report reflects our general findings and some key trends revealed by the data generated from varied sources. Those sources include an Organizational Readiness Questionnaire (20 questions), a Staff Survey (50 questions, results in Appendix D), a Racial Equity Audit (75 questions), internal policy documents provided to us by Community Services, and post-training evaluations submitted by employees who participated in our Race, Power and Privilege (RPP) intensive training between January 25, 2024 and February 2, 2024.

A

Commitment, Governance, and Leadership

RECOMMENDATION		RESPONSE
1	Add language to mission statement that reflects anti-racism. Use North Star Statements to inform this process	Our Equity and Inclusion Statement is finalized.
2	Invest in diverse Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Committee.	Created a DEI committee with subcommittees.
3	Create an official Racial Equity Policy and Action Plan	We created a Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, Accessibility and Belonging policy.
4	Leadership acts consistently around racial equity (e.g. by allocating sufficient resources for equity initiatives, making racial justice a standing agenda item at key meetings)	We are partnering with local organizations to participate in DEI related work groups, trainings and festivals/events. Agency staff at all levels are directly involved in DEI initiatives. We report to our Agency Management and our Agency Board on our activities. We actively welcome people of all diversities in all levels of org, and share data on where we stand.
5	Budgeting practices include defined and measurable investments in racial equity.	The agency has and will continue to commit financial resources.
6	Highlight investments and progress in racial equity in annual report.	We commit to doing this.
7	Conduct an annual survey with the entire workforce to continue monitoring progress in racial equity and cultural responsiveness	We conducted a DEI survey through Open Buffalo in 2023 and will annually assess employee satisfaction and racial equity and cultural responsiveness progress.

B

Racial Equity Policies and Implementation Practices

RECOMMENDATION		RESPONSE
1	Create a Racial Equity Policy and produce progress reports which are available to consumers, partners, and the public. Progress reports can be a simple one-page document. The DEI committee should generate this report.	We are in process and committed to creating Equity and Inclusion policy. We will highlight our progress in future marketing materials.
2	Create and communicate written responsibilities for racial equity and cultural responsiveness for your governing bodies (executives, board members, managers).	We will add to Board Members' Responsibilities. We have added to Leadership and Management job descriptions.
3	Revise board members' "job description" to include a mandate that they attend training sessions on racial equity and formally agree to the principles in the North Star (or racial equity) statement.	Will add to Board Members' Responsibilities and to new Board Members' orientation.
4	To enhance feasibility and sustainability, leverage the time and talents of board members and community stakeholders. Additionally, pursue funding sources that are focused on racial equity (ie. John R. Oishei Foundation, per its newly announced strategic direction).	Applied for and received a Peter and Elizabeth Tower Foundation in 2023 for some of our work with Open Buffalo. We will continue to seek funding for our equity and inclusion work from other sources as possible.

C

Organizational Climate, Culture, and Communications

RECOMMENDATION		RESPONSE
1	Seek opportunities to celebrate your organizational culture, diverse workforce, and service population to generate further pride and confidence in your institution.	We already do this and will continue to do this.
2	Develop a formalized circle of support for staff who are victims of hate speech or discrimination at the hands of the people whom they serve. This difficult challenge arose as a recurring theme during our training sessions.	We commit to doing this. Will evaluate the best ways to support staff in the next 6 months, and the newly formed DEI subcommittees will also be working on ideas in regards to this item.
3	Continue demonstrating positive attitudes and willingness to have conversations about the communities that you serve or should be serving.	We commit to doing this.
4	Consider systematically displaying visible signs of Community Services' commitment to racial equity in your work locations (e.g. signage that states your commitment and/or physical representation of diverse communities via artwork).	We already ensure that our collaterals show our diversity. We will continue to expand and consider artwork that can be a visual sign of acceptance. We will plan how our Equity and Inclusion Statement will be displayed. Our agency name itself is an intentional presentation of acceptance of Every1.

D

Service-Based Equity

RECOMMENDATION		RESPONSE
1	Collect race and ethnicity data on each of the following: those who request service, those who receive service, those referred for specific interventions, and those who succeed and those who don't in your programs/ services. Empower the DEI committee to review this data on a regular basis.	We collect this data on those who choose to receive services from us and those we employ. Our current demographics demonstrate our commitment to supporting and employing all.
2	Continue providing interpreter/translator services for people who speak languages other than English. Contracts for translation services should include quality assurance measures and be regularly reviewed.	We commit to continuing.
3	Develop strategies to ensure that staff know the racial disparities faced by communities of color across their lifespan, and particularly those that limit clients' abilities to improve their health and/or wellbeing; and specific health and wellbeing risks	We will explore how to achieve this in the next 6 months.
4	Devise diverse communication strategies (including trainings) designed and used to build awareness. Develop a system to track progress of these efforts within the organization.	We commit to doing this.
5	Evaluate staff for their ability to practice and implement policies and procedures for racial equity and cultural responsiveness.	Orientation staff evaluates new hires and their cultural responsiveness during New Employee Orientation. Annual evaluations for all positions will be reviewed to ensure this is included.
6	Encourage service providers to continue seeking and validating customer experiences and applying the customer's perspective to future interactions. Consider employee recognitions to incentivize this.	Customer service is one of our core values. We encourage employee recognition for demonstrating this.

E**Service User Voice and Influence**

	RECOMMENDATION	RESPONSE
1	Conduct a client satisfaction survey at least twice a year that minimally includes the following elements: attitude of and treatment by service providers, barriers to service access, cultural responsiveness of services, organizational climate, translation services, organizational welcome, effectiveness of complaint process, and quality of services provided.	We have this in place with our Individual Satisfaction Survey
2	Disaggregate client satisfaction survey report by race, refugee status, language, and for 1st and 2 nd generation immigrants.	To ensure people feel free to share honest feedback, we allow the person who is reporting to remain anonymous.
3	When making evidence-based decisions regarding communities of color, organization should review those decisions with representatives of the impacted communities.	We commit to doing this.
4	Create organizational structures which ensure service-user participation by communities of color (e.g. program planning, service delivery, evaluation, quality improvement, hiring practices, performance appraisal, etc.).	We are committed to ensuring the people we serve are involved in our agency practices, including having people we serve on our Agency Board.

F**Workforce Composition and Quality**

	RECOMMENDATION	RESPONSE
1	Empower the DEI committee to research/ explore the creating an internal structure or position dedicated to promoting workforce diversity (e.g. an officer of diversity or office of diversity). Key components of this new person/entity's work should be succession planning and creating pipelines to the leadership team and support, and retention of frontline workers and mid-level managers, and mitigating the threat of burnout.	The Engagement, Inclusion and Employee Relations Coordinator position has been created and candidates are actively being interviewed.
2	Continue developing plans to Incorporate racial justice knowledge, skills, and practices into performance objectives (e.g. job descriptions, work plans) and appraisals/evaluations for staff.	We have made changes to our Personnel Manual, job descriptions and performance evaluations and will continue to review as needed.
3	Devise a process for annual racial equity training for all staff and board members.	We commit to offering racial equity trainings based on needs and interests of our staff.
4	Explore recruitment practices that emphasize the goal of hiring staff and volunteers who have a proven track record in culturally responsive practice.	The agency interview questions will assess the person's cultural competence.

G

Community Collaboration

	RECOMMENDATION	RESPONSE
1	All hiring committees for all executive positions should include community leaders of color to ensure that community voice and priorities are reflected in hiring decisions. Members of these committees can be recruited from partner organizations, from stakeholders within the communities that you serve, or from within your service population itself.	We commit to doing this.
2	Community collaborators might make good recruits for DEI committee, or focus groups formed by the committee, if interested in testing your ideas with a trusted outside audience.	We will explore with community partners to assess interest in joining.

H

Resource Allocation and Contracting Practices

	RECOMMENDATION	RESPONSE
1	Investigate ways to require or incentivize vendors and contractors to adhere to organization's racial equity practices and policies.	Our bidding policy prioritizes our desire to work with MWBE. Our vendor contracts give clear guidance about our agency practices and expectations, and these are reaffirmed annually.
2	Agency annual report and budget should outline how funding is allocated to reduce specific disparities. This can include program investments, contracting practices, funding provided to DEI committee and activities, sponsorships and contributions to organizations that advance racial equity, racial justice, and anti-racism, scholarships/stipends/education support, wraparound workforce support (ie. childcare, nutrition, etc.)	Our future annual reports will share our work toward equity and celebrate progress.

I

Data, Metrics, and Continuous Quality Improvement

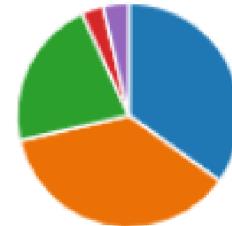
	RECOMMENDATION	RESPONSE
1	Agency expressed a desire to diversify applicant pools for management and leadership team positions, as well as for more of the current employee population to nominate themselves for higher positions. The leadership team should empower the DEI committee to review hiring and employment data and make recommendations for improvements in these areas.	We will seek the DEI Committee input into this. Currently, 75% of Residential Management has been promoted from within and we have eliminated many educational barriers to these positions.
2	Organization should generate a report- disaggregated by race and language of individuals served- which lays out an analysis of services provided. This report should be utilized by board for review and integration into future planning.	We do not currently have a mechanism to collect language, but we collect and share annual demographics of those we support.

Appendix D

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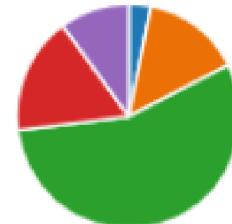
15. I would choose to remain with the organization, even if I were offered a job with similar pay and benefits elsewhere.

- Strongly agree 66
- Agree 69
- Neither agree or disagree 41
- Disagree 6
- Strongly disagree 7



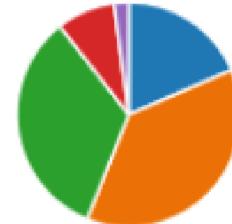
16. Generally, I prefer working with people who share my physical traits, my culture, and/or my political views.

- Strongly agree 6
- Agree 27
- Neither agree or disagree 105
- Disagree 32
- Strongly disagree 19



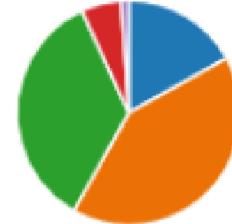
17. I feel comfortable discussing race with others.

- Strongly agree 35
- Agree 71
- Neither agree or disagree 63
- Disagree 16
- Strongly disagree 4



18. I feel comfortable discussing gender with others.

- Strongly agree 32
- Agree 78
- Neither agree or disagree 66
- Disagree 11
- Strongly disagree 2

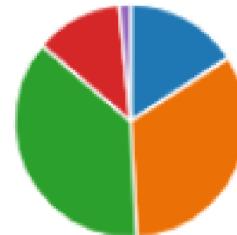


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19. I feel comfortable discussing sexual orientation with others.

Strongly agree	30
Agree	63
Neither agree or disagree	70
Disagree	23
Strongly disagree	3



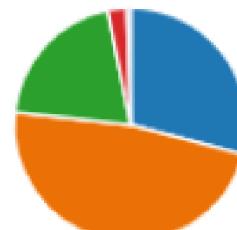
20. I feel comfortable discussing immigration with others.

Strongly agree	30
Agree	68
Neither agree or disagree	70
Disagree	15
Strongly disagree	6



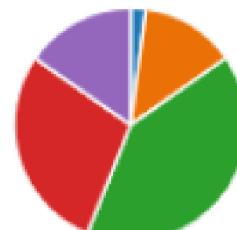
21. I am comfortable working with or serving someone who has limited English skills.

Strongly agree	55
Agree	90
Neither agree or disagree	38
Disagree	5
Strongly disagree	1



22. The way people dress and speak informs me about who they are as a person.

Strongly agree	4
Agree	25
Neither agree or disagree	77
Disagree	54
Strongly disagree	29

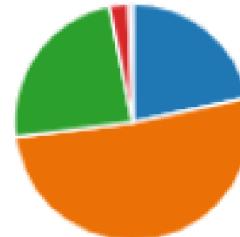


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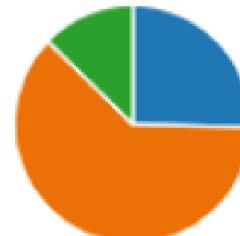
23. I have examined my own biases and prejudices.

Strongly agree	41
Agree	97
Neither agree or disagree	45
Disagree	5
Strongly disagree	1



24. I have observed people within my agency treating others with implicit bias. (Implicit bias is a negative attitude against a specific social group. We are often not conscious or aware of our biases).

Yes	48
No	117
I don't know	24



25. I have observed situations of clear racism within my agency.

Yes	32
No	140
I don't know	17



26. I have been discriminated against in my agency based on my race/ethnicity.

Yes	11
No	158
I don't know	20

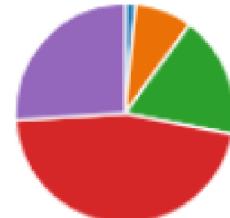


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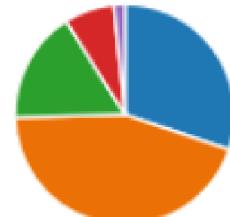
27. I have to adjust the way I speak or dress in order to "fit" into my agency's culture.

Strongly agree	3
Agree	16
Neither agree or disagree	34
Disagree	87
Strongly disagree	49



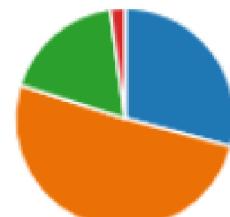
28. When I feel harmed or offended, I usually speak up for myself.

Strongly agree	57
Agree	84
Neither agree or disagree	31
Disagree	14
Strongly disagree	3



29. I feel obligated to speak up for others when they feel harmed or offended.

Strongly agree	55
Agree	96
Neither agree or disagree	34
Disagree	4
Strongly disagree	0



30. All people served by my agency are treated the same, regardless of their race/ethnicity.

Strongly agree	51
Agree	64
Neither agree or disagree	59
Disagree	13
Strongly disagree	2

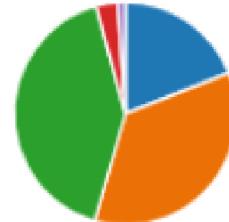


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31. My agency should take public positions opposing racism.

● Strongly agree	36
● Agree	67
● Neither agree or disagree	78
● Disagree	6
● Strongly disagree	2



32. The people working for my agency should reflect the demographics (race/ethnicity) of the community where it is situated.

● Strongly agree	22
● Agree	48
● Neither agree or disagree	97
● Disagree	14
● Strongly disagree	8



33. A percentage of my agency's resources should be allocated specifically to BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, & People of Color) vendors, speakers, and trainers.

● Strongly agree	16
● Agree	49
● Neither agree or disagree	101
● Disagree	13
● Strongly disagree	10



34. I have a safe place to bring and process race-related issues within my agency.

● Strongly agree	38
● Agree	66
● Neither agree or disagree	71
● Disagree	8
● Strongly disagree	6

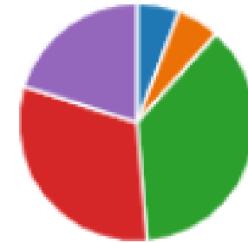


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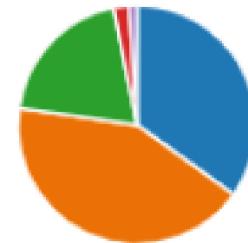
35. I believe there is a glass ceiling based on my race/class/gender on how far I can go within the agency.

Strongly agree	11
Agree	11
Neither agree or disagree	70
Disagree	59
Strongly disagree	38



36. My agency is a safe place for all people in the community, regardless of race.

Strongly agree	66
Agree	80
Neither agree or disagree	37
Disagree	4
Strongly disagree	2



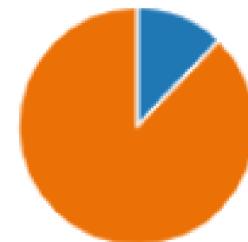
37. I feel safe and valued in my workplace.

Strongly agree	65
Agree	79
Neither agree or disagree	24
Disagree	14
Strongly disagree	7



38. I have felt discriminated against at work.

Yes	23
No	166

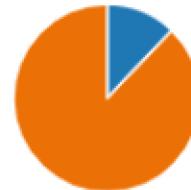


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39. I have felt discriminated against at work by someone in a position of authority.

● Yes	23
● No	166



40. I know who I can speak to within the organization if I feel discriminated against or witness discrimination.

● Yes	163
● No	26



41. My organization has effective systems in place to protect me from racial discrimination within the organization. I feel any concern I bring forth will be handled appropriately.

● Yes	132
● No	11
● I don't know	46



42. I believe every person has the same opportunity to be successful in life, if they work hard enough.

● Strongly agree	67
● Agree	50
● Neither agree or disagree	26
● Disagree	37
● Strongly disagree	9



43. I believe that there are good neighborhoods and bad neighborhoods.

● Strongly agree	47
● Agree	92
● Neither agree or disagree	31
● Disagree	12
● Strongly disagree	7

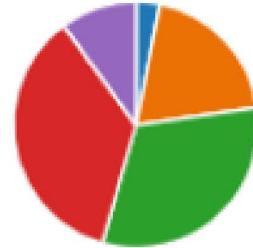


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44. I associate crime with poverty.

Strongly agree	6
Agree	37
Neither agree or disagree	60
Disagree	67
Strongly disagree	19



45. I feel safer working in communities where people of my race/ethnicity are more prevalent.

Strongly agree	3
Agree	26
Neither agree or disagree	82
Disagree	56
Strongly disagree	22

