



**Building DEIB Momentum Amid the War Against DEI**  
Department of Licensing Equity and Inclusion Office  
June 5, 2024



# Workshop Agenda

3:00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Welcome</li> <li>• Introductions</li> <li>• Who we are and what we do</li> <li>• Icebreaker</li> <li>• Agreements</li> <li>• Key Takeaways</li> </ul>	1 min 2 min 5 min 8 min 1 min 3 min	Marianne and Lani
3:20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The War Against DEI Headlines</li> <li>• What are we facing? (video 2:54)</li> <li>• What are the consequences (video 3:13)</li> <li>• Diversity Fatigue (2:22)</li> <li>• How has the anti-DEI sentiment made you feel? (Menti)</li> </ul>	1 min 3 min 4 min 3 min 4 min	Marianne
3:35	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is hope on the horizon</li> <li>• Those entering the work force prioritize DEI</li> <li>• Promising practices to build momentum</li> <li>• Self and community care are critical</li> <li>• What gives you hope? (Menti)</li> </ul>	1 min 1 min 2 min 3 min 4 min	Lani
3:50	BREAK	10 min	All
4:05	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are some self-care practices that work for you?</li> <li>• How do you give to and get from community care?</li> </ul>	5 min 5 min	Lani and Marianne
4:15	Questions and Answers	15 min	All

# Presenting today

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Marianne K. Ozmun-Wells  
Equity and Inclusion Administrator,  
Department of Licensing



Lani Fowlkes  
Service Equity Analyst  
Department of Licensing



# Who we are and what we do

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Yes, we provide licenses to drivers, and we do car tabs, and we do so much more.

- Data
- Identification (critical to “identity”)
- Businesses (we license everything from Architects to Whitewater River outfitters. Next time you buy car, get a tattoo, get your nails done, or go to a gym, check out who issued their business license. Yep, that was us)

We are the second largest revenue generating/collecting agency in the state, collecting \$2.1 billion annually.

Our purpose: ***Helping every Washington resident live, work, drive and thrive***

Our values: ***Respect, Trust, Diversity, Equity, Inclusion***

# Who we are and what we do

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The Equity and Inclusion Office (EIO), affectionately referred to as the E-I-O (cue “Old MacDonald had a farm”), is in the Office of Equity, Performance, and Accountability or OEPA (cue, “the Lion Sleeps Tonight”) within the Director’s Office.



- We equip our employees with the framework, knowledge, and skills to serve customers accessibly and equitably.
- We support customers who feel they might not have experienced equitable access to services and facilities.
- We work with leadership and key business partners to advance and embed diversity, equity, access, inclusion, and belonging.

# Would you Rather?

Spinner game self care “Would you rather?”

Questions generated  
by spinner

(Self care would you rather prepare a healthy meal or go out to eat a healthy meal?)

Participants type their responses in the chat. Chat moderator chooses one or two responses per round.

<https://pickerwheel.com/pw?id=CJ3MM>

# Agreements

- Co-create a trusted space.
  - *We can neither guarantee safety, nor is there an expectation of bravery from those who typically must show up bravely everyday, we can co-create a trusted space through kindness and respectful curiosity.*
- Share your own experiences
- Who you see here, let it stay here, what you learn here, let it leave here
- Listen to learn, not to judge
- Stay curious
- Engage
- What else?

# Key Takeaways

- There is a war against DEI
- Ignoring it is not a strategy
- Negative Impacts of the rhetoric
- DEI Practitioner fatigue
- There is hope on the horizon
- Promising Practices
- We are better together
- Self and Community Care





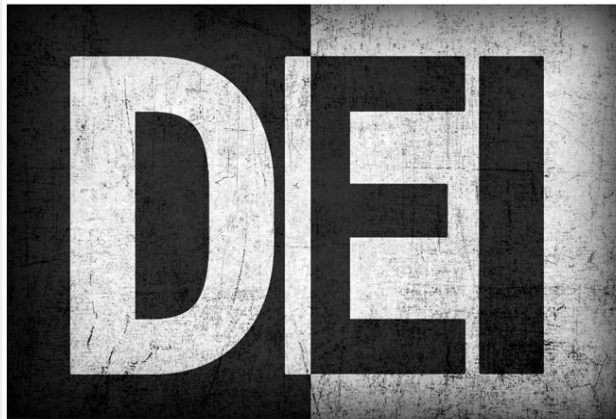
**“Not everything that is faced  
can be changed, but nothing can  
be changed **until it is faced.**”**

*- James Baldwin*

***We need resolve, we must maintain hope, but denial and toxic positivity impede strategy and action; and one of the worst things for equity right now is inaction.***

# What are we facing?

## The Assault on DEI



Republican politicians in early 2023 launched an assault on colleges' diversity, equity, and

## The War on DEI

Republican lawmakers have introduced 40 anti-DEI (diversity, equity, and inclusion) bills targeting higher education institutions since late 2022. The laws take aim at essential institutional practices, including mandatory DEI training for employees, required diversity statements in hiring, DEI office programming, and curriculum and concepts related to systemic racism, sexism, oppression, and privilege.

## How corporate America is slashing DEI workers amid backlash to diversity programs

DEI officers say they've faced cuts in the years since George Floyd's murder.

By [Kiara Alfonseca](#) and [Max Zahn](#)  
July 7, 2023, 3:26 AM



## Anti-DEI Efforts Are the Latest Attack on Racial Equity and Free Speech

Home > News & Insights > State Anti-DEI Initiatives Explained

### State Anti-DEI Initiatives Explained

04.25.2023 | UPDATES

Over the past year, several states have rolled out plans to defund diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) efforts. While these initiatives are focused on state agencies and state-funded higher education, they may cause concern for private employers.

DEI has many definitions, but broadly, the phrase is often used to describe policies or practices that include recruitment, and retention of diverse employees in the workplace, including age, race, sexual orientation, gender identity, and

OPINION

## DEI programs are under fire. Is yours the next target?

Poorly created and implemented DEI initiatives coupled with a lack of training can create significant liability for employers, according to Hunton Andrews Kurth LLP attorneys.

Published Sept. 19, 2023

COMMENTARY · POLITICS

## The war on DEI is the beginning of a coordinated attack on the Civil Rights Act of 1964

BY [ALPHONSO DAVID](#)  
July 24, 2023 at 8:29 AM PDT



## DEI came to colleges with a bang. Now, these red states are on a mission to snuff it out.

 [Alia Wong](#)  
USA TODAY

Published 5:00 a.m. ET March 23, 2023 | Updated 10:38 a.m. ET March 23, 2023

## Anti-DEI movement expands in politics, business and

# What are we facing?

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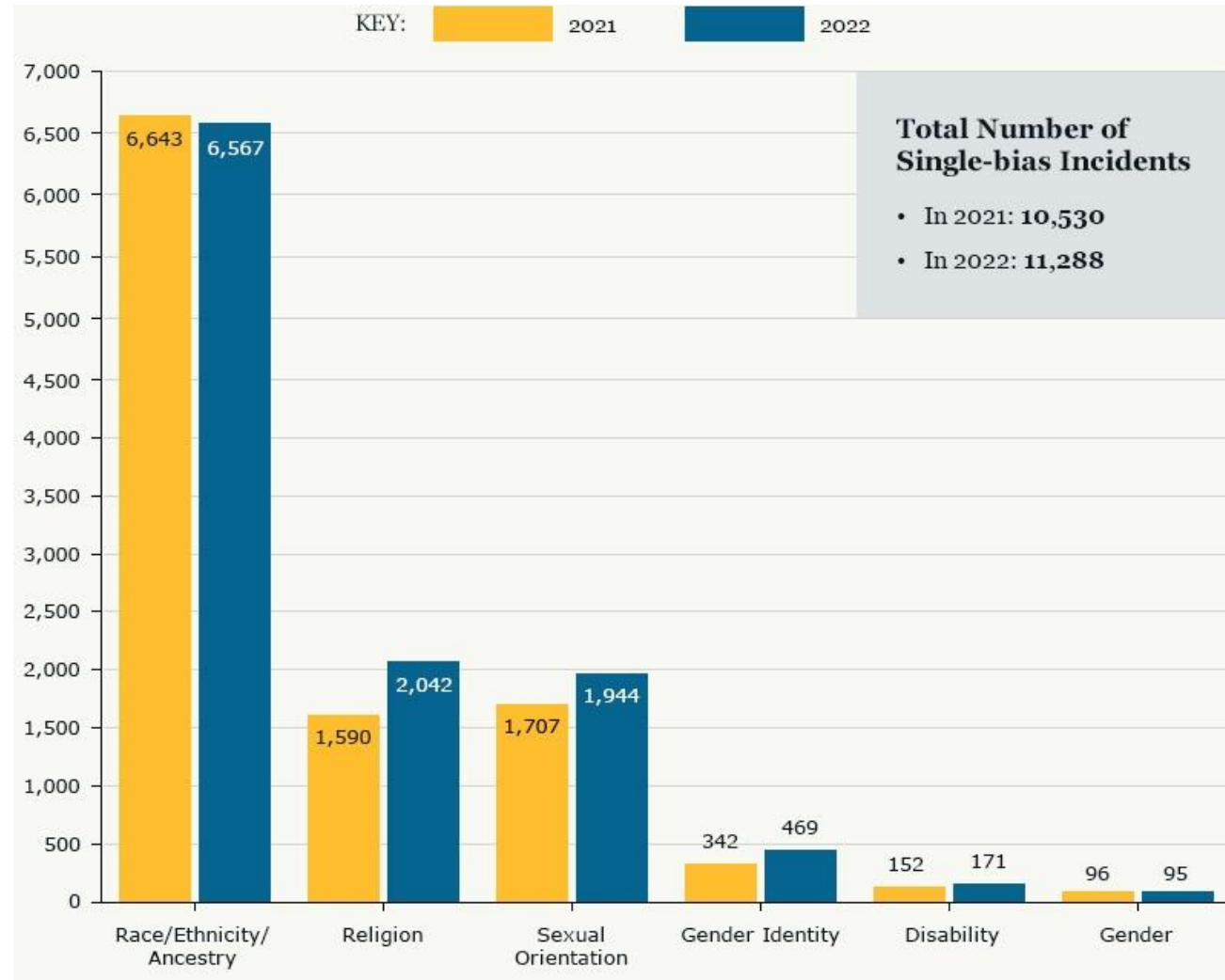


<https://youtu.be/V7TQDhdRWkg>



## Cause and Effect –the Impact

Although hate crimes against persons of color remain the highest percentage of documented hate crimes, racially motivated crimes decreased slightly from 2021 to 2022. During the same period, reported crimes based on religion, sexual orientation, gender identity and disability increased.



<https://www.justice.gov/hatecrimes/hate-crime-statistics>



## Cause and Effect, the Impact (Menti)

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*How has the increasing anti-DEI sentiment made you feel?*

# Cause and Effect, the impact

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**Students mobilize as UT lays off employees under new Texas DEI ban**

<https://youtu.be/iHmjyZmKizU?si=nJPJ-kACETjio3C9>

# Cause and Effect - DEI Burnout

## *Tips for managing*



<https://youtu.be/vkQKtE9j2rk?si=sCxbMp3dH8Qscar>

# Hope on the horizon

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## **DEI is important now and likely more important to our future workforce**

- The majority of workers say it is important.
- The incoming workforce requires it
- Happiness increases in agencies that prioritize it

## **What we have right here right now**

- Some examples of Washington state initiatives, organizations, and programs.

## **Building momentum while caring for ourselves and one another**

- The future of DEI (Affirmity) – Holding on to hope
- Rest as Revolution – what are practices that you personally and communities you are part of, doing to rest, restore, renew? (Mentimeter)



## Despite the backlash, DEI is still important

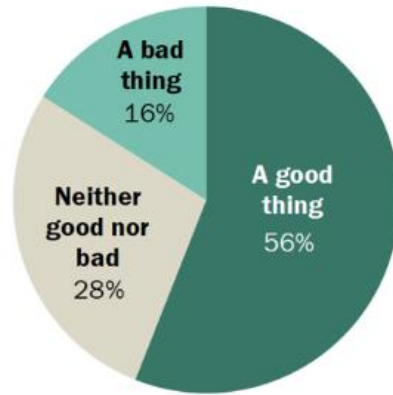
<https://www.pewresearch.org/social-trends/2023/05/17/diversity-equity-and-inclusion-in-the-workplace/>

<https://insightglobal.com/blog/gen-z-diversity-in-the-workplace/>

<https://fitsmallbusiness.com/dei-in-the-workplace/>

### A majority of workers say focusing on DEI at work is a good thing

*% of employed adults saying that in general, focusing on increasing diversity, equity and inclusion at work is mainly ...*



Note: Based on workers who are not self-employed and work at a company or organization with 10 or more people. Share of respondents who didn't offer an answer (<0.5%) not shown.

Source: Survey of U.S. workers conducted Feb. 6-12, 2023.

"Diversity, Equity and Inclusion in the Workplace"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

## Gen-Z in the Workplace



Gen Z workers were born after 1996, so they are the youngest generation currently in the workplace. They are also considered the nation's most diverse generation yet. Let's look at some of the ways this generation defines itself.



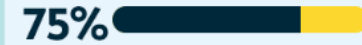
They consider themselves to be:

- Tech-dependent
- Entrepreneurial
- Pragmatic
- Aware of social issues
- Highly aware of the power of diversity and importance of inclusion in the workplace

Gen Z is more passionate about a diverse and inclusive workplace more than any other generation, and they show interest in companies that show a similar passion.



83% said an employer's commitment to diversity and inclusion is significant when choosing where to work.



75% said they'd reconsider applying at a company if they weren't satisfied with their diversity and inclusion efforts.



Nearly 60% believe there should be more "gender-neutral" options on online forms that ask for an individual's gender.



### Diversity Benefits

Happiness scores are **12 points higher** for employees who feel their organizations are doing enough on DEI

What we have right here  
right now

Washington state is  
leading the nation in  
many DEI efforts

- A Robust Office of Equity
- DOL – DEI integrated into everything (values, strategic plan, HR efforts, cross divisions)
- OFM DEI staff started the Let’s Chat About it Podcast – check it out <https://www.youtube.com/@Letschat1010>
- PEAR- PEAR Teams are building up and agencies are now sharing their lessons learned with each other (AGR, OFM, Equity).
- Grassroots efforts to bridge gaps (Language Access Tech group started)
- Business Resources groups across the state and within organizations

***What else is working? What programs or initiatives are “moving the needle in your organization? Drop it in the chat or come off of mute and share.***

# Be Impactful

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Take a strategic and comprehensive approach.  
Formulate and execute impactful DEI initiatives

1. Involving Top Leadership in the Initiatives
2. Creating Strategies and Goals
3. Fostering an Inclusive and Supportive Culture
4. Assessing and Benchmarking Your Current DEI Status
5. Reviewing and Updating the Policies Regularly



Source: [Hi People](#) (Aug 2023)

# Take action

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Benchmark the company's current DEI progress

1. Articulate leadership-level support for DEI initiatives
2. Engage in unbiased hiring practices
3. Invest in ERGs
4. Support mentorship and sponsorship opportunities
5. Offer development programs for underrepresented individuals
6. Host DEI educational events
7. Provide DEI training across levels
8. Craft a plan for communicating about DEI issues
9. Provide progress updates



# Committed and Unwavering

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## **The business case is (even) stronger.**

Diversity is "associated with holistic growth ambitions, greater social impact, and more satisfied workforces."

## **There are still challenges ahead.**

Ensure policies have the desired effect. Adjust. New information and practices are emerging.

## **Change takes time.**

Reverse entrenched approaches that have marginalized certain groups to the benefit of no one.

**DEI is the key to business transformation.** It improves workforce adaptability, innovation and productivity.

# REAL - shifts

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## Shift mindsets, behaviors, and practices toward equity and inclusivity

- **1. *Reveal* relevant opportunities.**
  - Articulate individual and collective perspective, identity, values, and culture
- **2. *Elevate* equity.**
  - Acknowledge societal inequities and recognize that the organization *isn't* always a level playing field.
- **3. *Activate* diversity.**
  - Recognize and engage differences within the employee base.
- **4. *Lead* inclusively.**
  - Inclusion requires active, intentional, and ongoing efforts to promote the full participation

◦ Source: [Center for Creative Leadership](#)

# A call to Action for Rest Now

*Rest is Resistance,  
A manifesto*

*-Tricia Hersey*

*I want you to firmly plant yourself inside your  
imagination.*

*Take refuge in the power and beauty of our community  
care.*

*Take root in our daydreaming.*

*We can rest, build, usher in a new way.*

*We center rest and care no matter what the systems say.*

*Rest is a portal*

*Silence is our pillow.*

*Hold silence with me now*

*Take a deep full breath.*

*Hold for four seconds.*

*Release the shame you feel when resting*

*It does not belong to you.*

# Self Care

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## A Regular Practice of Self-Care

- Prioritizing self-care is not an indulgence. It's a means to recharge.

## Setting Boundaries

- Say 'no' to additional responsibilities when needed, take breaks, and disconnect from work outside office hours.

## Seek Therapy

- Reaching out for support is a sign of strength,

## Promote a Compassionate Culture

- A culture of empathy and understanding fosters an environment where mental health is valued and prioritized.



Source: [LinkedIn](#) (May 2023)



# Self Care

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1. Sleep
2. Log off – Detox from social media weekly, monthly, or more
3. Stay active
4. Stay hydrated
5. Take up a hobby
6. Find a therapist
7. Build a community

**What are some self-care practices that work for you?**

***(Come off of mute, drop in the chat)***

# Build a Community

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1. Create structured groups
2. Host intentional meetings
3. Develop multiple feedback mechanisms
4. Be an ally who takes action
5. Participate in group activities and



# Show Community Care at work

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1. Listen and Validate
2. Intervene in the Moment
3. Be an Ally, Advocate, and Activist

Source: Pepperdine



**How do you give to and get from community care?  
*(Come off of mute, drop in the chat)***

# What Gives you Hope? (Menti)

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What meaningful work,  
accomplishments,  
outcomes, people  
possibilities, bring you  
hope?



# Q&A