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INTRODUCTION & OVERVIEW

ABOUT OSEI

MISSION
To foster an equitable and inclusive Denver by dismantling systemic barriers and creating targeted solutions for historically marginalized populations.

VISION
To be a city where race and social identities no longer predict life outcomes.
February 21, 2024

As Mayor of the City and County of Denver, I’m honored to extend my heartfelt congratulations and deepest gratitude to the Mayor’s Office of Social Equity and Innovation (OSEI) for your outstanding efforts and achievements in advancing social equity and inclusion within our community.

OSEI has exceeded expectations in its mission to dismantle systemic barriers within the City and County of Denver and to foster a city where every resident has the opportunity to thrive, regardless of race, gender, disability, or economic status. OSEI’s dedication to creating a more equitable society is evident in the impactful trainings and initiatives you have implemented.

I am particularly impressed by the data-driven and strategic approach your office has taken in working together with departments, community organizations, and stakeholders to ensure that equity is at the forefront of everything we do. This collaborative spirit is essential for achieving long-lasting and meaningful change.

OSEI has successfully trained over 10,000 employees in the Race and Social Justice Academy, a monumental step in ensuring equity is at the forefront of the work of every department across the city. Additionally, the city has now implemented new employee trainings on recognizing microaggressions, and on equity data and evaluation. These trainings help to identify gaps in information access, and recognize damaging perceptions as a result of sligmas. This, with the creation of Agency Equity Diversity and Inclusion Champions throughout the city and the Racial Equity Council will continue to play a key part in fostering opportunities for healing from generational traumas.

This work is an example of what can be accomplished when passion is paired with purpose, and it inspires all of us to strive for a higher standard of social justice and equity. The challenges may be great, but your resolve and commitment to making a difference in the lives of our citizens are greater.

Thank you once again for your exceptional leadership in our city and for being a beacon of hope and progress. I look forward to our continued partnership and the remarkable achievements as we build a more vibrant Denver.

Sincerely,

Mike Johnston
Mayor
March 14, 2024

I am honored to serve as Executive Director of Denver’s Office of Social Equity & Innovation (OSEI) and thrilled to share both news of how our work developed in 2023 and what we plan to achieve in 2024. Over the past year, our agency has made significant strides in advancing racial and social equity for the City and County of Denver. We have implemented several impactful programs aimed at addressing systemic disparities and promoting inclusivity across various sectors. From our EDI Administrator program which deepens the city’s commitment to equity by ensuring executive charter agencies have designated EDI staff, to the leading the nation in digital equity efforts and driving innovative data programs across the city, OSEI remains deeply committed to ensuring Denver’s commitment to equity is maintained and developed in ways that have measurable positive impacts on our most vulnerable communities and residents.

One of our proudest achievements has been our unwavering support of Mayor Johnson’s initiatives to address homelessness and support newcomers in our city. Given our office’s vision and mission, it made perfect sense for us to work in tireless collaboration with city partners to develop comprehensive strategies that prioritize the needs of these vulnerable populations, providing them with the resources and assistance they require to rebuild their lives. We look forward to helping further develop these efforts in 2024.

Additionally, our agency has been at the forefront of various EDI projects aimed at informing evidence-based policymaking and decision-making processes. By harnessing the power of data analytics, we have been able to identify key areas of intervention, amend processes or reallocate resources based on intervention findings, and measure the outcomes of programmatic changes aimed at more equitable processes and priorities.

Furthermore, I am pleased to announce that we have welcomed several new hires to our team, bringing in diverse perspectives and expertise that will further strengthen our ability to drive positive change. 2023 saw the addition of 3 EDI Administrators (serving the City Attorney’s Office, Department of Safety, and Department of Transportation & Infrastructure), a new Director of Strategy & Learning, a new Public Information Officer, and my appointment as Chief Equity Officer and ED of OSEI. These new additions to OSEI share the office’s passion for social justice and commitment to expanding racial and social equity in local government.

Looking ahead to 2024, we are filled with excitement and anticipation for how the city’s citywide goals will help frame the ongoing development of our office. We are committed to increasing community engagement and fostering meaningful collaborations with stakeholders from all walks of life. Additionally, we are dedicated to enhancing our Racial Equity Action Plan program in partnership with city agencies, as well as embarking on multiagency projects that address intersecting issues of inequity.

As we embrace the challenges and opportunities of the coming year, we do so with unwavering commitment to building regional, statewide, and national partnerships that stabilize and advance the work of equity in local government. As much division continues to threaten American democracy, we stand committed to building a city where race and other social identities no longer predict life outcomes. OSEI remains both compelled and challenged by the immortal words of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. “Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere. We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly.” We look forward to collaborating with you to make Denver one of the most equitable cities in the country.

Best Regards,

Dr. Ben Sanders, III
Chief Equity Officer
Mayor’s Office of Social Equity and Innovation
DATA BY THE NUMBERS

3
EDI Administrators
Hired in 2023

100
People Attended
Data Equity Trainings

98
Denver Digital Equity
Coalition Members

6
Racial Equity Council Members

7
Equity Data Projects with
City Agencies

4
Full Scale Equity Data Analysis
Projects Completed

2
Awards Received for
Outstanding Work

400
Devices (Hotspots and Chromebooks)
Purchased for Community Use with
Our DPL Partner

10,000
Employees Trained in
Race and Social Justice Academy
OSEI hit a training milestone of 10,000 employees trained in the Race and Social Justice Academy.

OSEI released the first Denver Digital Equity Plan in partnership with Denver Public Library, Technology Services, the Denver Digital Equity Coalition, and Internal Committee.

OSEI received a Trailblazers Award from the National Digital Inclusion Alliance for the work done in Digital Equity for Denver.

OSEI began operationalizing its inaugural Equity Indicator Report, “Equity in Denver.” This report is the first of its kind for the city, aiming to provide insights into equity within Denver.

OSEI hired three EDI Administrators in partnership with the City Attorney’s Office, Department of Safety, and Department of Transportation and Infrastructure.

OSEI hired its first Public Information Officer.

OSEI was honored at the Denver PEAK awards for Best Agency Collaboration for work on the Food Interagency Group.

OSEI hired its first Public Information Officer.

A new Director of Strategies & Learning joined OSEI.

A new Chief Equity Officer was appointed.

OSEI hit a training milestone of 10,000 employees trained in the Race and Social Justice Academy.
OSEI STRUCTURE

Chief Equity Officer

Executive Assistant/Office Coordinator

Public Information Officer

Racial Equity Council

Deputy Director

Director of Operations & Innovation

Multi-Agency Equity Initiative Teams

Equity Data Analyst

Director of Data & Evaluation

Director of Race and Social Justice Training & Services

Equity Core Council

Special Program Manager

Digital Equity Program Manager

Digital Equity Coalition

CAO EDI Admin

DOS EDI Admin

DOTI EDI Admin

Race and Social Justice Trainer & Strategist

Race and Social Justice Trainer & Strategist

Race and Social Justice Trainer & Strategist

Multi-Agency Equity Initiative Teams
A significant development this year was the expansion of the Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) Administrators team. The development of this team has catalyzed substantial progress in vital city agencies, many of which benefited from having a dedicated EDI staff member for the first time. The three agencies that hired EDI Administrators in 2023 were the City Attorney’s Office (CAO), the Department of Safety (DOS), and the Department of Transportation and Infrastructure (DOTI). This burgeoning team crafted Denver’s inaugural EDI Administrator Practice Guide and Practice Group tools used to develop, innovate, and collect best and most promising practices in EDI efforts.
In the spring of 2023, OSEI began operationalizing the inaugural Equity Indicator Report, “Equity in Denver,” a comprehensive analysis aimed at dissecting and understanding the persistent inequities in Denver. The report introduces a series of example metrics, or indicators, that should be used to measure Denver’s progress in addressing these disparities. These indicators are not mere numbers; they are a call to action, enabling ongoing assessment and refinement of the city’s equity-focused initiatives. Through this analytical lens, “Equity in Denver” encourages a multi-faceted approach to policymaking and program development, one that is informed, intentional, and inclusive.

Equity in Denver is designed to serve, inform, and engage a wide audience, from city staff and residents to nonprofits, community groups, city leadership, and elected officials. By doing so, it aims to not only illuminate the path to equity but also to empower every stakeholder in the city to actively engage in this momentous journey. This report doesn’t just dwell on the past; it provides a robust framework for understanding and evaluating current and future policies and programs.
DIGITAL EQUITY

The Mayor’s OSEI has made significant strides in 2023 to ensure all its residents have equitable access to the internet, devices, and digital literacy. We updated our definition to align with OSEI’s overall mission, while considering the complexities of intersectionality in historically marginalized groups. In alignment with OSEI’s vision and mission, “Digital Equity” is defined as: when race and other social identities (such as age, gender, immigration status, language, income level or disability) no longer predict access to the internet, devices or digital skills support.

Denver’s Digital Equity Plan, released by OSEI, outlines ambitious goals aimed at bridging the digital divide—a gap that distinguishes between those with ready access to digital technologies and those without. The plan introduces a refined governance structure for digital equity programming, underlining Denver’s commitment to making digital equity a reality for all its citizens.

A pivotal component of Denver’s strategy is the establishment of the Denver Digital Equity Coalition, which expanded from 81 to 98 members in 2023. This coalition brings together city representatives and community partners, including organizations like PCs for People and the Center for Work Education and Employment, highlighting the collaborative effort to enhance digital inclusion across Denver. Read more about the Denver Digital Equity Coalition in our Internal/External Councils section.
In 2023, OSEI leveraged American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) relief funds to bolster the technology resources available at the Denver Public Library, significantly increasing its device library to include 200 Chromebooks and 200 hotspots for community use. This investment is part of a broader initiative to integrate digital resources into existing programming and to innovate new solutions to digital barriers.

Denver’s commitment to digital inclusion was evident in its participation in 14 community digital inclusion fairs, including the Denver Housing Authority and Denver Human Services. These events are integral in reaching out to the community, providing direct access to digital resources and skills development.

In a significant accolade that highlights the city’s efforts, Denver was named a Visionary Trailblazer City by the National Digital Inclusion Alliance in December 2023. This prestigious recognition, the highest awarded, highlights Denver’s achievements in digital equity and positions the city as a model for others to follow.

As Denver continues to innovate and expand the boundaries of digital equity, it remains committed to its strategic plan, that promises further advancements and partnerships in 2024. This ongoing journey not only benefits Denver’s residents but also sets a benchmark for cities nationwide, demonstrating the transformative power of prioritizing digital equity and inclusion.
In an era where access to nutritious food has become a pressing concern, the City and County of Denver has taken a proactive stance with the Denver Food Vision, an ambitious, comprehensive plan aiming to reshape the local food landscape by 2030. Adopted in October 2017, the Denver Food Action Plan has set the groundwork for this visionary journey, demonstrating a commitment to sustainability, equity, and health in the community’s food system. In 2023, FIG’s work continued under the leadership of Denver Public Health and Environment (DDPHE) in partnership with OSEI, Denver Human Services (DHS), Community Planning and Development (CPD), Department of Finance (DOF), Denver Parks and Recreation (DPR), Office of Children Affairs (OCA), Excise and Licensing (EXL), Denver Public Health and Environment (DDPHE), Office of Social Equity and Innovation (OSEI), Department of Transportation and Infrastructure (DOTI), and more. The FIG embodies a collective effort to ensure equitable access to nutritious food, support thriving food businesses, and embed resilience into the core of Denver’s food systems.

One of the FIG’s notable projects is the development of a centralized webpage dedicated to food access in Denver. This online hub aims to consolidate a wealth of resources, from urban farms and farmers’ markets to food pantries and meal programs, as well as information on food business operations, licensing, and federal assistance programs like Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) and Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). By addressing imperative issues such as food waste and zoning policies, the web page will serve as a comprehensive platform for Denver’s community to easily access food-related resources and support.

A testament to its impact and groundbreaking collaboration, the FIG was awarded the prestigious PEAK award for Cross-Agency Collaboration in 2023. As Denver moves forward with its Food Vision towards 2030, the city sets a remarkable example of how collaborative, innovative approaches can address complex challenges in food security and sustainability. With the FIG’s continued efforts and the community’s engagement, Denver is on a promising path to creating a resilient, equitable, and thriving food system for all its residents.
As part of Mayor Johnston’s historic House1000 initiative, in October 2023 OSEI partnered with the Mayor’s Office in the implementation of Urban Gardens within Micro-Communities. This initiative is not just about beautifying spaces or increasing green cover; it’s a strategic effort aimed at fostering community health, vitality, and resilience. Beyond their environmental benefits, these gardens are poised to become havens of mental health support, offering a natural remedy to reduce anxiety, depression, and loneliness among residents.

Mayor Johnston’s strategic initiatives, from the activation of the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) and Homelessness Resolution Operation Center (HROC) to the innovative Urban Gardens within Micro-Communities, illustrate a holistic approach to crisis management and community development. These steps not only address immediate needs, but also lay the groundwork for long-term health, sustainability, and social cohesion in the community. As these programs unfold, they promise to transform the urban landscape into one that supports not just the physical, but also the mental and environmental well-being of its inhabitants.
OSEI staff celebrate the milestone of having 10,000 city employees complete the foundational training in the Race and Social Justice (RSJ) Academy.

As 2023 came to a close, OSEI’s efforts underscored a year defined by growth, adaptation, and a deep commitment to equity, diversity, and inclusion. With a forward-looking approach, the team is poised to continue shaping a more inclusive and equitable Denver, demonstrating the power of shared knowledge and collective action toward driving systemic change.

Responding to national events and local needs, the team orchestrated several initiatives aimed at fostering understanding and dialogue. In the wake of Tyre Nichols’s tragic death in Memphis, the team facilitated citywide listening sessions, creating spaces for reflection and conversation. The team also developed and offered post-RSJ Academy trainings, including “Applying an Equity Lens” and “Understanding & Resisting Microaggressions,” to deepen employees’ engagement with EDI principles.

Another notable tool that OSEI developed was the citywide, virtual Racial Equity Action Plan (REAP) Strategy training. This initiative built upon RSJ Academy by providing further guidance for crafting actionable and measurable REAPs. This training was also customized and delivered individually to agencies that requested it, such as the Department of Housing Stability (HOST), Community Planning and Development (CPD), and the Denver Department of Public Health and Environment (DDPHE), among others.

Additionally, toward the end of 2023, the team created the “Gender Identity: Pronouns, Gender, and How to Be Inclusive” training. After piloting the training in Q1 of 2024, the team intends to roll out this in-person training in Q2 of 2024.
Customized RSJ-level trainings were also adapted for specific community groups, including the People’s Budget Community Steering Committee and Promotoras Climáticas (climate advocates), highlighting the OSEI’s commitment to equipping community members connected to the work of CCD agencies.

Across the year, the team led four quarterly meetings that were intended to reach 300+ staff members across City and County of Denver (CCD) who were dedicated to advancing EDI in their agencies. At these meetings, OSEI staff provided trainings on the REAP dashboard and RSJ dashboard, presented on the Equity in Denver (EID) report, spotlighted the EDI work of various city departments, and trained on the Circle of Influence and Circle of Concern to enhance self-care and effectiveness in equity work. At the final meeting of 2023, 17 peer-nominated Equity Champions from across the city were recognized and celebrated for their commitment and contributions to EDI in their agency.

As 2023 came to a close, OSEI’s efforts underscored a year defined by growth, adaptation, and a deep commitment to equity, diversity, and inclusion.
A pivotal development early in the year was the appointment of an EDI Administrator, a role designed to spearhead the CAO’s EDI initiatives and support executive leadership in integrating EDI concepts into their departments.

The revitalization of the CAO’s EDI Team, and the finalization of its EDI Team Charter, marked key milestones. Through the establishment of officer roles and new meeting cadences, the team has been instrumental in developing and implementing cohesive EDI strategies. These strategies encompass a broad spectrum of initiatives, including:

- The development and implementation of the CAO’s Racial Equity Action Plan (REAP).
- The organization of EDI-centered events, lectures, workshops, and Continuing Legal Education (CLE) sessions.
- Coordination of EDI presentations during CAO town hall meetings.
- Collaboration with EDI professionals to establish goals and performance metrics.
- Provision of advisory support on EDI needs, risks, and issues to leadership.

A significant innovation was the weekly dedication of time during agency-wide town hall meetings to explore issues of cultural and identity awareness, connecting these discussions to the practical application of EDI principles within the CAO. This initiative has fostered a deeper understanding and appreciation for the diverse ways in which EDI is operationalized across different sections, enhancing alignment and collaboration throughout the agency.

Recognizing the existing commitment to EDI, the EDI Administrator introduced EDI Alignment Sessions. These sessions are a strategic approach to engage each section in developing REAP strategies tailored to their specific legal focus areas. Whether supporting client agencies in better operationalizing EDI or exploring ways to foster more inclusive operations and cultures, these strategies are essential in shaping the CAO’s vision for how EDI will influence its support for client agencies and the broader city and county residents in the coming year.

The year concluded with a significant educational initiative, hosting two intensive EDI sessions with Deep Dive DEI. This collaboration focused on developing empathy, resilience, and a broader awareness of the needs of unhoused individuals, further expanding the CAO’s capacity for impactful EDI work.
The Department of Safety (DOS) has taken a significant step by hiring its own EDI Administrator. The EDI Administrator helps to increase awareness among DOS leadership of developments in each department. For example, the monthly ‘EDI Express’ series further equips leaders with the knowledge and tools to advance equity within their teams.

The EDI Administrator has strengthened the connection between equity and budgeting, initiated quarterly meetings to foster collaboration on equity work across DOS departments, and guided EDI teams towards greater stability and effectiveness. Moreover, the EDI Alignment Sessions have united various DOS departments for the first time to collaboratively work on equity, energizing teams and paving the way for new REAP strategies.

Data and evaluation play a principal role in informing and driving equity strategies. The DOS, in partnership with the OSEI’s Data and Evaluation team, has made strides in data-informed decision-making. Efforts range from Community Corrections’ post-training surveys to the Sheriff Department’s strategies to close equity gaps and the Fire Department’s initiatives to improve success rates for women and minorities.

Breaking down silos and fostering inter-departmental collaboration has been another focus area. This approach has facilitated cross-agency training sessions, newsletters, and the creation of joint EDI teams, exemplifying a collective effort to address challenges and achieve success.
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION & INFRASTRUCTURE (DOTI)

In 2023, Denver’s Department of Transportation and Infrastructure (DOTI) hired an EDI Administrator.

EMPOWERING THE WORKFORCE

At the heart of DOTI’s efforts is a commitment to workforce development, highlighted by the creation of a Race and Social Equity SharePoint page. This innovative platform provides DOTI employees with essential resources, offering historical and contextual insights into race and social justice issues in Denver.

A notable initiative was the Career Development Training Day, aimed at boosting internal promotion diversity by enhancing professional development skills, including resume writing and interview techniques. The training explicitly incorporated EDI principles to minimize bias. Remarkably, 99% of DOTI employees completed the Race and Social Justice (RSJ) Academy, a testament to the agency’s commitment to fostering an inclusive culture that champions racial and social equity.
ENHANCING COMMUNITY IMPACT

The Office of Community and Business Engagement (OCBE) introduced a resource hub, guiding staff to prioritize community engagement in project solicitations. Additionally, a public involvement scoping tool was developed to ensure that community projects are executed with equity and meaningful engagement at their core. With 43% community involvement in DOTI high-risk and equity area projects, DOTI demonstrates a strong commitment to collaborating with and empowering local communities.

BOOSTING BUSINESS ENGAGEMENT

In business engagement, DOTI has innovated to create more equitable opportunities for small, minority, and women-owned businesses. The revamped Bagels & Business Program facilitates networking and learning opportunities for these businesses with DOTI leadership, promoting equitable outcomes in contracting opportunities. Furthermore, DOTI’s active participation in Denver’s Citywide Mentor-Protégé Program gives emphasis to its dedication to mentoring minority and women-owned businesses, enabling them to scale and compete more effectively for city projects.
This year, the Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) Team at Denver International Airport (DEN) has redoubled its efforts towards fostering a culture of equity, guided by established best practices. A fundamental development was the formation of specialized subcommittees, comprising strategists and trainers who have played an instrumental role in refining their equity goals and strategies. This approach enabled DEN to conduct in-depth meetings with a wide array of DEN personnel, enhancing our understanding of the diverse teams and initiatives across the airport. This collaborative effort has led to a more nuanced and comprehensive equity planning process.

The refined goals and strategic plans were subsequently presented to the airport’s leadership, securing an elevated commitment to pursue equity initiatives vigorously in the forthcoming year. This progression emphasizes the unflinching dedication to embedding equity principles within DEN’s operational ethos in 2024 and beyond.

Additionally, this year marked the commencement of the Center of Equity and Excellence in Aviation at DEN. This pioneering initiative is dedicated to three core areas: Business Development and Training, Building Career Pathways, and fostering Research and Innovation. This center is poised to be a beacon of equity and excellence, setting new standards in the aviation industry and reinforcing DEN’s commitment to creating inclusive growth and opportunities.
In a year marked by strategic initiatives and compassionate outreach, the Department of Human Services’ (DHS) Equity Ambassador Team has exemplified dedication and adaptability in its mission to foster inclusivity and support for all, particularly newcomers to the city. Beginning the year with a robust team comprising four administrators, including two full-time employees and two interns, the team collaborated closely with the Office of Social Equity and Innovation (OSEI) to align DHS’s equity endeavors with citywide initiatives. Through a comprehensive environmental scan, they gathered exacting data to understand internal equity landscapes, fostering unity and a shared identity among all Equity Ambassadors and Employee Resource Group leaders.

Despite facing staff transitions mid-year, the Equity Ambassadors persevered, establishing new working groups to assess and address equity needs within the Family and Adult Division (FAAD). These groups also embarked on targeted marketing and communications efforts to dismantle stigmas associated with single-caregiver households. Furthermore, DHS has embraced and begun the normalization of a formal Language Access Plan, in alignment with Executive Order (XO) 105, ensuring that services and communications are accessible and inclusive across the agency.

DHS placed a notable focus on bridging service gaps for often overlooked demographics, such as young and older adults, at DHS’s GIVE centers. Through dedicated efforts, the team has not only met but surpassed its objectives in delivering support to these groups, affirming its commitment to reaching all community members.

Additionally, DHS has continued its steadfast support for newcomers that culminated in a year of sustained efforts to respond to their needs. An indispensable move in this endeavor was the hiring of a new position dedicated to managing public information related to the newcomer response, aiming for a more cohesive communication strategy. This role is instrumental in sharing the stories of the city’s newest residents from a perspective that is both human-centered and equitable, embodying the DHS ethos: Human Together.

The year’s achievements certify DHS’s ongoing commitment to equity and inclusivity, reinforcing its role as a beacon of support and unity in the community.
In 2023, the agency for Human Rights and Community Partnerships (HRCP) has further entrenched its commitment to equity, a core tenet that underpins all its programs and initiatives. Recognizing the importance of a unified approach to equity across the department, OSEI embarked on comprehensive collaboration with the leaders of HRCP’s eight divisions.

The primary focus of this collaboration was the development and refinement of Racial Equity Action Plans (REAPs) tailored to each division. This effort involved constructing some REAPs from the ground up to better align with key projects and objectives, while also meticulously refining existing plans. This initiative has significantly enhanced their ability to monitor and track the progress of HRCP’s equity-focused activities. Moreover, it has established a clearer framework for ensuring that the efforts of HRCP and the Office of Social Equity and Innovation (OSEI) continue to move in lockstep.

This strategic endeavor demonstrates the department’s untiring dedication to fostering an equitable environment, both within their organizational structure and in the broader community served. Through these refined REAPs, HRCP is better positioned to advance its equity goals, demonstrating a proactive and thoughtful approach to embedding these principles into every facet of the work.

HRCP’s work in 2023 also included rolling out the Citywide Language Access Plan under Executive Order 150. HRCP created a neighborhood language map so that City agencies and others in Denver can determine the best language to use when engaging in certain neighborhoods. They have also provided no-cost interpreter training with free childcare to individuals in Denver who speak one of Denver’s top languages.
In the continual journey towards fostering an inclusive and equitable environment for all, the Office of Children’s Affairs (OCA) has taken deliberate steps to enhance the structure of the Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) team this year. Recognizing the vital importance of representation, this ensured that each division within OCA is actively represented on the EDI team. This strategic restructuring was aimed at facilitating the integration of diverse perspectives and experiences in their equity initiatives, thereby enriching the approach to creating a more inclusive agency.

Central to the efforts this year has been the alignment of agency values with the Racial Equity Action Plan (REAP). OCA has embarked on an introspective journey to delve deeply into its core values, with the aim of understanding how these principles can be authentically woven into equity work. The goal is for core values and commitment to equity to not only align but to also drive the agency’s actions and decisions, ensuring that they reflect the dedication to serving all children and families with fairness and respect.

To support this endeavor, OSEI has been instrumental, in facilitating agency-wide workshops designed to eventually foster collaborative development of innovative REAP strategies and metrics. These workshops will be fundamental in setting the direction for equity work enabling progress to be tracked with precision and accountability.

Through these initiatives, OCA is not only reinforcing its commitment to equity but also ensuring that all actions are grounded in their core values, guiding towards meaningful and impactful work in the communities served. The collaborative efforts with OSEI enunciates their dedication to continuous improvement and learning, as they strive to make a positive difference in the lives of children and families across the city.
Denver Economic Development and Opportunity has been hard at work continuing to embed equity in their organization throughout 2023. DEDO’s focus has been on equitable hiring, inclusive recruitment, mobility and professional development, organizational inclusion and belonging, program delivery, policy, and procurement. OSEI supported these goals by attending DEDO’s Justice, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (JEDI) team meetings and participating in data-driven conversations around equity in the city.

Throughout 2023, DEDO provided multiple opportunities for small businesses to receive grant funding, including grants supporting “Legacy Businesses”, to recognize and preserve longstanding, independent businesses that have contributed to community character, with strong roots of service with the City and County of Denver. They also supported businesses that had been impacted by nearby encampments. DEDO also continued work on their Neighborhood Activation Program, which helps to increase foot traffic and support growth of local businesses via funding and beautification efforts. Finally, DEDO continued to mitigate displacement of vulnerable populations via their Neighborhood Equity & Stabilization (NEST) program. This program focuses on keeping residents in their homes and uplifting businesses in 17 priority neighborhoods.
In full commitment to empowering its workforce, the Department of General Services has initiated a strategic focus on enhancing digital literacy among employees. Recognizing the integral role that foundational digital skills play in today’s workplace, GS has embarked on a journey to equip its team with essential competencies, including email composition, meeting scheduling, spellcheck utilization, font size adjustments, attachment handling, and proficient use of Word documents. This initiative particularly aims to uplift the most vulnerable staff members, ensuring no one is left behind in their digital transformation.

The inception of this strategy was sparked by insights from staff, who identified a significant gap in digital proficiency within a segment of employees. Addressing this gap has not only facilitated improved communication across the department but has also opened avenues for staff to effectively manage their professional profiles and career opportunities within the Workday system. The enhancement of these skills is anticipated to contribute to career development and upward mobility within the organization.

To gauge the effectiveness and progress of this digital literacy initiative, GS collaborated with OSEI’s Data Team to develop and administer pre- and post-strategy surveys. These tools are instrumental in measuring the growth of digital literacy skills among employees and will continue to inform the approach to fostering a digitally competent workforce.

This ongoing strategy is a testament to the dedication to employee satisfaction and retention. By investing in employees’ digital literacy, GS is enhancing their day-to-day efficiency and reinforcing its commitment to creating an inclusive and supportive workplace environment where every team member has the tools and skills needed to succeed.
Denver Arts & Venues has been a leader in equity work throughout the city for many years and was the first agency to develop an equity platform. They have provided several “how-to” style guides on different equity topics, including equitable hiring, pronoun usage and a demographic survey. DAV has worked closely with OSEI in order to share these resources and ensure that all City agencies have access. Aligning on their equity approach across the city ensures that all those who interact with CCD, whether they be prospective employees or members of our community, are being served in an equitable manner. OSEI helped review this language and supported its distribution.

DAV has also been working hard to embed equity in their contracts, and OSEI has assisted by reviewing this language and working internally to expand OSEI’s offerings to contractors, with a goal of all those who represent the City receiving equity training. OSEI also facilitated the connection between DAV and OSEI’s Digital Equity Specialist, in order to help them find some equitable funding solutions. Finally, OSEI trained DAV’s EDI team on Microaggressions, and will be training all of DAV on microaggressions in 2024.
The Department of Finances’s Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) team embarked on a strategic reorganization at the start of the year, delineating their focus into two specialized groups to enhance their impact both within the organization and in the broader community. The first team is dedicated to equity in hiring and recruitment, streamlining processes to ensure a diverse and inclusive workforce. This includes the development of a comprehensive “DOF 101” course aimed at acclimating new employees to the department’s core values of equity, setting clear expectations, and guiding the hiring of individuals from underrepresented groups.

The second EDI group concentrates on external outreach and event coordination, notably launching their inaugural event, “Equi-Tea.” This gathering featured insights and personal narratives on navigating human services from a majority standpoint, as well as discussing the findings of the “Equity in Denver Report”. The event, which attracted over 80 participants, marks the beginning of a series of both in-person and virtual engagements planned throughout the year to foster dialogue and action on equity issues.

As the EDI team’s scope and capacity expands, they are poised to tackle equity challenges on multiple fronts with greater efficiency. The year’s end saw the formation of an additional initiative from within the EDI team to focus on revising the department’s Racial Equity Action Plans (REAPs), aligning them more closely with the wider strategic objectives of the Department of Finance (DOF). This strategic realignment is a testament to the department’s commitment to embedding equity and inclusion at the heart of its operations and outreach efforts, setting a precedent for meaningful change.
In a collaborative effort to streamline the approach to equity, DDPHE worked alongside the Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) team to consolidate equity goals from Racial Equity Action Plans (REAPs) into a centralized tracking sheet. This initiative simplifies the reporting process and ensures a unified strategy towards achieving equity objectives. OSEI played an essential role in ensuring alignment efforts further solidifying their commitment to cohesive and integrated equity practices across the agency.

This dedication to equity is also evident in the active engagement of equity-focused subcommittees and sprint groups, including the Office of Human Resources (OHR) Talent Acquisition, Celebration and Acknowledgment, and Community Advisory groups. Moreover, DDPHE’s submission of 75 Language Access plans marks a significant milestone towards enhancing engagement with Denver’s diverse communities, ensuring services are accessible to all.

Collaboration with OSEI continued to deepen which included crafting language around current events impacting equity on a larger scale. This partnership ensured that equity statements reflected internal best practices and were responsive to the evolving societal landscape.

Furthermore, OSEI facilitated numerous training sessions for the EDI team and subcommittees, covering topics such as Microaggressions and REAP Strategy, while DDPHE hosted Trauma-Informed and Equity-Centered Care training for both leaders and staff. These educational initiatives have significantly raised the equity knowledge baseline within the staff, empowering the team to integrate equity considerations into daily responsibilities more effectively.

This year’s achievements punctuate DDPHE’s resolved dedication to embedding equity across the agency driving towards the goal of creating a more inclusive and equitable environment for the communities served.
The challenges may be great, but your resolve and commitment to making a difference in the lives of our citizens are greater.

Mike Johnston
Mayor
The Department of Housing Stability (HOST) in Denver has taken a bold step forward in enhancing its Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) initiatives, adopting an organizational structure designed to leverage the diverse strengths of its team members and drive impactful outcomes. In 2023, HOST’s EDI team reorganized its efforts into three distinct categories: Training, Data and Dashboards, and ORESA surveys, a move that has significantly amplified its effectiveness in promoting equity within Denver’s housing sector.

**Training group** within the EDI team focuses on the development and delivery of crucial equity-related training sessions for HOST staff. This proactive group not only creates its educational materials but also collaborates closely with the Office of Social Equity and Innovation (OSEI) to enhance the efficacy of HOST’s training programs. This approach ensures that all HOST staff are equipped with the knowledge and skills needed to advance equity in their work, while fostering a culture of inclusivity and understanding across the department.

**Data-driven equity**

In an era where data is king, the Data and Dashboards group plays an imperative role in embedding equity into HOST’s operations. This segment is dedicated to educating service contractors on equity values, enabling staff to better understand and serve their community, and driving equitable outcomes through data-driven methodologies. A standout achievement of this group is the successful launch of a down payment assistance program specifically designed for individuals or families affected by historical redlining practices. Due to its overwhelming success and high demand, HOST is exploring ways to broaden the program’s scope to include those in areas adjacent to historically redlined neighborhoods.

**Surveying for continuous improvement**

The third pillar of HOST’s EDI strategy involves deploying and analyzing ORESA surveys, which serve as a biennial barometer for equity issues and staff morale within the department. The insights garnered from these surveys directly shape HOST’s internally focused Racial Equity Action Plan (REAP) strategies and contribute to the advancement of its five-year strategic plan, ensuring that HOST’s efforts are continually aligned with its core values of equity and inclusion.

**House 1000 Initiative: A Testament to Equity in Action**

Amid these structural innovations, HOST has also been instrumental in the equitable implementation of Mayor Johnson’s House1000 initiative, a critical endeavor aimed at increasing housing stability across Denver. The dedication of HOST staff to this initiative accentuates the department’s commitment to ensuring that every Denver resident has access to safe, affordable housing, free from the constraints of past inequities.

Through its reimagined EDI team structure and strategic initiatives, HOST is setting a new standard for how housing stability efforts can be integrated with equity, diversity, and inclusion principles. As HOST continues to navigate the challenges and opportunities of advancing housing equity in Denver, its innovative approaches serve as a beacon for other departments and cities alike, demonstrating that with the right structure, strategy, and dedication, meaningful progress is within reach.
The Community Planning and Development (CPD) has taken significant strides in integrating equity into its core functions, with efforts spanning both programmatic initiatives and volunteer committee activities. In the summer of 2023, the CPD’s Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) team undertook a comprehensive update of the Racial Equity Action Plan (REAP). This began with in-depth interviews with supervisors to evaluate ongoing and potential projects aimed at fostering equitable outcomes, including enhancing public access to CPD services. Through this process, over 16 projects were earmarked for continued development or future exploration, emphasizing CPD’s commitment to achieving social equity.

In a collaborative effort to align with broader citywide equity initiatives, CPD partnered with the Office of Social Equity and Innovation (OSEI) to host a forum on the Equity in Denver Report. This event provided an opportunity for staff and the public to delve into discussions about equity challenges and progress within the city.

To further engage its employees in equity and inclusion conversations, CPD expanded its “Coffee Corner,” incorporating updates and notifications about EDI and SPEEC (Supporting Public Engagement and Employee Culture) activities. This initiative offers employees various avenues to participate in cultural celebrations and fosters a more inclusive workplace environment. Notable events included forming a CPD team for the Pride Parade in June and organizing a visit to the Denver Latino Cultural Arts Center in October, demonstrating CPD’s dedication to celebrating diversity.

The department also welcomed the People’s Budget project, previously situated within the Department of Finance, now making its home within CPD. This move signifies a strategic effort to more closely integrate budgeting processes with planning and development goals through an equity lens.

A highlight of CPD’s commitment to cultural preservation and equity was the launch of the second “History in Context” project by the Historic Preservation team, focusing on Indigenous and Native American histories in the region. To ensure the project is carried out in a respectful and accurate manner, an advisory board consisting of representatives from City staff and local Native communities has been established. This board plays an all-important role in guiding the project’s direction and content, ensuring it aligns with the values and perspectives of Indigenous Elders.

These initiatives reflect CPD’s holistic approach to embedding equity within its operations, marking significant progress towards a more inclusive and equitable city planning process.
Denver Parks and Recreation (DPR) is setting a new benchmark for Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) within municipal agencies, demonstrating a clear and efficient approach to integrating these values into every facet of its operations. In a significant stride towards fostering an inclusive environment, DPR has successfully increased its Race and Social Justice (RSJ) Academy completion rate by 30%; a testament to the agency’s commitment to educating its staff on vital EDI principles.

In a bid to extend its EDI efforts beyond full-time employees, DPR initiated targeted training programs for on-call staff and other non-FTE personnel, including lifeguards. This initiative underlines the department’s recognition of the importance of addressing equity across all levels of employment, ensuring that part-time and seasonal workers are also champions of EDI values in their roles.

A notable development in DPR’s EDI journey is the introduction of a mandatory 3 hour implicit bias training specifically designed for leadership positions. This program aims to not only enhance diversity in hiring and promotion practices but also to establish a culture of intentional EDI that permeates the entire agency. By starting with its leaders, DPR demonstrates its commitment to embed EDI principles at all levels of the organization.

Complementing the diversity and bias training, DPR has innovatively woven EDI principles into the fabric of its existing Mentorship Program. By incorporating equity-centered relationship guidelines, the program seeks to align closely with DPR’s broader EDI objectives, fostering a learning environment where mentors and mentees can grow together in their understanding and application of EDI values.

The aspiration of the Mentorship Program is for mentees to become so inspired and equipped with EDI knowledge that they, in turn, take on mentorship roles, perpetuating a cycle of learning and growth. Achieving this goal would signify a significant milestone in embedding EDI into the very heart of DPR’s culture, transforming the department into a model for inclusive excellence.

As Denver Parks and Recreation continues to innovate and lead in EDI initiatives, its strategic efforts are not only enhancing the workplace culture within the department but also setting a precedent for other city agencies. Through education, leadership training, and mentorship, DPR is forging a path towards a more equitable and inclusive future, ensuring that its values of diversity and inclusion are reflected in every park, recreation center, and community space across Denver.
In their dedicated pursuit of fostering sustainable urban environments and enhancing community resilience, the Office of Climate Action, Sustainability, and Resiliency (CASR) has embarked on a collaborative journey with the Pedestrian Dignity Coalition, an innovation firm, and our sister agencies. This partnership aims to implement four place-based engagement processes, each tailored to the unique context of a designated neighborhood. These processes are designed to engage community members directly, ensuring their voices are at the forefront of identifying urgent needs and priority issues through Rapid Assessments.

In 2023, collaborative efforts have focused on facilitating community-driven dialogue, from which the aim is to distill at least 2-4 well-articulated Problem Statements per neighborhood. These statements will serve as a foundation for next steps—co-creating actionable, sustainable solutions with the communities themselves.

This initiative is a testament to CASR’s commitment to not only understanding the specific challenges faced by our communities but also to empowering them in the solution-making process. By aligning strategies with the lived experiences and insights of community members, we are ensuring that our actions are both relevant and impactful, paving the way for more resilient and sustainable neighborhoods.
Throughout the year, the Technology Services (TS) department has undergone significant transformation in their Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) initiatives, a change highlighted by new leadership within the EDI team. This new leadership team is dedicated to embedding equity into every facet of operations. A key element of this journey was the partnership with the Office of Social Equity and Innovation’s (OSEI) Data and Evaluation team, which was instrumental in refining the employee surveys to be both outcomes-focused and equity-centered. This collaboration has been essential in gathering insights that shape the EDI strategies effectively.

The EDI team has achieved notable progress, facilitating a series of meetings to foster open dialogue around equity challenges and to formulate strategic approaches to address these issues. This collaboration with OSEI’s Digital Equity staff through GIS-related equity mapping projects has deepened the integration of equity into the departmental processes of TS. This partnership has enhanced its contributions to the broader equity goals of the City and County of Denver (CCD), emphasizing the significance of internal efforts in the wider context.

Externally, TS has actively engaged in community initiatives that have a direct impact. The work with PCs for People, facilitating the recycling of city electronics, has provided essential technology access to underserved communities. Additionally, through a collaboration with Comcast in establishing “Lift Zones,” we have expanded free internet access to key community spaces, including Boys & Girls Clubs, migrant shelters, and sites associated with the Mayor’s House 1000 project. These initiatives demonstrate TS’s vital role in bridging the digital divide and highlight a commitment to enhancing community access to vital digital resources.

These endeavors reflect an ongoing commitment to both internal and external equity, diversity, and inclusion goals, showcasing the agency’s role in driving meaningful change and improving community well-being through technology and innovation.
In 2023, the Department of Excise and Licenses (EXL) embarked on an important journey to integrate equity more deeply into their operational fabric. The development of a comprehensive tool designed to assess and refine policies and procedures through an equity lens was initiated. Drawing inspiration from the Office of Social Equity and Innovation’s (OSEI) Equity Lens training, this initiative represents a foundational step toward an internal, agency-wide commitment to equity. The goal is to establish a robust resource that not only facilitates the identification of opportunities for equitable improvements in existing practices but also serves as a guiding framework for the development of new policies and procedures.

In parallel with policy review efforts, EXL has placed a significant emphasis on fostering an environment of education and celebration of diversity. Each month, EXL is dedicated to exploring and honoring a specific theme, enriching the agency’s cultural competence and awareness. This year, significant strides were made in educating the entire agency on serious issues such as microaggressions and accessibility. Feedback from an agency-wide survey highlighted the staff’s appreciation for these learning opportunities, along with a strong desire for their continuation. This positive response illuminates the value of these initiatives in promoting a more inclusive and understanding workplace culture.

Together, these efforts reflect EXL’s dedication to advancing equity, diversity, and inclusion within our agency and in the services provided to the community. Commitment to continuous learning and improvement positions EXL to better serve Denver’s diverse city, ensuring that policies and practices are equitable and accessible to all.
In a bold move to champion equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) within its operations, the OHR hired an EDI Administrator in October 2023. This strategic addition gives emphasis to the agency’s commitment to fostering a more inclusive, diverse workplace and operationalizing these values through tangible initiatives and policies.

The EDI Administrator’s mandate is expansive, aiming to weave EDI principles deeply into the fabric of the organization’s culture. One of the initial steps taken was to establish common language around EDI, offering foundational training sessions across various departments. These sessions, sought to equip employees with the tools to view their work through an equity lens and to understand and navigate the nuances of microaggressions and unconscious bias.

Recognizing the profound impact that talent acquisition and retention policies have on organizational diversity, OHR is revisiting these areas with a keen focus on eliminating biases and fostering a workplace that truly reflects the vibrant diversity of Denver itself. This initiative is emblematic of the organization’s broader vision, as encapsulated in its equity statement, which pledges commitment to equity in every decision and action, with the goal of building a resilient, inclusive community.

In addition to setting a strategic direction for EDI, the Administrator has been instrumental in infusing these values into OHR’s goals for 2024, revising equity statements in budget submissions, and leading the OHR EDI Team. This team has been reimagined with a clear mission and vision, actively engaging the broader OHR staff through quarterly meetings and welcoming new members eager to contribute to the EDI journey.

The team’s initiatives are both varied and impactful, ranging from cultural awareness activities and speaker series aimed at advancing social justice, to “Courageous Conversations” designed to foster inclusion. A notable achievement was the successful hosting of an Employee Disability Awareness event, which educated attendees on various disabilities and promoted a more inclusive environment for all city employees.

Looking ahead, the EDI Administrator is spearheading the development of an Equity Audit for 2024, leveraging data from the previous year to inform and refine ongoing and future EDI efforts. This audit, alongside a suite of initiatives planned for the year, represents a structured, data-driven approach to advancing equity within the agency and, by extension, the communities it serves.
In a year marked by transformative growth and commitment to equity, the Denver Public Library’s (DPL) Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) team has experienced significant developments aimed at enhancing its operational effectiveness and impact. Notably, this period saw the addition of four full-time positions dedicated to bolstering the library’s equity initiatives. This strategic expansion reflects the heightened commitment to embedding equity throughout all services and operations.

In collaboration with OSEI, the EDI team embarked on the development of a draft Racial Equity Action Plan. This plan, focused on the revitalization of the EDI team’s structure and function, represents a foundational step towards integrating equity more deeply into the fabric of DPL. Furthermore, OSEI facilitated significant discussions with DPL on the integration of equity within the existing strategic plan. These dialogues aimed to not only identify but also amplify the library’s equity efforts on a broader scale, ensuring alignment with DPL’s overarching strategic objectives.

This year’s efforts illuminate an important moment in DPL’s journey towards a more inclusive and equitable community resource. Through deliberate planning and strategic staffing enhancements, DPL is poised to elevate its commitment to equity, ensuring that it remains a core principle guiding our library’s strategy and services.
DATA PROJECTS

Over the course of 2023, OSEI has produced data analysis and program evaluation across a range of city policies. This data work is rooted in improving equity and has emphasized collaboration across city agencies. These efforts focus on identifying disparities, tracking progress towards achieving equity goals, and assessing the impact of policies and interventions. OSEI seeks to ensure that each initiative is impactful, that resources are judiciously allocated, and that the outcomes tangibly reduce inequities within the communities and agencies served. Through steadfast evaluation and a commitment to data transparency, OSEI has been instrumental in steering city agencies towards realizing meaningful and lasting advancements in equity and social justice by delivering actionable insights and evidence-based strategies, enhancing equity and inclusiveness across various agencies.
OSEI partnered with the Denver Sheriff Department (DSD) on a range of data analysis initiatives aimed at advancing equity within the services provided to individuals in custody. A major milestone was the completion of analysis of the Recovery in a Secure Environment (RISE) program, initiated in 2021 following insights that suggested potential disparities affecting Black women’s admission rates to the program.

This collaboration involved a detailed, multi-phase project where OSEI utilized advanced data analysis techniques to identify and quantify inequities. Working in concert with DSD program managers, OSEI developed and implemented targeted programmatic changes, followed by a thorough re-assessment to measure the impact of these interventions. The findings from this re-evaluation in the summer of 2023 were encouraging, showed that we substantially closed the inequity with a series of small, low or no cost program changes identified by DSD staff.

Moreover, OSEI played a key role in enhancing the recruitment process for DSD’s Lead Data Analyst position, ensuring that a candidate with strong technical skills, a genuine desire to serve people in custody, and commitment to equity was hired.
DENVER FIRE DEPARTMENT (DFD)

Denver Fire Department (DFD) and the Department of Safety’s Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) Administrator have embarked on a data evaluation project. This project is focused on identifying potential inequities in the attrition rates of firefighters within their first year of employment. Upon obtaining the findings from this analysis, we will engage in a strategic partnership with both DFD and Safety HR professionals. Our objective is to devise appropriate, evidence-based interventions that not only address equity concerns specifically but also enhance overall retention rates.

DENVER POLICE DEPARTMENT (DPD)

OSEI, Safety HR, and DPD leadership developed a statistical model of the pattern of officer retirements. This will inform targeted strategies to retain experienced officers, thus preserving their invaluable expertise and promoting an inclusive culture. Additionally, DPD will extend these retention efforts to early-career officers, aiming to strengthen the workforce comprehensively in 2024.
OSEI partnered with the agency for Human Rights & Community Partnerships (HRCP) division, marking an advancement in our commitment to inclusivity and accessibility across the city. This partnership culminated in the development of an innovative data collection process, a comprehensive strategy for analysis, and the implementation of a Power BI dashboard.

HUMAN RIGHTS & COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP (HRCP)

Key projects undertaken by this partnership include the comprehensive Recovery in a Secure Environment (RISE) program analysis, aimed at addressing and rectifying disparities within the program.

SAFETY HUMAN RESOURCES (SAFETY HR)

Key projects undertaken by this partnership include the comprehensive Recovery in a Secure Environment (RISE) program analysis, aimed at addressing and rectifying disparities within the program.

Moreover, Safety HR’s involvement extends to the Equity Data Community of Practice, among other significant projects, showcasing a broad and impactful engagement in fostering a more equitable workplace. The collaboration between Safety HR and OSEI is poised to continue into 2024, with a lineup of joint projects on the horizon, further cementing their role as leaders in the pursuit of workplace equity and inclusion in Denver’s public safety departments.
In an initiative that punctuates Denver’s commitment to inclusive governance OSEI has joined forces with the Budget Management Office to weave equity considerations deeply into the 2024 Budget Cycle processes. The collaboration with OSEI marked a significant stride towards ensuring that Denver’s budgeting reflects and promotes equity across all city services and departments.

The initiative kicked off with a series of meetings attended by hundreds of city staff, where OSEI highlighted the assiduous importance of incorporating equity into the budgeting process. These presentations laid the groundwork for a more inclusive approach to city planning and resource allocation, emphasizing strategies to integrate equity considerations at every step.

To support city staff in this ambitious endeavor, OSEI introduced equity “office hours,” a novel concept that provided staff with the opportunity to seek direct guidance on embedding equity principles into budget proposals. These sessions saw robust participation, indicating a strong citywide commitment to advancing equity through fiscal planning.

A key process of this initiative is the refinement of the “equity rating rubric.” This tool is designed to assess each budget change request, identifying those that either advance equity goals or raise concerns for further scrutiny. Further ensuring the integration of equity into budget discussions, representatives from OSEI were present in every Chief Financial Officer (CFO) meeting. Their role was to evaluate budget requests through an equity lens, pose determinative questions to agency leadership, and identify opportunities for new partnerships that foster continuous collaboration on equity issues.
This work is an example of what can be accomplished when passion is paired with purpose, and it inspires all of us to strive for a higher standard of social justice and equity.

Mike Johnston
Mayor
In March of 2023, the Office of Social Equity and Innovation (OSEI) was pleased to welcome a Public Information Officer (PIO), marking the beginning of an era characterized by enhanced transparency, accuracy, and timeliness in our communications. The PIO has been instrumental in fostering a well-informed and engaged community through the strategic dissemination of information about our office’s initiatives, achievements, and policies. This effort highlights our commitment to advancing equity, inclusiveness, and social justice. The PIO has worked to build and maintain trust, raise awareness of compelling equity issues, and encourage involvement in creating an equitable and inclusive environment. The PIO’s contributions are crucial to ensuring that our message not only reaches but also resonates with the city and county of Denver employees, stakeholders, community partners, and the media.
INTERNAL & EXTERNAL COUNCILS

RACIAL EQUITY COUNCIL

Racial Equity Council (REC) convenes regularly to evaluate and support institutional and structural government systems, policies, and practices through the lens of racial equity (XO 146, 2022). As a diverse, external council of equity-minded experts, the REC serves as a valuable source of connection and collaboration with the community for OSEI.

In 2023, the Racial Equity Council (REC) continued its vital role in guiding the OSEI towards realizing its vision of a more equitable government. Meeting regularly, this council, comprised of a diverse group of equity-minded experts undertook the significant task of evaluating and supporting the refinement of systems, policies, and practices through a focused lens of racial equity. Serving as a vitally important bridge between OSEI and the broader community, the REC fostered collaboration that enriches our collective pursuit of equity.

The year marked a significant milestone for the council as it formalized its governance structure and adopted bylaws, laying a strong foundation for its operations. Additionally, the council members undertook the important process of electing their executive leadership, ensuring that the council is positioned to lead effectively and continue its vital work with clear direction and robust governance.

DENVER DIGITAL EQUITY COALITION

The Denver Digital Equity Coalition has made strides in 2023. The group met consistently throughout 2023, grew from 81 members to 98, and even worked toward its first group project of establishing a best practice guide for or community service providers. The group is not only the largest Digital Equity coalition in Colorado, but the only digital equity coalition known of in Colorado, and we look forward to paving the way as other regions seek to establish their own. We are proud to have representation on the coalition from organizations such as The Community Economic Defense Project, Hunger Free Colorado, Denver Public Schools, and The International Rescue Committee.
In 2023, OSEI welcomed key team members to lead equity efforts.

A new Chief Equity Officer, Dr. Ben Sanders, was appointed by Mayor Mike Johnston, while OSEI also welcomed two new Directors: Claire Colangelo and Karen Davis

Additional members include Franchesca Luistro, Operations Coordinator, and three EDI Administrators: Justin Toomer, Robin Jones, and Jamilla Bryant
As we embrace the challenges and opportunities of the coming year, we do so with unwavering commitment to building regional, statewide, and national partnerships that establish and advance the work of equity in local government.

Dr. Ben Sanders, III
Chief Equity Officer
In a decisive response to the escalating homelessness crisis, Mayor Johnston declared a State of Emergency on July 18, leading to the activation of the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) on July 24. This critical action underscored the launch of the House1000 initiative, a targeted effort to provide shelter for 1,000 individuals experiencing homelessness in Denver by the end of 2023. Achieving this ambitious goal required a multi-disciplinary approach, marked by collaboration across various sectors the implementation of innovative strategies, and the mobilization of essential resources.

The EOC became the operational heart of this initiative, staffed daily by more than 50 committed city employees. Their dedication was central in translating the House1000 vision into actionable steps and measurable outcomes. In October, the initiative’s efforts were further streamlined with the establishment of the Homelessness Resolution Operations Center (HROC), enhancing our capacity to meet the urgent needs of those without shelter.
The Office of Social Equity and Innovation (OSEI) played a vital role in this comprehensive response. Directors and staff from OSEI were actively involved in both the EOC and HROC, integrating an equity perspective into every phase of planning, decision-making, and implementation. This focus ensured that our strategies were inclusive and mindful of the diverse needs of the population we aimed to serve.

Additionally, OSEI took the lead in monitoring progress, ensuring that data collection and analysis were timely and accurate. This rigorous approach to data management was paramount for evaluating the initiative’s impact and guiding future strategies.

Community engagement was also a cornerstone of this approach. The Mayor’s Office facilitated Community Information Meetings to communicate openly with residents near the House1000 shelter sites. These gatherings were instrumental in gathering community feedback, addressing concerns, and fostering a sense of shared purpose. OSEI staff participated in these meetings on a rotating basis, ensuring a consistent flow of community insights into the House1000 strategy.

Our collective efforts under the House1000 initiative reflect our organization’s commitment to addressing homelessness with compassion, innovation, and a focus on equity. This year’s achievements represent a significant step forward in our ongoing mission to create a more inclusive and supportive Denver for all residents.
NEWCOMERS TO DENVER

In 2023, the Office of Social Equity and Innovation (OSEI) played a fundamental role in orchestrating a comprehensive response to the influx of newcomers in Denver, showcasing our commitment to inclusivity and support for all community members. As part of the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) operations, OSEI Directors were instrumental in strategizing and implementing a series of initiatives aimed at welcoming and integrating newcomers by serving in the equity seat in the EOC. These initiatives ranged from organizing gift drives and outreach programs to facilitating work authorization clinics, demonstrating our holistic approach to meeting the diverse needs of those arriving in Denver.

Further emphasizing our dedication to informed decision-making and continuous improvement, OSEI’s Data and Evaluation unit has been at the forefront of developing a robust infrastructure for data collection, reporting, and analysis. This strategic effort enables us to meticulously track the effectiveness of our initiatives, assess outcomes, and refine our strategies to ensure they are responsive to the evolving needs of newcomers.

Additionally, OSEI has actively contributed to addressing housing and sheltering challenges faced by newcomers. This collaboration illuminates OSEI’s commitment to finding innovative and sustainable solutions to one of the most pressing issues associated with welcoming new community members.

Together, these efforts reflect OSEI’s unwavering dedication to fostering an environment of equity and support within Denver. By playing a central role in the city’s response to newcomers, OSEI continues to champion initiatives that not only address immediate needs but also pave the way for the successful integration of newcomers into our community. Our comprehensive approach to this challenge highlights our organization’s capacity for innovation, collaboration, and impactful action in the face of emerging community needs.
We are committed to increasing equitable community engagement and fostering meaningful collaborations with stakeholders from all walks of life.

Dr. Ben Sanders, III
Chief Equity Officer
2024 GOALS

OFFICE OF SOCIAL EQUITY & INNOVATION GOALS

In 2024, the Mayor’s OSEI goals are poised to further embed equity into the very fabric of our operations and external partnerships. Our goals encompass a broad range of initiatives aimed at advancing our commitment to equity, diversity and inclusion, and are as follows:

- Leverage data to identify disparities, inform policy decisions and measure effectiveness of our initiatives
- Advocate for equity in citywide policy and legislation
- Advance digital equity for historically marginalized populations
- Strengthen community engagement by fostering open communication and collaboration between residents and the city.
- Broaden our reach and impact through regional, statewide and national partnerships
- Elevate our city’s capabilities in data analysis with a focus on equity
- Expand our Racial Equity Council to integrate diverse perspectives and expertise into our equity efforts
- Strengthen our partnerships with local media
CITY OF DENVER GOALS

In 2024, the Mayor’s Office of Social Equity and Innovation will play a substantial role in supporting the 2024 Citywide Goals set by Mayor Mike Johnston.

Those goals include:

**VIBRANT DENVER**

**BUILD A SHARED VISION FOR A VIBRANT DENVER**
Engage the public across the 11 council districts to envision vibrant neighborhoods and vibrant downtown, identifying funding for both by Dec. 31, 2024.

**AFFORDABLE DENVER**

**ALL IN MILE HIGH**
Reach a total of 2,000 people moved indoors from unsheltered homelessness by Dec. 31, 2024.

**3,000 AFFORDABLE HOMES**
Permit, secure, finance or support the development and preservation of 3,000 long-term affordable housing units by Dec. 31, 2024.

**SAFE DENVER**

**ROADS TO RECOVERY**
Move 200 individuals struggling with addiction or mental health out of the criminal justice system and into a coordinated intervention, treatment, and rehabilitation pipeline by Dec. 31, 2024.

**SAFE CITY**
Reduce violent gun crime by 20% and improve customer satisfaction by 15% by Dec. 31, 2024.

**GREAT GOVERNMENT**

**CUT PERMITTING TIME**
Re-envision the Development permitting process and reduce city review time by 30% by Dec. 31, 2024.

**IMPROVE CITY SERVICES**
Reduce our response time to the top 3 constituent concerns by 20% by Dec. 31, 2024.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS
MAYOR MIKE JOHNSTON
CITY COUNCIL

AMANDA P. SANDOVAL DISTRICT 1
KEVIN FLYNN DISTRICT 2
JAMIE TORRES DISTRICT 3
DIANA ROMERO CAMPBELL DISTRICT 4
AMANDA SAWYER DISTRICT 5
PAUL KASHMANN DISTRICT 6
FLOR ALVIDREZ DISTRICT 7
SHONTEL M. LEWIS DISTRICT 8
DARRELL WATSON DISTRICT 9
CHRIS HINDS DISTRICT 10
STACIE GILMORE DISTRICT 11
SARAH PARADY AT LARGE
SERENA GONZALES-GUTIERREZ AT LARGE

WE THANK YOU FOR YOUR CONTINUED SUPPORT!

For those eager to explore more about our office and join in the city’s efforts towards achieving racial and social equity, we invite you to visit our website and get involved.
Thank you once again for your exceptional leadership in our city and for being a beacon of hope and progress. I look forward to our continued partnership and the remarkable achievements as we build a more vibrant Denver.

Mike Johnston
Mayor