



# 2021 Workforce Equity Study

City of Tacoma | Human Resources Department

Presentation to the Public Utility Board  
February 8, 2023





# Agenda



1. Study Purpose
2. Study Scope and Research Focus
3. Consultant's Key Conclusions
4. Consultant's Recommendations



# Purpose



1. To determine whether there are disparities in the City of Tacoma's:
  - processes for hiring, promotions, performance management and termination, retention, and salaries and wages
  - employment compared with the workforce availability within city limits and within the local recruitment area
2. Identify potential causes and potential remedies for any disparities based on analysis of City governing documents, practices, federal and state legal constraints, and other relevant factors.



# Scope and Research Focus



The study included **Tacoma Public Utilities, Tacoma Fire Department, Tacoma Police Department, Tacoma Public Library, and General Government Departments.**

Through a competitive solicitation, the City retained **Keen Independent Research, LLC** to conduct the study. They focused their research on:



- Applicable federal and state law
- Tacoma City Charter, Municipal Code, Policies and Procedures
- Collective Bargaining Agreements
- Applicant and employee data
- Employee complaints, disciplinary and other personnel actions
- Current and past employee interviews and focus groups
- Demographic and workforce data for geographic area



# Consultant's Key Conclusions



Keen Independent Research, LLC offered the following key conclusions:

1. Efforts for diverse hiring at the City have been successful.
2. Societal discrimination still limits the number of people of color and women available to be hired in certain fields.
3. People of color and women leave City jobs at a higher rate than non-minorities and men.
4. Retention of diverse employees is the greatest obstacle to increasing diversity and inclusion at the City.
5. Disparities found in rates of promotions for people of color and women.



# Consultant's Key Conclusions (continued)



Keen Independent Research, LLC offered the following key conclusions:

6. Lack of understanding and trust among employees about advancement at the City.
7. City work environment is not always welcoming to diverse workers.
  - Uneven employee management skills among supervisors and managers
  - Overt discriminatory behavior by some employees
  - Some employees are unwilling to speak up
8. Ultimately, more to do to achieve an inclusive environment for diverse workforce at the City.



# Consultant's Recommendations



1. Remove limits to hiring only people living within the City.
2. Employees should reflect diversity of local labor market.
3. Continue, strengthen general diversity outreach activities.
4. Continue to work with training partners to encourage diverse candidates for specialized entry level positions.
5. Reevaluate minimum qualifications and scoring of qualifications for entry-level positions.
6. Remove City Charter Section 6.3 requiring citizenship for eligibility for employment with the City.
7. Reevaluate use of tests for entry level positions to ensure needed accurately measure ability to perform.



# Consultant's Recommendations



8. Consider more flexibility in application acceptance periods and better communicate the application process.
9. Build pipelines of diverse workers for jobs where labor pool not diverse.
10. Ensure mandatory qualifications and testing for advanced positions are non-discriminatory, including written exams.
11. Proactively communicate, prepare employees for career advancement.
12. Encourage individuals eligible for advancement to apply.
13. Explore opportunities, remove barriers to advancement outside of one's department or bargaining unit.
14. Invest in effective talent management training across all departments.

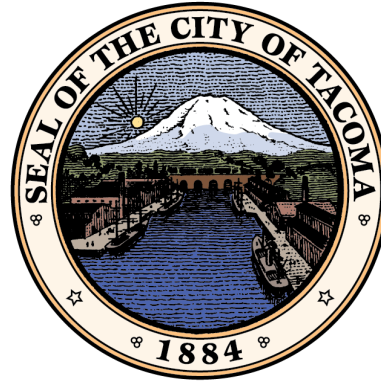




# Consultant's Recommendations

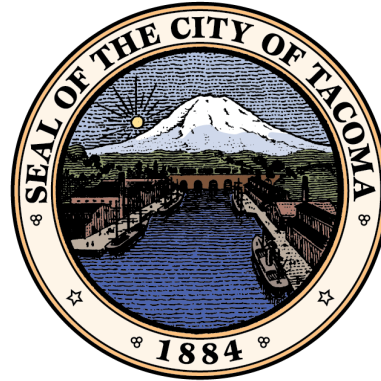


15. Review, enforce consistency in hiring process for advanced positions.
16. Encourage employee resource groups and other cross-department employee groups.
17. Deploy regular, consistent employee satisfaction surveys.
18. Explore new ways for employees to bring discriminatory actions to light without fear of retribution.
19. Focus on eliminating disparities in retention of employees.



**Questions?**





# 2021 Workforce Equity Study

City of Tacoma | Human Resources Department

**Presentation to the Public Utility Board  
February 8, 2023**

