



Eric D. Batista  
Acting City Manager

CITY OF WORCESTER

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February 7, 2023

TO THE WORCESTER CITY COUNCIL

COUNCILORS:

Leadership is nothing if not the power to influence change. Our effectiveness as leaders is measured by both the achievements of those we lead, as well as the culture we shape within our institutional systems. We often remove people from the equation when we talk about systemic change, but the reality is that we, the people, *are* the system. The only thing standing in the way of transformative change is ourselves. It's time to take ownership and accountability. Together, we can, and will, be the *conduits of change* for a better future, starting now and laying the foundation for generations to follow.

I wish to open by thanking your Honorable Body for allowing me the opportunity to meet with community members across the City of Worcester during last fall's series of listening sessions.

At each meeting, I reiterated that diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) is a top priority for me and my administration. This was not merely lip service; I sincerely meant it, and it is non-negotiable. For years I have heard from colleagues, City Council, members of our community, and my own family about their hopes of a truly inclusive City. That all people, regardless of identity or circumstance, can thrive and live productive, dignified lives.

I am extremely proud of our City's vastly diverse community. My goal is to ensure that our government reflects that diversity. Doing so will require an intentional, equitable, and good-faith approach, which I am eager to implement. Today, I present a long-

awaited framework for achieving DEI for our City family. This is not just a work assignment for me, but a personal mission.

**I commit to:**

- Accelerate representation within City workforce and leadership
- Increase access to opportunities through an equitable hiring process
- Provide DEI trainings and professional development opportunities
- Foster an environment where people with disabilities are included, empowered, and have access to support
- Advance equal pay for equal work
- Ensure diverse vendors have equal opportunity to conduct business with the City

Each of these commitments and a roadmap to fulfill them are detailed below.

**Accelerate representation within City workforce and leadership**

My administration is committed to hiring and retaining a City workforce and leadership that reflects the diverse Worcester community, from police officers, general foreman, and managers, to nurses, accountants, and inspectors. Having a diverse workforce fosters a healthy and thriving organization.

***Key goals:***

- To significantly increase the number of people from underrepresented communities by end of 2026.
- To significantly increase representation of Women, Black, Hispanic, Asian, and Indigenous leaders, and managers by end of 2026.

**Increase access to opportunities through an equitable hiring process**

The City is committed to bringing new and diverse talent to our workforce with an emphasis on recruiting individuals from our community who seek to serve their community. This is an opportunity to enhance our relationships with Worcester's

racially/ethnically diverse students and communities through new and strengthened career pathways.

***Key Goals:***

- To build an internship program with strong partnerships with Worcester Public Schools and Universities to identify underrepresented minority candidates
- To restructure our hiring process to one that focuses on intentional recruitment, centered on DEI

**Provide DEI trainings and professional development opportunities**

Changing culture requires quality education, and our DEI mission will fail if our current and future employees don't understand concepts such as cultural competency and unconscious bias. Our personnel deserve access to a robust program that provides upskilling training to elevate career pathways with the City, which ultimately builds stronger leadership for future generations.

***Key Goals:***

- To build a training program that includes access to leadership and career coaches for both entry level staff and experienced hires that aid in talent development, specifically in the areas of management and interpersonal skills.

**Foster an environment where people with disabilities are included, empowered, and have access to support**

Inclusion goes beyond race/ethnicity and gender, and we can lead by example by ensuring our colleagues with disabilities are treated with the same respect and consideration shown others.

***Key Goals:***

- Provide education and support for disability awareness
- To implement a centralized platform in our enterprise resource planning (ERP) system to make it easier for people with disabilities to request accommodations

## **Advance equal pay for equal work**

While each of the previous initiatives will build a more inclusive and diverse culture, we cannot overlook the fact that we must fairly and adequately compensate our workforce.

My administration is committed to pay equity, which is the concept of compensating employees who have similar job functions with comparable pay, regardless of their gender, race, and ethnicity. Prioritizing pay equity is not only legally required, but it will improve productivity and morale, reduce turnover, and attract new talent.

### ***Key Goals:***

- Conduct a pay equity analysis that looks deeply into whether there are pay gaps within City Government, including updating job descriptions and pay structures
- Create new pay equity goals and policies to achieve said goals

## **Provide opportunities to diverse vendors who conduct business with the City**

Establishing representative diversity must also be reflected in the City's supplier relationships, and we will continue to build connections with our local, women, and minority-owned businesses. Internally, I am committed to providing resources to our Purchasing Division to create a structure that centralizes all buying of goods and services in the City, and I will ensure equity is at the center of Purchasing.

### ***Key Goals:***

- To build a partnership between the Executive Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion and the Purchasing Division to monitor spending and recruitment of our diverse suppliers. Additionally, to centralize all buying of goods and services to the Purchasing division.
- To significantly increase our spend with diverse suppliers by end of 2026

## **DEI Systems**

For these commitments to be successful, equity must be embedded in everything we do. All systems that we build must be built around equity at their center.

## DEI MUST BE AT CENTER OF OUR BUSINESS PRACTICES



I emphasize **systems** as a key word.

Achieving DEI requires strong systems—a village—as opposed to placing all responsibility on an individual Chief Diversity Officer (CDO). No matter how talented or motivated the CDO may be, without the necessary support structure, they will not succeed. For the last six months, I have been working on a plan to restructure our Executive Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (EODEI), to give it the authority, resources, and support required to make meaningful change.

Rather than employing one individual champion to support the framework I have laid out, we need a robust support system and structure to truly advance equity amongst our employees and the community we serve. It starts with our EODEI and how it interacts with our core administrative departments.



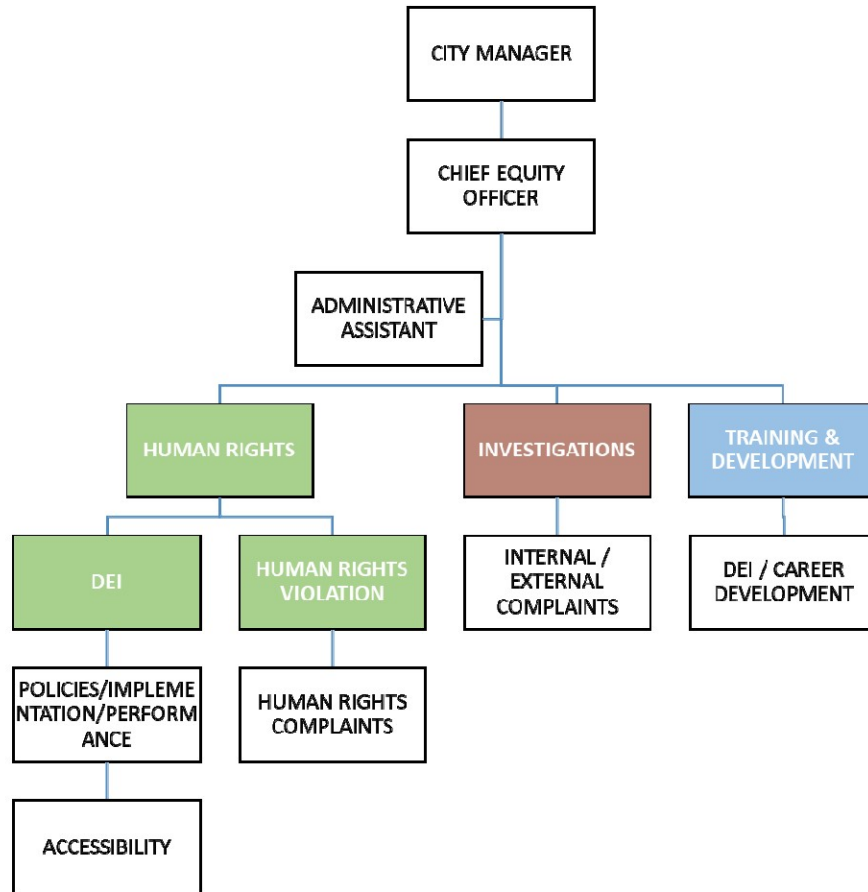
Both the EODEI and our overall DEI mission must be able to function with or without a CDO, and they will if support systems are in place. Therefore, the EODEI cannot live on its own, isolated within a corner of City Hall. It must be embedded in our core business practices related to human capital: hiring processes, promotions, pay equity, education, and accountability. In order to execute on our commitments, I am proposing to restructure and make significant investments into the EODEI.

**Executive Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion**

The EODEI is an Executive Office that will play the lead role in setting and advancing our DEI strategy. It has the authority to set regulatory frameworks, as well as Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) that affect culture, behavior, diversity, and inclusion.

The EODEI will consist of three divisions: **Human Rights, Investigations, and Training & Development**. Most of the individual positions that will comprise these divisions already exist, but within other departments. I propose to formally transition these positions into the EODEI.

### EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF DIVERSITY, EQUITY & INCLUSION STRUCTURE



#### **Human Rights Division**

Ensuring employees have equal rights, including pay equity, access to opportunity, and protection from discrimination, is a human rights issue. Therefore, the Human Rights Division will study, analyze, and recommend policies and strategies that advance our DEI mission. The Division will also receive, initiate, and refer internal and external complaints to the Investigations Division. It will start with four staff: a Director of Human Rights, a Human Rights Coordinator, a DEI Manager, and an Accessibility Coordinator.

#### ***Key Functions:***

- Develop DEI implementation plans
- Make policy recommendations to the City Manager
- Receive, initiate, and refer internal and external complaints to appropriate investigative authorities, as well as review departmental disciplinary actions

- Collect and analyze key data (employee demographics, experiences, etc.)
- Track performance
- Draft DEI reports to the City Manager and City Council

I propose transitioning the Director of Human Rights and the Accessibility Coordinator from the Department of Health and Human Services to the EODEI, and to create a new Human Rights Coordinator position.

### **Investigations Division**

A core function of the EODEI is to investigate complaints related to discrimination (age, disability, sexual orientation, status as a parent, religious, national origin, pregnancy, sexual harassment, race, color, sex, retaliation) and other civil rights violations. Through the Investigations Division, the Office will have the authority to investigate both internally-initiated and externally-initiated complaints. The Division will start with two investigators who are attorneys and have knowledge and experience with anti-discrimination laws.

### ***Key Functions:***

- Investigate human/civil rights complaints from a City employee against another City employee
- Investigate human/civil rights complaints from the public against a City employee
- Investigate human/civil rights complaints related to the Police Department from the public
- Develop a web page to file complaints

I propose transitioning the Lead Investigator position from the Human Resources Department to the EODEI. Additionally, I propose to create one new Investigator position to ensure the office has the capacity to handle the potential high volume of inquiries.

### **Training & Development Division**

A major component of our DEI strategy is to ensure our workforce has the knowledge, skills, experiences, and confidence to be future leaders who recognize the value of DEI.



Shifting the culture will be paramount to the success of making the City a truly diverse, equitable, and inclusive environment.

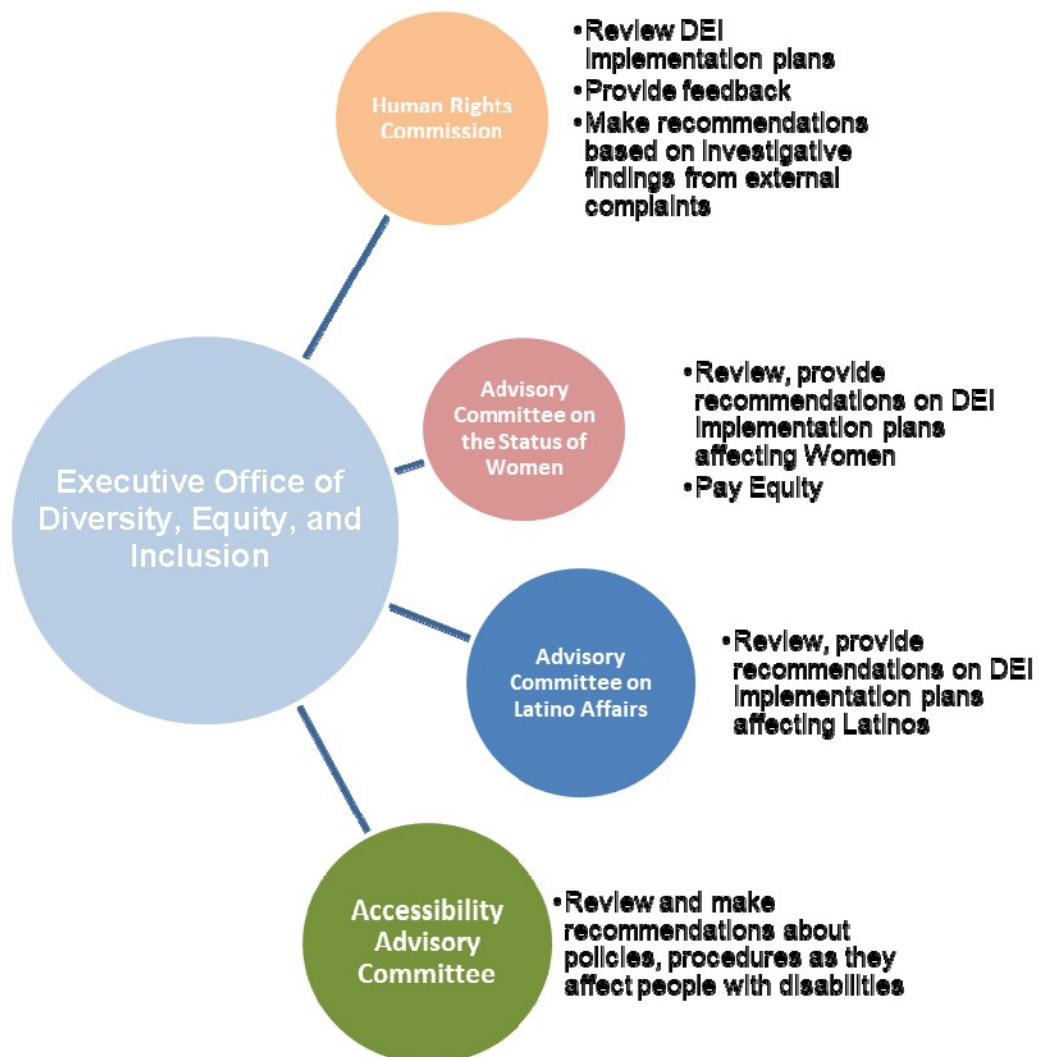
**Key Functions:**

- Shift culture from a fixed mindset culture to a growth culture
- Educate on key concepts such as unconscious bias and discrimination
- Upskilling employees on leadership and management
- Career development support

I propose transitioning the Coordinator of Training from the Human Resources Department to the EODEI.

**Community Input and Transparency**

Ensuring the community has a voice at the table is extremely important to our DEI mission. Therefore, the EODEI will have four boards, made up of community members to review and provide feedback and make recommendations on DEI policies.



## **Chief Equity Officer**

To cap off the restructured EODEI and ensure that our DEI mission is clear, I have decided to rename the Office's leadership position. Diversity is just one piece of the puzzle, while *equity* is at the center of all our business practices, from representation to pay equity. Having a Chief Diversity Officer doesn't tell the full story—having a Chief **Equity** Officer better reflects our greater mission.

I will be working closely working with our team to conduct a **national search** to find the best candidate to lead our ambitious DEI endeavor. This Chief Equity Officer will lead a team of dedicated staff to ensure no stone goes unturned. This position will continue to be on my cabinet and will serve as my voice for DEI throughout my administration.

I expect to release a Request for Proposal (RFP) for a national search firm by the end of spring 2023. To ensure our Chief Equity Officer has the administrative support to manage a growing department, I also propose the creation of a new Administrative Assistant position.

## **Roadmap for Success**

I have laid out my vision and commitment to building an inclusive workforce that represents the great diversity of Worcester and positions its members for success through equitable opportunity. We will not meet our goals overnight, but I firmly believe that the intentional approach I have outlined, supported by a restructured and empowered Executive Office of Diversity Equity and Inclusion, will succeed and bring forth true transformative change. It will take a village and your Honorable Body's backing will serve as its foundation. When we lead with purpose, we never lose.

Respectfully submitted,



Eric D. Batista  
City Manager