Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Task Force

Meeting Agenda

August 19, 2021
Electronic Meeting
9:00 AM

This meeting will be held electronically. Residents interested in listening to the meeting or making public comments can join in one of two ways:

1) *You can call in to 888-788-0099 (toll free) or 833-548-0276 (toll free) Webinar ID #825 5630 3439*
2) *You can log in via your computer. Please visit the Task Force website here to link to the meeting: www.louisvilleco.gov/editaskforce*

Anyone may also email comments to the Task Force prior to the meeting at gravescivicsolutions@gmail.com.

9:00 a.m.	**Welcome, Language Justice, Land Acknowledgement**
	Anthony E. Graves, Principal GRAVES CIVIC SOLUTIONS (Facilitator)
	Emily Shamsid-Deen, Principal, ESD Consulting (Facilitator)
9:10 a.m.	**Zoom Etiquette and Pronouns**
	Anthony E. Graves, Principal GRAVES CIVIC SOLUTIONS (He/Him)
	Emily Shamsid-Deen, Principal, ESD Consulting (She/Her)
9:15 a.m.	**Introductions**
9:20 a.m.	**Review Group Agreements**
	Anthony E. Graves, Principal GRAVES CIVIC SOLUTIONS (He/Him)
	Emily Shamsid-Deen, Principal, ESD Consulting (She/Her)
9:25 a.m.	**Announcements from the City of Louisville**
9:30 a.m.	**Review Themes from EDI Focus Groups and EDI Task Force**
	Anthony E. Graves, Principal GRAVES CIVIC SOLUTIONS
	Emily Shamsid-Deen, Principal, ESD Consulting (She/Her)

10:20 a.m.   **Discussion: Themes and Priorities**
                    EDI Task Force Members Discuss Themes and Priorities for Louisville City Council

10:25 a.m.   **Public Comment** (comments limited to 3 minutes each)
                    Anthony E. Graves, Principal GRAVES CIVIC SOLUTIONS

10:30 a.m.   **Adjourn**

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City of Louisville
EDI Task Force

Working Session:
Focus Group Results and EDI Task Force Feedback

August 19, 2021

Version: 8_17_21 @ 8:00 p.m.

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The Consulting Team

Anthony E. Graves, Principal
GRAVES CIVIC SOLUTIONS

Emily Shamsid-Deen, Principal
ESD CONSULTING

Language Justice & Land Acknowledgements

- **Language Justice Statement:**
    Spanish language interpretation available / traducción al español disponible

- **ASL**

- **Land Acknowledgement:**

We acknowledge that Boulder County is on land within the territories of the Arapahoe, Cheyenne and Ute peoples. We acknowledge the institution we represent was founded upon the exclusion and attempted erasure of Indigenous peoples and cultures. We acknowledge the American Indian community in Boulder County today, the elders past and present, and future generations.

Task Force Objectives

To provide advisory recommendations to the Louisville City Council with respect to community issues affecting Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) and other marginalized communities.

Zoom Etiquette

- Stay on mute unless you are speaking
- Raise your hand on zoom to be recognized unless the moderator invites participation
- Keep your camera On
- Please list your pronouns in the "Rename" feature

Pronouns

- Use pronouns designated by each EDI Task Force Member
- Respect chosen gender identities

Group Agreements

- Make space/ Take space
- Avoid generalizations, speak from the "I" perspective
- Listen to Understand, Not To Respond (Active Listening)
- One person, one mic
- Respect lived experience
- Be ok with discomfort
- Honor intent, Own impact
- Respect Confidentiality

Today's Action Item

The City of Louisville has asked the EDI Task Force to guide our consulting team in setting research topics for 5 focus groups to inform our understanding of the BIPOC experience and that of other marginalized communities.

Today, we will review the themes from the focus groups – and begin prioritizing issues for the Louisville City Council's action.

Today's Review and Discussion Process

- Guidelines and Context

- Review Direct feedback from constituents (unattributed quotes and stories)

- Outline themes from each session

- Brief EDI Task Force Discussion of the Issues

- Follow-Up Action Items: Email us priority issues for City Council consideration

Interpreting Focus Group Data and Themes

- Keep an open mind, reserve judgement
- Don't take any of the feedback personally, this is an opportunity to grow and advance EDI
- This is <u>another</u> data point in creating Louisville's EDI strategy ("data informed")
- Context is important – Who was present? Who was missing? Who was the feedback directed to?
- Priorities set by the Louisville EDI Task Force will spark a new round of discovery and action by the City Council
- A second consulting team is doing an internal equity assessment that may also influence the direction that council pursues – and further compliment your work

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EDI Focus Group Results

Overview: Focus Group Profile

- 5 Focus Groups

- 23 participants

- Ethnic diversity (+ representative Latinx population in 4/5 focus groups)

- Gender diversity

- LGBTQIA+ community members

- Age diversity

- People with disabilities

- + Email contributions and 1:1 phone conversations

Positive Feedback: All Focus Groups

- "I love Louisville."

- "It is a wonderful community where I want to raise my children."

- "We enjoy the parks and open space."

- "It has a wonderful community feel."

- "I think it is amazing that Louisville is conducting these EDI focus groups."

- "I feel safe and welcome."

- Positive Themes: Most participants enjoy the quality of life that Louisville has to offer. The open space, vibrant downtown and "small-town-vibe" is attractive. Many noted that Louisville is a wonderful community for families. Participants appreciated the interest in the experiences of diverse communities.

Throughline: Language Justice

- "I am surprised by how English-heavy Louisville is, and how little Spanish language services there are given the size of the Latino community,…and I don't even speak Spanish."

- "Someone wanted to apply for the Louisville Police Department's Christmas gift program, but it was only in English."

- "I often have to translate for my mom, because there is not a Spanish language interpreter on staff."

- "The way people are treated when they don't speak the language, it is very upsetting…[they are] treated rudely or ignored if Spanish is their first language or their English is poor."

Throughline: Language Justice

- "Ditto. The deaf community faces similar disrespect and is also ignored when trying to pay parking tickets or asking for help with other city-issues."

- "Many city staff don't know how to access the ASL interpretation services that are available. Or sometimes you request an interpreter in advance, but when you arrive – the interpreter has not been arranged."

- "Guidelines [and training] are needed for all language services for city staff"

- "The library feels like one of the safest places in Louisville, but paying a water bill, going to the grocery store, city hall, police department or schools can be scary – especially for undocumented people."

Focus Group: Public Accommodation / Access to Services

- "City buses are needed at the schools, down Campus Drive, to the neighborhood high school."

- "City of Louisville does appear to be improving transportation around the Kestrel community. There is also a ride share service."

- "I don't see very many Latinos at the rec center. I don't know if they feel welcome."

- Stories: Dignity and Medicaid / Disability Access, Rec Center and Transportation

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Focus Group: Housing

- "Many Spanish speaking community members try to access [affordable] housing and are unsuccessful in Louisville."

- "I had a [Spanish speaking] client who was in affordable housing who was harassed by her neighbors and felt she was facing racism."

- "I don't think anyone who is working class can afford to live in Louisville...People don't have a fair shot at housing in the city."

- "Apartment and home rental applications are only available in English."

- "The digital divide is also creating a barrier – and it's all in English." [compounding barrier of language justice and the digital divide]

Focus Group: Public Health

- "There is a mobile home park in Louisville that posted a price increase during COVID, it was only published in English and it created a lot of confusion."

- "At mobile home parks you always run the risk of having to move out."

- "On the other side of east street and Pine Street, there is no bike-lane and it is a very dangerous area. With Highway 42, cars turn-fast. Industrial areas where communities of color may live should also be safe and happy."

- "I'm pleasantly surprised by how many food programs there are, but they all require you to have a car."

Focus Group: Safe and Welcoming Environment

- "I went to a local business, and they had a community photo mosaic, but there were not any diverse communities represented. There were only white people on the wall."

- "I noticed the mural on a wall downtown with characters representing MLK, Gandhi, and others – it was a very welcoming picture and I truly appreciated it."

- "When I moved here, it was quite an adjustment…but for the most part it has been very welcoming. Sometimes I get 'looks' and people don't make eye contact."

- "I withhold parts of myself culturally in some way in Louisville…I don't always feel I can share those parts of myself."

- "At the grocery store while with my children, I was told to speak English because this is America or go back to my country."

Focus Group: Safe and Welcoming Environment

- "When we don't see ourselves reflected in what we see in Louisville, it is an apparent signal of whether we belong here or not…or start a business here or succeed here."

- "There are no bi-lingual programs in any Louisville school. I have to drive them to Boulder for bi-lingual education."

- "I had an incident when the police made a u-turn and followed me home - I was 50 feet from my driveway. I didn't know the rules for what to do. The police was loud and boisterous yelling at me to stay in the car… the police officer didn't explain why he pulled me over, his tone was demeaning, aggressive." "Why are you pulling me over? He responded, 'I said get back in the car.' No explanation was given as to why I was pulled over – even when he let me off with a 'warning.'" [elderly person of color]

Focus Group: Youth Engagement - Equity and Social Justice

- "We are making a mural behind Sweetcow and Lucky Pie for climate change and racial justice." [Art as a tool for social justice through youth]

- "It would be nice if they could teach more of the rough patches of Louisville's history."

- "I was wondering why there was nothing in the Louisville history museum about the black mining families."

- "The recognition of different festivals would be a nice way to bring the community together. Chinese New Year, Diwali, Ede, etc. Putting info in the library and town hall."

EDI Task Force Feedback

EDI Task Force: Offline Feedback - OPPORTUNITIES

- "Louisville is family oriented and has a small town feel that can result in a strong community and a safe place to raise a family."

- "[Louisville] has better housing options, less traffic and great recreation."

- "I would recommend for folks of color to move to Louisville. People in our City, relatively speaking, are more open minded and tolerant of fellow residents of different ethnic/cultural background. This community is in general safe for residents, and the City strives to provide services to the residents regardless of the color of their skin."

- "Louisville is taking steps to better serve all citizens and conducting an examination to make Louisville a better place to live."

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EDI Task Force: Offline Feedback - CHALLENGES

- "My own experiences in Louisville include being treated so poorly at a local establishment that other employees had to step in and apologized in private to me for how I had been treated."

- "A Black woman friend of mine was called the n-word in the Louisville post office line."

- "While my son was schooling online last year (Louisville Middle School), I heard one of his teachers repeat a racist joke to the class that they heard on a TV show the night before."

- "Cons: Very little people of color, Recreation membership cost, Uncomfortable at times for POC with stares and rude individuals."

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EDI Task Force: Offline Feedback - SUGGESTIONS

- "Louisville should hire a Deputy Manager for DE&I"

- "Would be good for local schools to invite speakers from BIPOC community to talk about different cultures."

- "The City of Louisville might want to consider adding a section on its website to provide information of federal, state & local assistance to the low/medium income folks with housing."

Overarching Themes from Each Focus Group

Public Accommodation / Access to Services

LANGUAGE ACCOMMODATIONS & ACCESS
- There are barriers for non-English speaking people and the deaf community at venues including but not limited to; schools, grocery stores, the rec center and other city services such as paying parking tickets or late water bills.

DIGNIFIED TREATMENT OF NON-ENGLISH SPEAKERS AND THE DEAF COMMUNITY
- People who speak a language other than English and those who communicate using ASL are often treated with disrespect, dismissed, or ignored.

LANGUAGE JUSTICE TRAINING, EDUCATION, RESOURCES, & TOOLS
- The City needs guidelines, protocols, and training to help city service providers become better equipped to help those with language barriers and ensure that service providers understand the guidelines and the laws surrounding a request to provide ASL services.

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Cont'd: Public Accommodation / Access to Services

- The lack of language access puts an unfair burden on the children of Spanish speakers to be forced into the position of having to translate for their parents.

EQUITABLE ACCESS
- Lack of bike lanes and sidewalks create dangerous situations for some neighborhoods

- Lower income residents must cross busy streets to access playgrounds (no bridges or underground tunnels to help them access these amenities).

REPRESENTATION AND SYMBOLS MATTER
- Inclusive imagery and reflective cultural experiences are needed
- The lack of diversity in Louisville creates feelings of isolation

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Safe and Welcoming Environment

REPRESENTATION MATTERS
- "no bilingual programs In Louisville," constituents going to Boulder
- Lack of representation in community, in leadership positions or community announcements

SYMBOLS MATTER
- The multicultural mural on the library wall brings joy to many and is appreciated. Participants encourage the City to find ways to include the youth so that they are reflected and see themselves.

Safe and Welcoming Environment

UNSPOKEN TENSION:
- Overall participants felt safe and welcomed in Louisville, however, there are unspoken signals such as looks, lack of eye contact, energy that are presented in certain environments that are felt by people of color as unwelcoming. This includes a sense that some people of color feel like they must shrink themselves and suppress their culture while out in public.

MORE POSITIVE ENGAGEMENT WITH POLICE:
- Experiences and thoughts about police in Louisville were varied. It was noted that it would be helpful for citizens to have a Know Your Rights training or other protocols for engaging with police. It was also recommended that the Police Department share information about what is happening in the neighborhood.

Youth Engagement – Equity and Social Justice

EDUCATING YOUNG PEOPLE THROUGH COMMUNITY CONVERSATIONS
- Audit non-profit and regional city/county programs for youth
- Offer camps and educational classes starting from a very young age
- Parent guidance on how to talk about race and exploring other social justice topics
- A summer series involving the youth advisory board that are willing to teach younger kids on Equity and Social justice – Youth Mentorship program
- Leverage Louisville Youth Advisory Board

Youth Engagement – Equity and Social Justice

IMPORTANCE OF UNDERSTANDING LOCAL HISTORY
- It's important that young people have an understanding about the difficult history of race in Louisville (role of the KKK in the 1920s and treatment of black coal miners).

ENGAGE SCHOOLS WITH EDI RECOMMENDATIONS
- Bring the goals from the EDI Task Force into the schools by identifying community members to help so the burden is not placed on teachers. Young people should have a role in moving recommendations forward.

CONTINUE USING ART AS A TOOL FOR CHANGE
- Art, like the Mural Project through Classrooms for Climate Action are important works that encourage community dialogue and demonstrate representation of diverse people and cultures.

Youth Engagement – Equity and Social Justice

RAISE AWARENESS THROUGH CULTURAL CELEBRATIONS
- Celebrate and learn about other cultures such as Diwali, Hanukkah, Chinese New Year, MLK, etc. through museum exhibits, festivals, newsletters, town halls, libraries, etc. Activate city spaces to help cultivate these experiences.

RE-ENGAGE THE YOUTH ADVISORY BOARD
- Re-engage the Youth Advisory Board and expand it to include younger students.

LANGUAGE JUSTICE IN SCHOOLS
- Engaging non-English speaking families, primarily fell on the English language teachers at schools. Many parents who did not speak English relied on the language teacher and felt more comfortable when they were met in their communities. They did not feel comfortable coming to the school.

Housing

INACCESSIBLE HOUSING MARKET
- Not enough affordable housing (availability is limited, prices sky-rocketing)
- BIPOC have experienced harassment in their housing communities and there is a lack of support for those individuals
- Systemic barriers to buying homes, prevents people of color from home ownership
- Digital divide and language barriers are also contributing

CONTRIBUTES TO CYCLE OF POVERTY
- The ability to access safe and secure housing has a significant impact on whether someone remains in the cycle of poverty, it impacts the well-being of children, etc.

Housing

MORE AFFORDABLE HOUSING INVENTORY NEEDED
- A lack of affordable housing such as condos, starter homes and single-family homes and apartments with high deposits and fees are preventing many from owning or even being able to rent without a roommate or family member helping to pay a portion

POTENTIAL LENDING DISCRIMINATION
- Unpleasant experiences with loan officers while in the process of trying to buy a house, that may be tied to discrimination
- Subtle actions, that are often hard to pinpoint but are felt, that go unchecked.

Housing

EDUCATION
- Educating the community about affordable housing can help eliminate negative perceptions, biases, and misinformation.

CONTINUED CONVERSATIONS
- Continued conversations needed about DEI
- Forums (like the focus groups) where people can express their concerns, build community and feel heard are important

Public Health

INEQUITABLE ACCESS
- There are barriers (limited or inaccessible hours, staff awareness and poor treatment) impacting some low-income residents and people with disabilities

- The current service hours may also be burdensome to single-parent households who want to participate in community services/activities/amenities – like rec and pool hours and WIC (Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children)

- There's also no childcare offered on weekends; it's only offered during work hours - the City could better serve the retired community as well

- Poor food quality at area food banks (expired/moldy), and car-only access

Public Health

MORE SUPPORT IN MOBILE HOME PARKS
- Infrastructure inequity in and around the mobile home parks

- Gray areas for maintenance between unincorporated and incorporated areas in the city and county which creates gaps in streets being plowed and impairs mobility (getting to work, stuck cars, etc.)

- Inadequate streetlights: Brymar mobile home community has inadequate lighting around the park

LIMITED PROVIDER AND SERVICE ACCESS
- Most Louisville providers don't accept Medicaid which makes access and provider choice very limited. Mental health access is also very limited.

Give yourself space to process this information...
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We are in this together. EDI is a journey that requires patience and commitment. Be encouraged that we are traveling down the right path, the City of Louisville is supportive of this work and the community is behind you.

Thoughts and Priorities?

1. What are your initial thoughts and reactions to these themes?

2. At first glance, what are the priority areas you would like the Louisville City Council to explore further?

3. Are there actions you would like to see the City Council take?

4. Do you have recommendations for city ordinances or charter changes that Council should explore?

Next Steps / Homework

- Please email us the Top 4 issues you would like the Louisville City Council to further investigate – gravescivicsolutions@gmail.com

- Send us suggested actions that you would like to see the Louisville City Council take to advance EDI in Louisville and be responsive to focus group feedback

Public Comment

- Public comment will be limited to 3 minutes per speaker

Thank You

Back-Up Information