

OFFICE OF DIVERSITY
EQUITY & INCLUSION
CITY OF LITTLE ROCK

ANNUAL REPORT 2023



DIVERSITY.

EQUITY.

INCLUSION.

NETEENTH
FREEDOM DAY
JUNE 19

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2023 OVERVIEW

MISSION

The City of Little Rock’s Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (ODEI) creates space for historically excluded communities to advocate for themselves by valuing and supporting diverse cultures, ensuring access to leaders and information, facilitating collaboration, and leveraging relationships.

VISION

We envision a Little Rock where people of all ages, abilities, identities, statuses, and colors collaborate to achieve an inclusive community where all residents can realize their full potential.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

- Collaborated with 50+ community organizations and businesses
- 1,500+ Municipal IDs issued
- 9 Mobile ID Clinics
- Multicultural Liaison Facebook Reach (Q4) 30.8K people
- 50 document translations (Spanish)

TALENT MANAGEMENT

- New Workforce Equity Team with 150+ hours of organizational experience

ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY

- 35 hours of direct business support
- 79% Emprende program graduation rate
- 33% increase in business-to-business networking
- 100+ attendees at Economic OpportUNITY Summit



**OFFICE OF DIVERSITY
EQUITY & INCLUSION
CITY OF LITTLE ROCK**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2023 we celebrated two years as an office. We refined and strengthened our work, leading in three core areas: community engagement, talent management, and economic opportunity. We leveraged our skills and expertise to ensure an equity lens in City projects, including grant applications, the Targeted Community Development and Food Desert Taskforces, and the Bloomberg Philanthropies City Data Alliance Performance Management program.



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Engaging in community is essential to our ability to serve residents effectively. We value the lived experiences and ideas residents bring to the table, and we seek opportunities to support their work and invite them into ours to bridge divides and promote collective impact. We began 2023 by facilitating an Equity Labs Neighborhood Mixer in January. We organized a free [501c3 workshop](#) for neighborhood associations in March. We supported community-organized

events throughout the year, including a Southwest Community and Business fair, El Grito with the Mexican Consulate, Fiesta de la Independencia at Plaza Frida, The Central Arkansas Library System's Dia de Los Muertos, and bilingual community meetings to bring city services to more residents. In all, we collaborated with around 50 community organizations and partners. The next few pages highlight how we intentionally engaged our community in 2023.

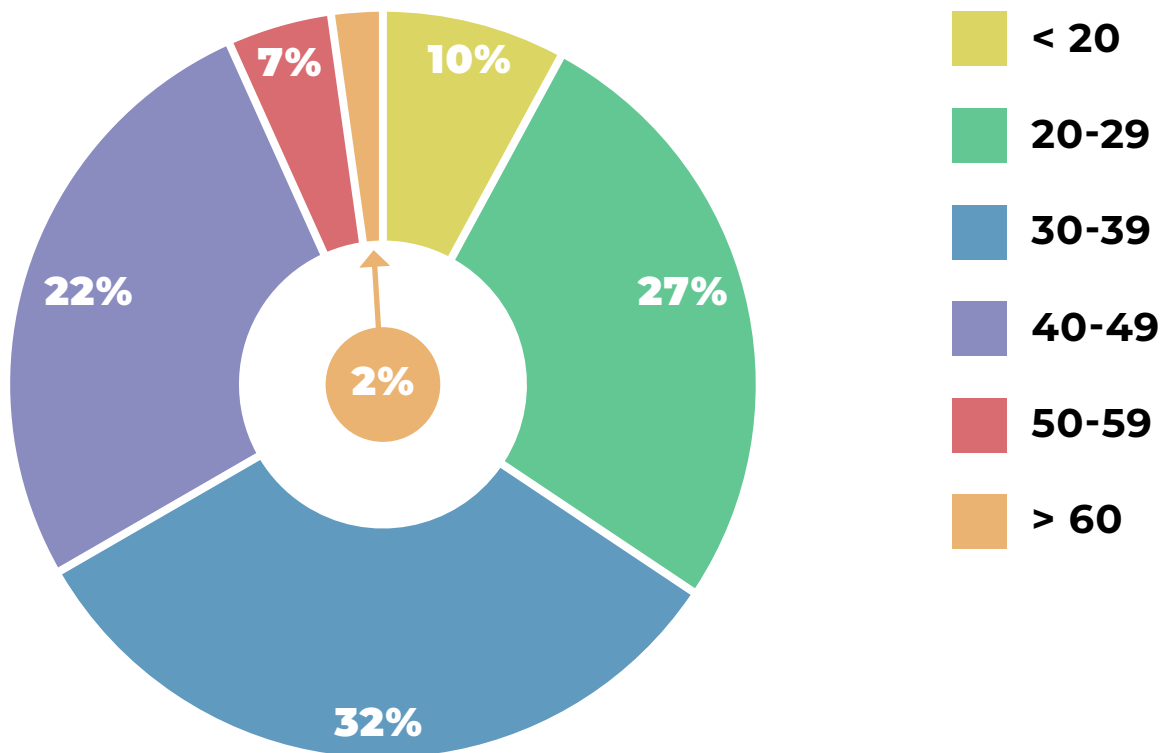
MUNICIPAL ID PROGRAM

The City of Little Rock offers a photo identification card to all city residents aged 14 and older for the minimal fee of \$10. The first program of its kind in the region, the purpose of the municipal ID is to increase safety and access to essential services for individuals who do not have a driver's license or state-issued ID.

Under our leadership, the Little Rock Municipal Identification program had

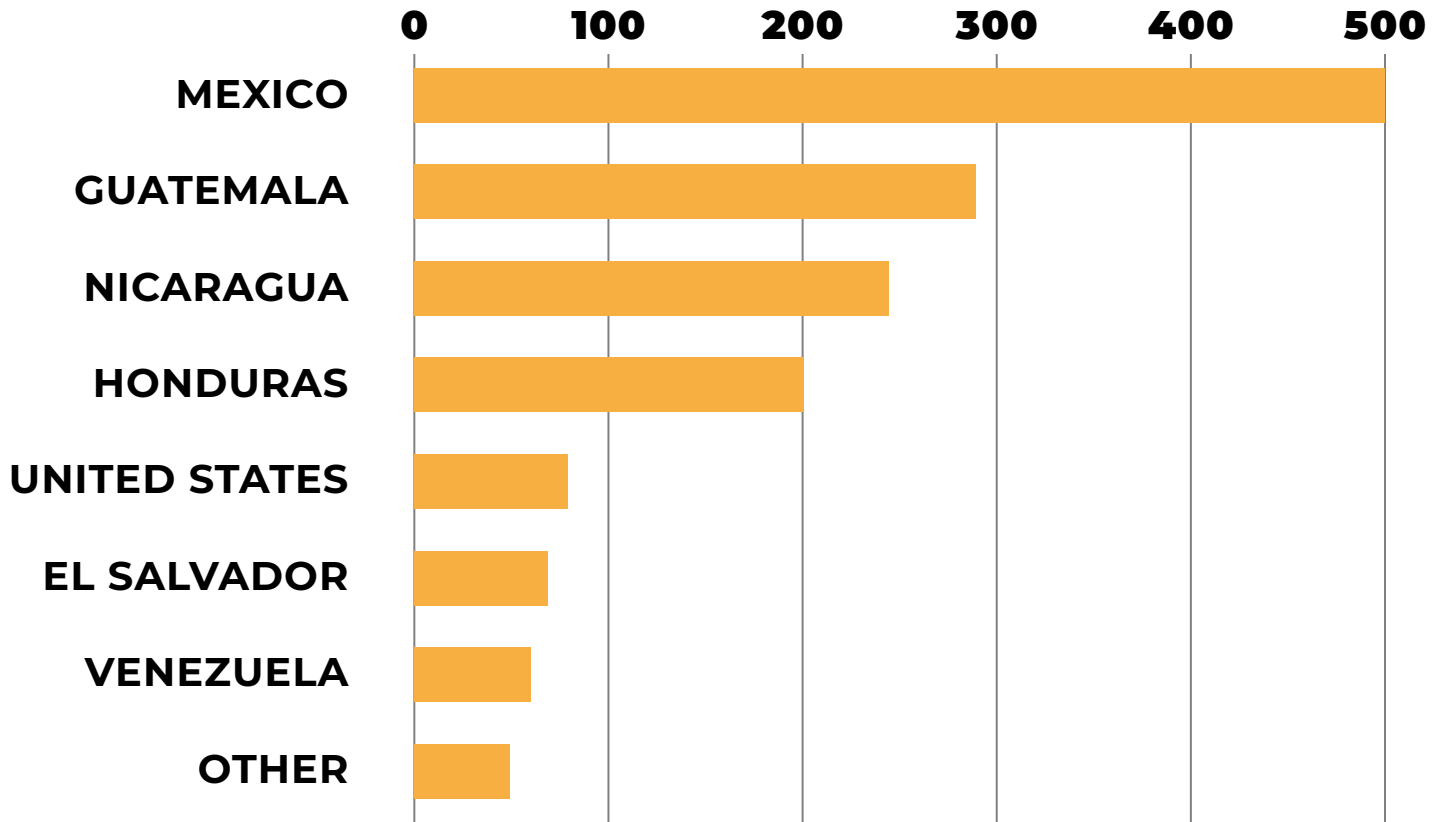
another banner year, with 1,512 ID cards issued. In addition to expanding our efforts to meet people where they are through mobile ID services, we also expanded the populations the ID serves by intentionally focusing on our residents experiencing homelessness and youth who, with a change in state law, can now work without a permit at the age of 14. The charts below describe the population we serve through the ID program.

AGE OF ID RECIPIENTS

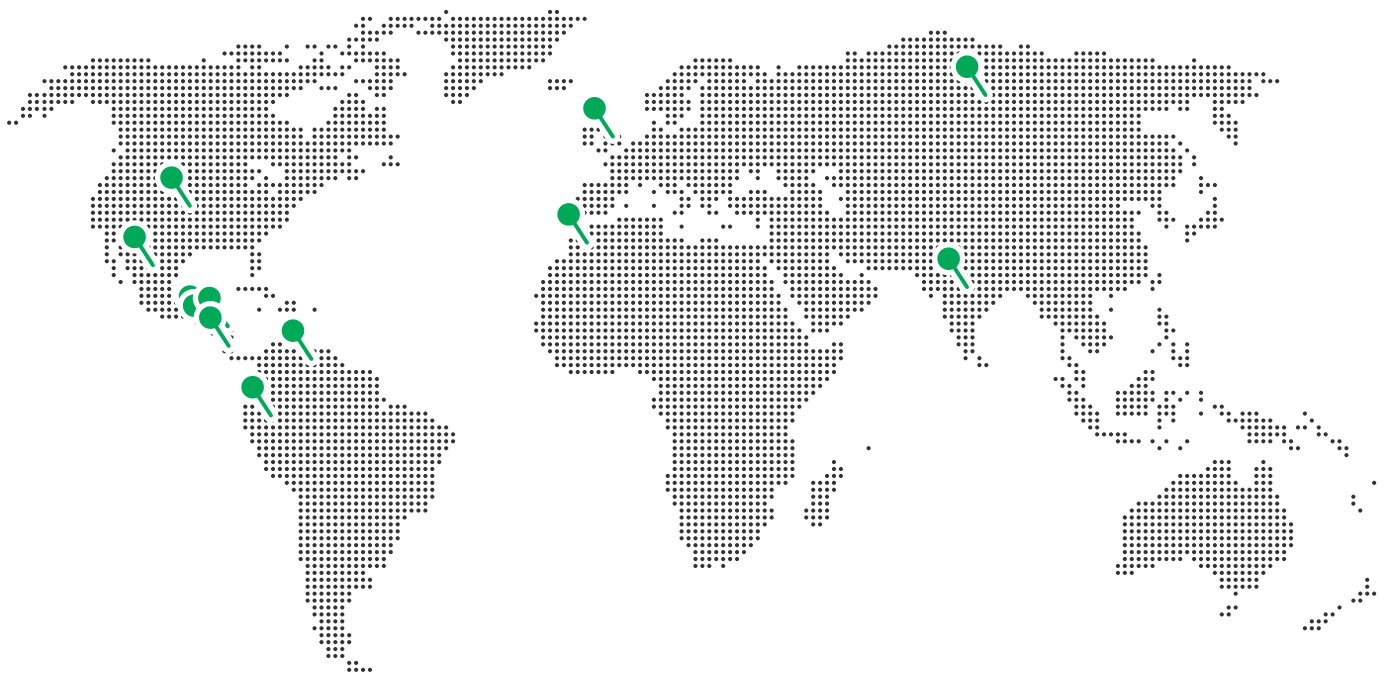


Most Little Rock ID recipients are young adults aged 20–39 (59%).

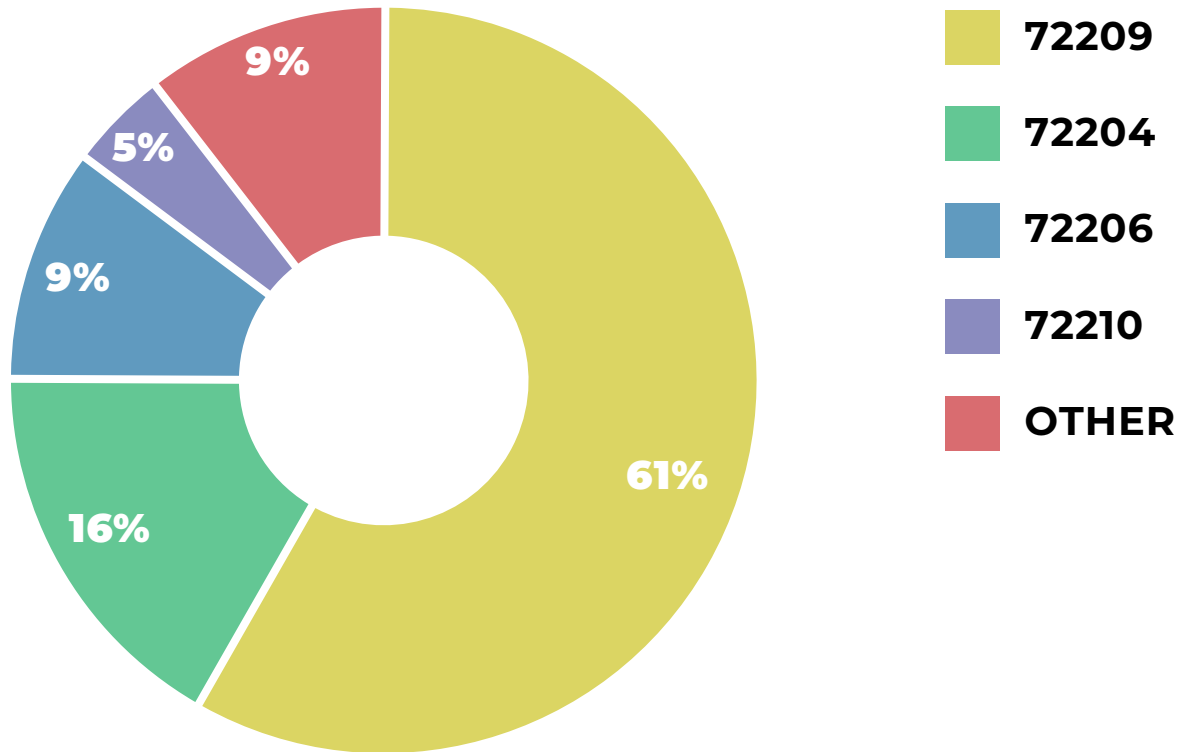
NATIONALITY OF ID RECIPIENTS



Mexicans represent the largest population of ID recipients, followed by Guatemalans.



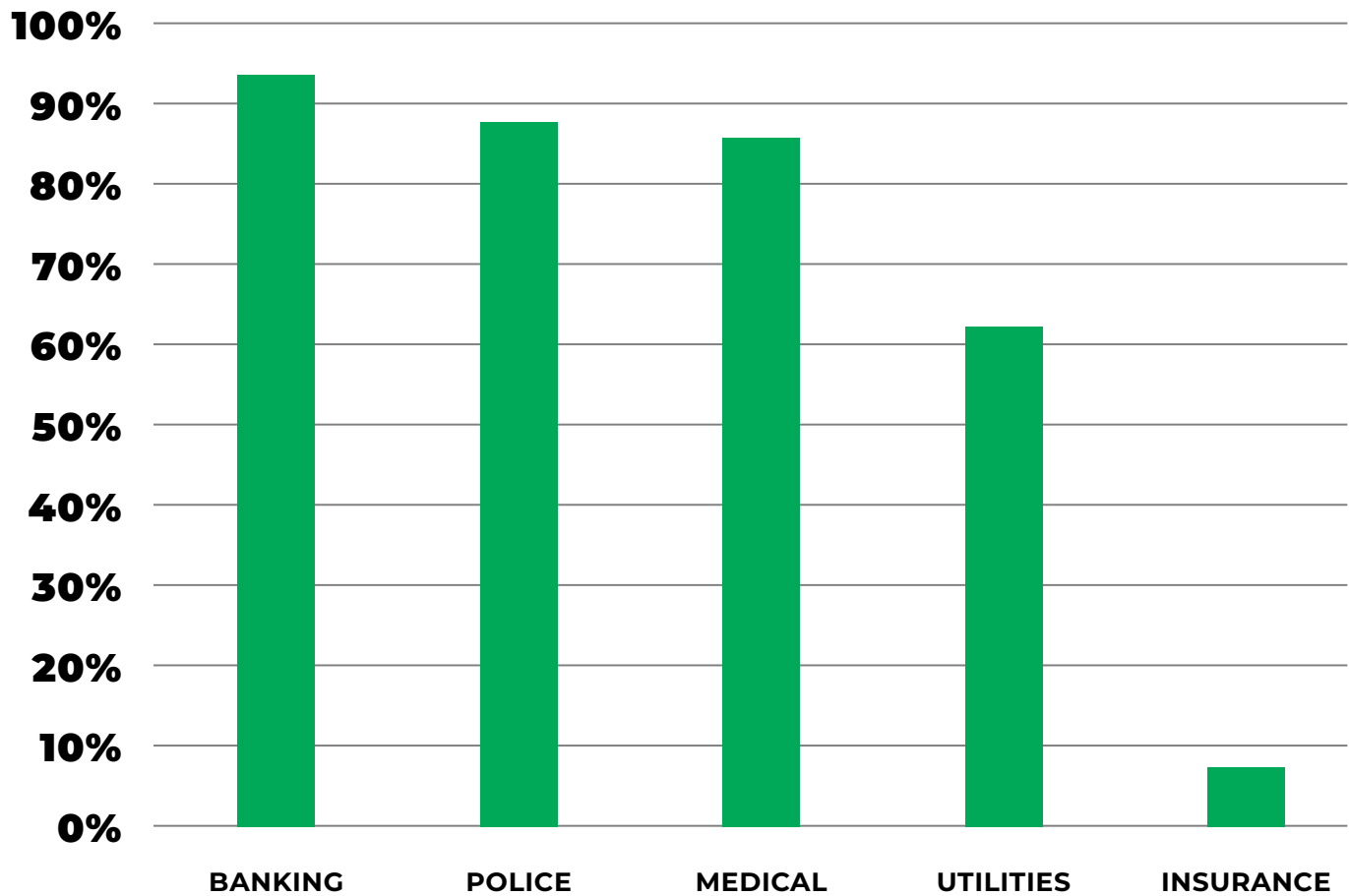
ZIP CODES OF ID RECIPIENTS



More than half (61%) of ID recipients reside in the 72209 ZIP Code in Southwest Little Rock.

IDENTITY

USE OF THE LITTLE ROCK ID



Additionally, data show that the program is meeting its intended purpose. The 84 individuals who renewed their ID in 2023 most commonly reported using it to access banking services (94%) and interact with the police (87%).

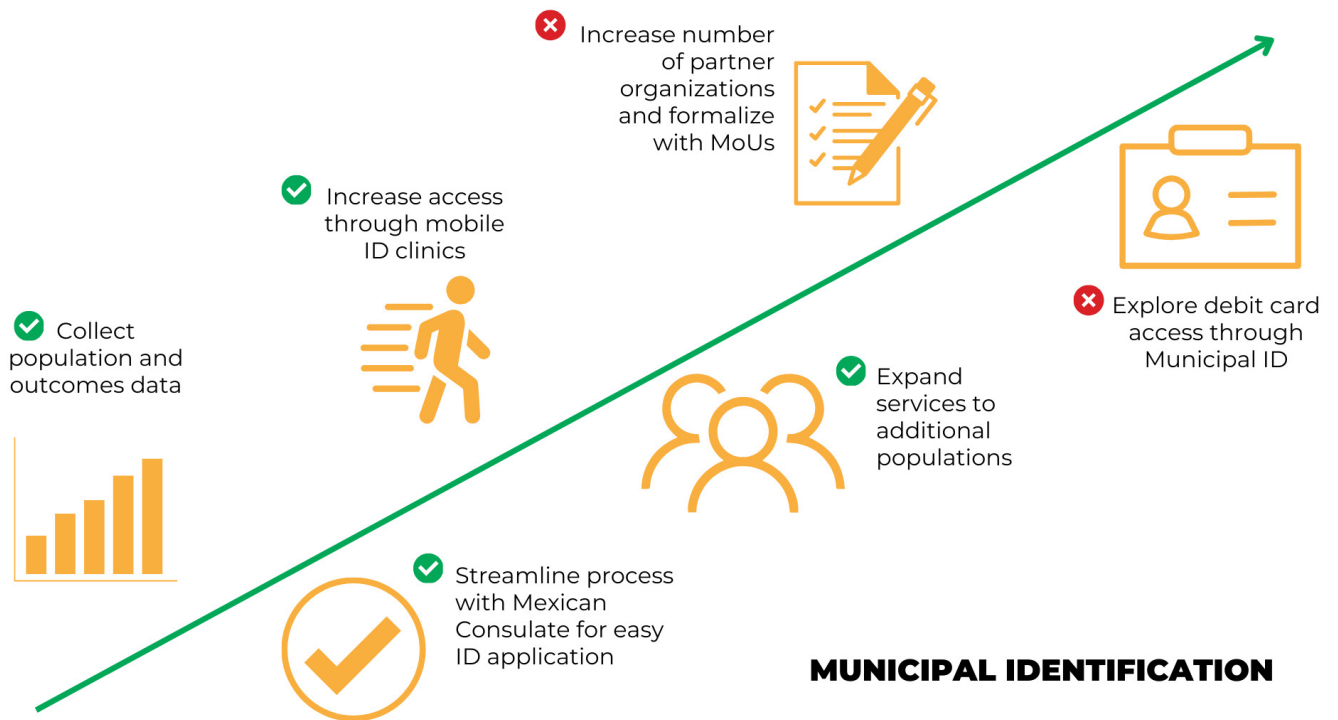
With the help of our interns, we also drafted a Municipal ID toolkit, scheduled for release in spring 2024. We designed the toolkit for our fellow city workers in municipalities around the region, several of whom have contacted us with questions about our program to increase access to identification in their communities. Once published, the toolkit will be available on our website: littlerock.gov/id.

We continue to grow the Municipal ID program. Plans include formalizing partnerships with community organizations that accept the ID with memoranda of understanding and exploring the possibility of adding debit card access.

ODEI STRATEGIES

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

- ✓ EXECUTING
- ✓ PLANNING
- ✗ NOT STARTED



DISASTER ASSISTANCE

On March 31st an EF3 tornado cut a path of more than six miles through our city. Affected neighborhoods vary widely in terms of income level, and we know that marginalized residents are likely to struggle the most when disaster strikes. Along with thousands of volunteers, our team leveraged relationships with local, state, and federal partners, a strong

background in social work, and our own lived experiences to staff the City's Family Assistance Center, which served as a one-stop-shop for residents impacted by the storms to receive food, water, clothing, shelter information, transportation, utility assistance, and more. The Center, which remained open for two weeks in April, served approximately 1,500 residents.



WE ARE...

#LRSSTRONG



During this time, we also ensured that our most critical information was communicated in Spanish through the City's social media channels and Univision Arkansas.

LANGUAGE ACCESS

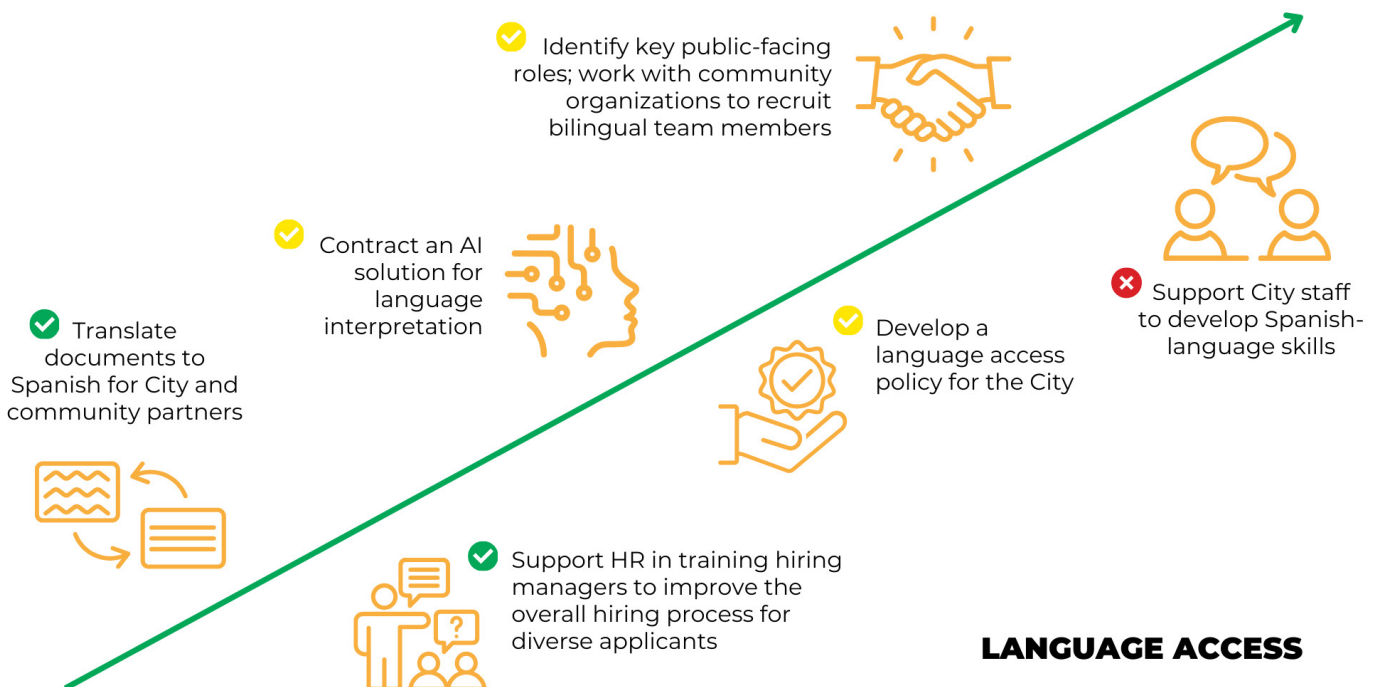
As the second most spoken language in Little Rock, Spanish is the primary language of an estimated 10% of adult residents in our city. Individuals with limited English proficiency may face barriers to accessing education and emergency services, doing business, and buying and maintaining a home, which can result in social and economic exclusion. In 2023 the ODEI team continued to focus on increasing Spanish language access to city and community services, collaborating to host Spanish-language financial services and affordable housing

fairs, providing live interpretation at the State of the City address and Southwest Community Center tax proposal meeting, and collaborating with Fleet Services, 311, and the Little Rock Zoo to enhance communication and outreach strategies and expand access to services. Our team also completed nearly 50 document translation requests from colleagues and community partners in 2023.

See the following image for an overview of our current strategies to increase language access to City services.

ODEI STRATEGIES COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

- ✓ EXECUTING
- ✓ PLANNING
- ✗ NOT STARTED



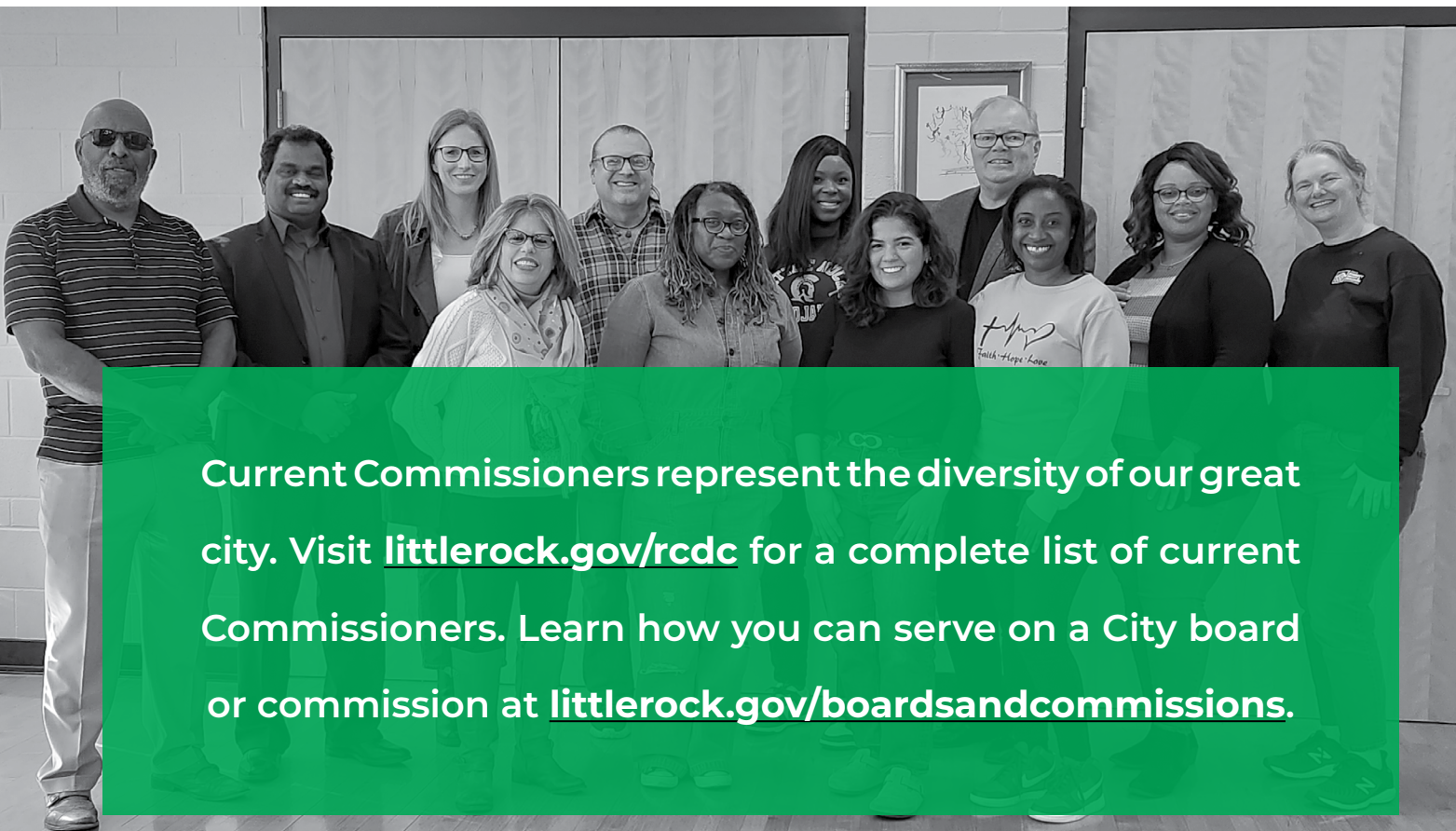
LITTLE ROCK RACIAL AND CULTURAL DIVERSITY COMMISSION

Our team is privileged to support Little Rock's Racial and Cultural Diversity Commission (RCDC). Established in 1994, RCDC's mission is to promote equal opportunity and ensure all city residents fully exercise their civil rights. The Commission is committed to dismantling racism and reducing prejudice within the city through modeling, education, and policy development.

This year RCDC focused on three projects, including a [video](#) highlighting the diversity of Little Rock and encouraging participation on City boards and

commissions; support of the University of Arkansas at Little Rock's Juneteenth celebration; and A Seat at the Table, a discussion-based event to inform and encourage diverse residents to serve the City on a board or commission.

In 2024, the Commission will support ODEI's efforts to identify opportunities across City departments to increase access and equitable outcomes for residents and employees, collaborate with Just Communities of Arkansas to plan the Walk for CommUNITY and host another A Seat at the Table event.



Current Commissioners represent the diversity of our great city. Visit littlerock.gov/rcdc for a complete list of current Commissioners. Learn how you can serve on a City board or commission at littlerock.gov/boardsandcommissions.

DIALOGUE PROJECT

In partnership with team members from our Community Programs Department, this project in fall 2023 invited 16 middle school students in the Little Rock School District to engage in dialogue across differences to alleviate conflict using the Essential Photovoice methodology. The students engaged in approximately three hours of dialogue on social media “beef,” examining the roles they can play in diffusing tension that could erupt into violence.

Dialogue is central to DEI work. The process invites discovery and leads to developing shared values and interests and confidence in engaging with people who feel or think differently. The space we create through dialogue allows participants to grow in understanding so they can decide to act together with common goals.





UNITY



TALENT MANAGEMENT

We support DEI in the community and our workplace. Talent management and engagement strategies include data collection, policy development, and programs. We advise and support individuals and departments throughout our organization.



ODEI STRATEGIES

TALENT MANAGEMENT

- ✓ EXECUTING
- ✓ PLANNING
- ✗ NOT STARTED

DATA



- ✓ City of Little Rock Inclusion & Belonging Survey



- ✓ Pulse Engagement Surveys

POLICY



- ✓ Such as guaranteed employee access to professional development

PROGRAMS



- ✓ Communications Professional Development Series



- ✓ Mid-manager meetings



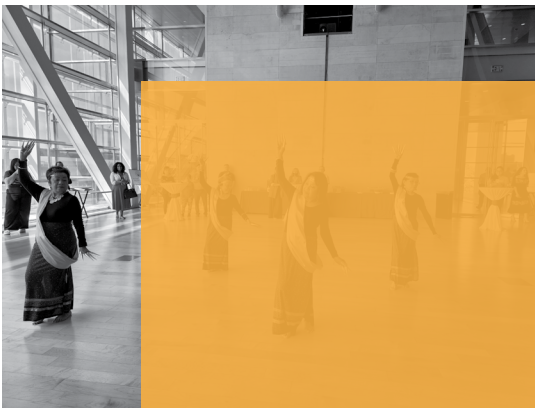
- ✓ Workforce Equity Team



- ✓ Bloomberg Managing Talent in City Government



- ✓ Adopt-a-Department



WORKFORCE EQUITY TEAM

Supported by the ODEI, the Workforce Equity Team serves as a platform for a cross-departmental team of employees to ask questions, refine ideas, learn, and practice new skills to promote equity and build a culture of inclusion in the workplace. This working group brings over 150 years of institutional knowledge together with training and perspectives from various disciplines to develop systemic, sustainable solutions in the workplace.

Initially formed in the summer of 2023 with 14 employees from 11 City departments, team members worked last year to build and strengthen relationships with co-workers across the City. In the coming year, the team will participate in selected DEI-related trainings and meet monthly to develop leadership skills and become empowered to effect change.





MID-MANAGER MEETINGS

The Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion supports the Human Resources Department in planning and designing mid-manager meetings. This intentional monthly engagement promotes cross-departmental collaboration, awareness, and skill-building throughout the middle of the City's workforce.





ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY



Our economic opportunity strategy includes efforts to diversify supply chains, support Little Rock's anchor institutions and businesses by bolstering their DEI efforts, and develop socially and economically disadvantaged businesses.



Charity Hallman, Senior Vice President, Community & Economic Development, Hope Federal Credit Union



Arlo Washington Founder, President People Trust



Anthony Young President, Southern Bancorp Community Partners



Jay Young Regional Director, Forge Community Loan Fund



Kara Wilkins, Director, Bank On Arkansas*

#LR2023OPPORTUNITY



ODEI STRATEGIES

ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY

- ✓ EXECUTING
- ✓ PLANNING
- ✗ NOT STARTED

STRATEGIC COLLABORATION

INCREASED ACCESS



- ✓ Buyers can now find minority-owned businesses in Little Rock on a map on our website.



- ✓ Cultivate a network of leaders with the skills and knowledge to bolster their organization's diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts

DIRECT SUPPORT



- ✓ Prepare small diverse businesses for procurement opportunities with the City of Little Rock

OPPORTUNITY LITTLE ROCK

In August we hosted the first Economic OpportUNITY Summit and Expo at the Willie Hinton Neighborhood Resource Center in Little Rock's 12th St. corridor. Organized in partnership with the Little Rock Regional Chamber and an alliance of community stakeholders, this free two-day event provided a powerful platform for meaningful dialogue to

foster collaboration and mutual growth between policymakers, business leaders, and the diverse talents in Little Rock. Learn more and view video from the event at littlerock.gov/opportunity. Stay tuned to the City's social media platforms for announcements about this year's Summit.



EMPRENDE

In 2023 we expanded Emprende, a comprehensive educational program that offers Little Rock's Spanish-speaking entrepreneurs a series of free classes on establishing, managing, and growing a business.

The only program of its kind in Little Rock, this comprehensive cohort-based program provides small businesses with the knowledge, resources, and connections to do business with the City of Little Rock. Emprende bridges access and opportunity, ensuring that our Spanish-speaking community is fully

included in—and contributing to—Little Rock's economy.

With support from Arvest Bank, our team provided 35 hours of programming in 2023, in which participants engaged with local lenders, tax preparers, consultants, and city officials. As of November 2023, 91 small business owners and entrepreneurs had participated, with a 79% graduation rate. Among the most recent cohort, the rate of participants who reported networking with other business owners at least sometimes increased by 33% by the end of the program.

Also in 2023, the City of Little Rock's BUILD Academy and Emprende programs hosted Little Rock's first bilingual pitch competition at the Little Rock Regional Chamber.

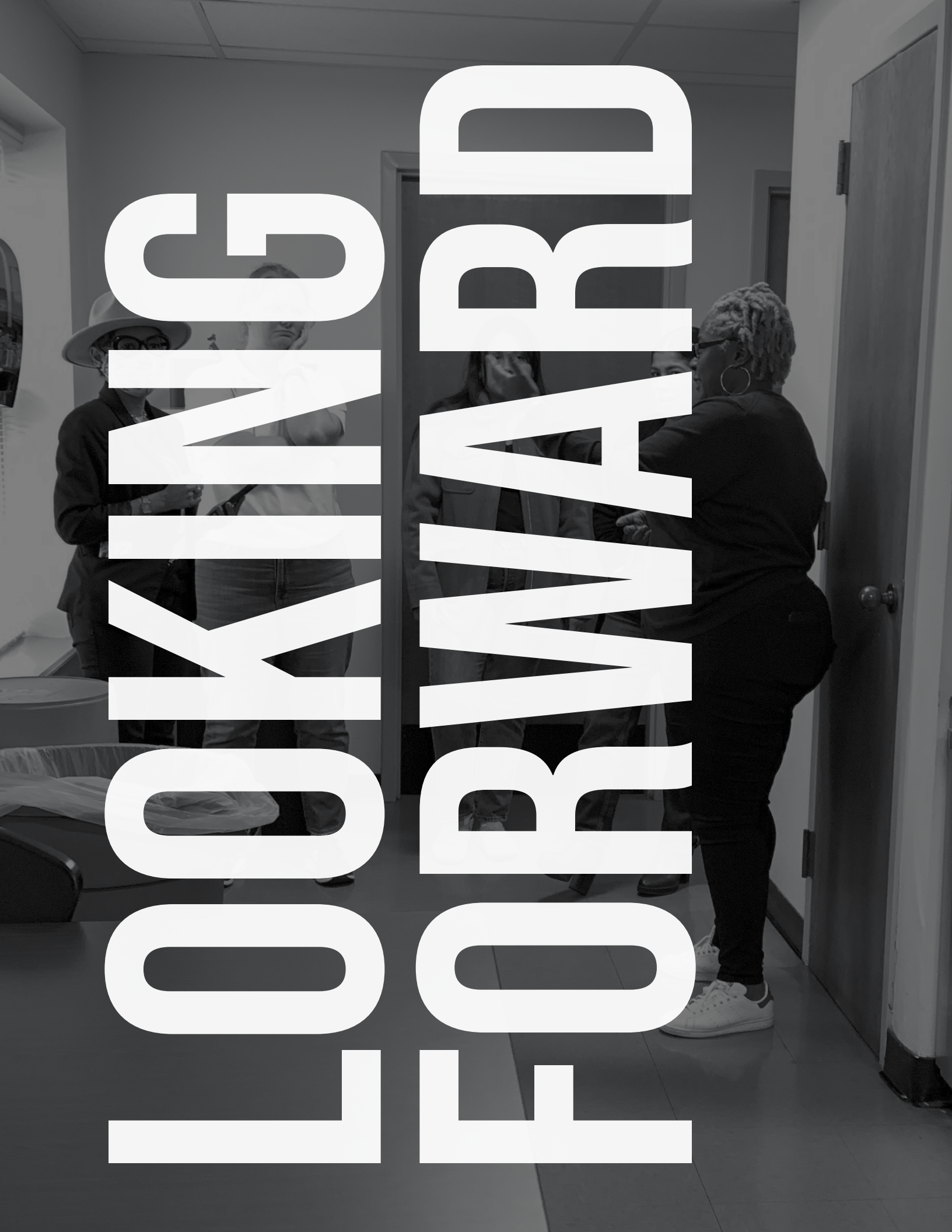




A LOOK AHEAD

2024 is already off to a great start as we continue many of our initiatives, expand others, and begin new ones. This year our team aims to:

- Identify opportunities across City departments to increase access and equitable outcomes for residents and employees. In partnership with the Little Rock Racial and Cultural Diversity Commission, we will develop and begin a city-wide equity audit to identify opportunities to increase equitable outcomes for residents and employees.
- Expand outreach within multicultural communities through consulate outreach and quarterly meetings with members of the Black, Asian, Middle-Eastern, and Native American communities. These meetings will allow us to identify needs and areas of concern and share information about City and community services.
- Expand economic opportunity for historically excluded or marginalized communities through our continuing OpportUNITY Little Rock and Empreunde initiatives and the revised Minority Business Enterprise Map on our website, littlerock.gov.
- Expand language access through policy development and artificial intelligence solutions.
- Empower engagement through effective communication and educate City team members to achieve and utilize DEI competence and confidence through the Workforce Equity Team, Mid-managers meetings, and Communications Professional Development series. We aim to work collaboratively to increase professional development opportunities and employee engagement.



GIVING
LOOKING
FORWARD
FOR

OUR TEAM



OFFICE OF DIVERSITY
EQUITY & INCLUSION
CITY OF LITTLE ROCK

AMBER D. JACKSON, MPS — Chief Equity Officer

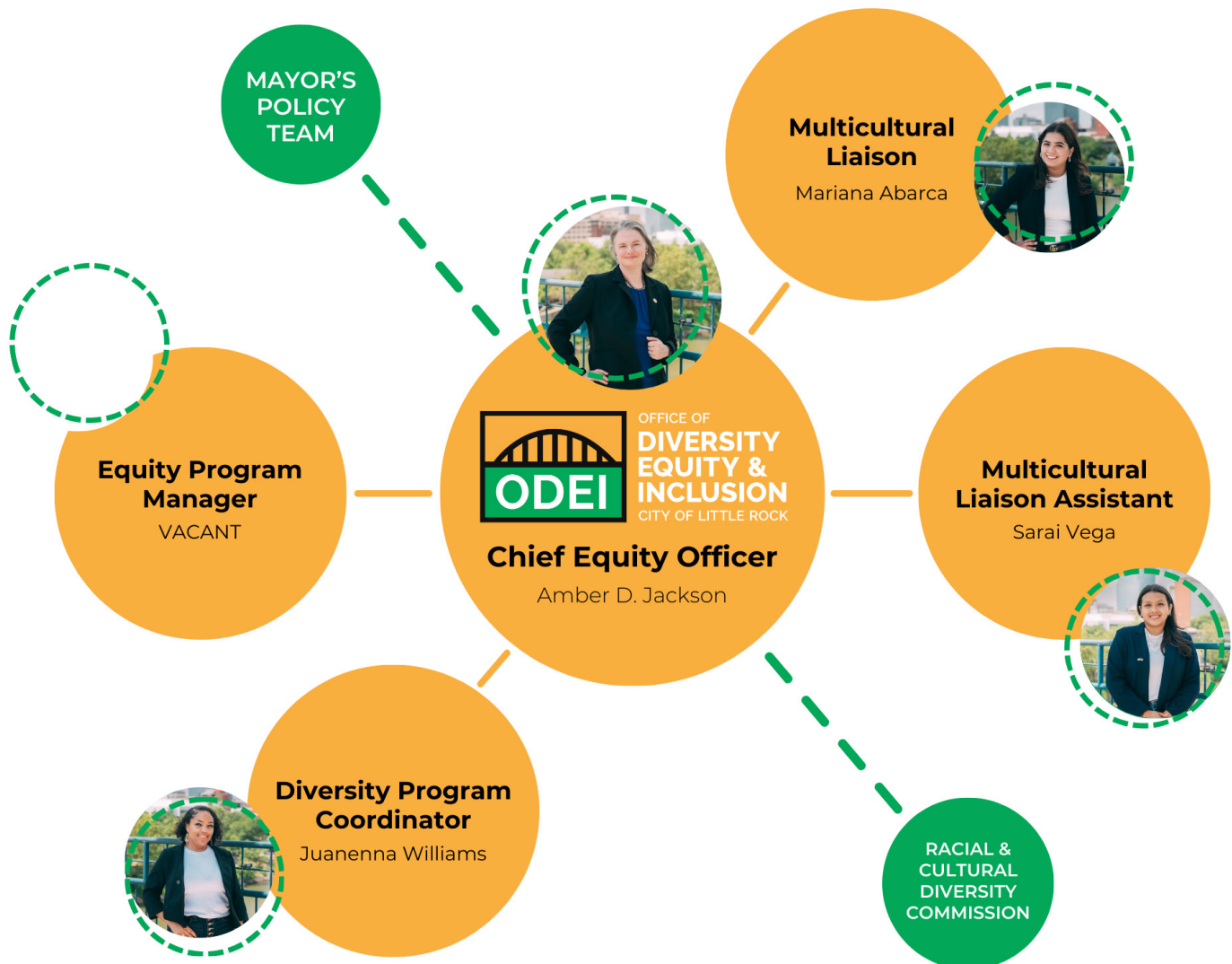
JUANENNA WILLIAMS — Diversity Program Coordinator

MARIANA ABARCA — Multicultural Liaison

SARAI VEGA — Multicultural Liaison Assistant

TOSHA ALECK — Intern (UA Little Rock Anthropology Program)

SOLIEL MYTON — Intern (UA Little Rock Anthropology Program)



AWARDS

- Amber D. Jackson, 2023 Arkansas Single Parent Scholarship Fund Employer of the Year
- Mariana Abarca, 2023 Little Rock School District ViPS Volunteer of the Year

SPEAKING & PRESENTATIONS

- National Day of Racial Healing Press Conference
- Eastern European Council on International Educational Exchange Fellows
- Southeast Sustainability Directors Network
- Winthrop Rockefeller Institute Arkansas Health Equity Collaboration
- Arkansas Women in Power
- SEC Public Affairs Leadership Workshop
- Arkansas Apex Accelerator

MEMBERSHIPS

- Arkansas Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Network

EDUCATION & PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- Amber participated in the Bloomberg Philanthropies City Data Alliance and Bloomberg Harvard City Leadership Initiative on Talent Management.
- Mariana graduated with an associate's degree and is now a full-time student pursuing a bachelor of social work.
- Mariana and Sarai completed the two-part course of the American Association of Motor Vehicle Administrators Fraud Detection and Remediation Training.
- Sarai and Juanenna are full-time students pursuing an associate's degree.

Follow the Multicultural Liaison on social media!



CONTACT US

ODEI@LittleRock.gov
(501) 371-4510



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**Follow the City
of Little Rock on
social media!**

**Have feedback
about this report?**

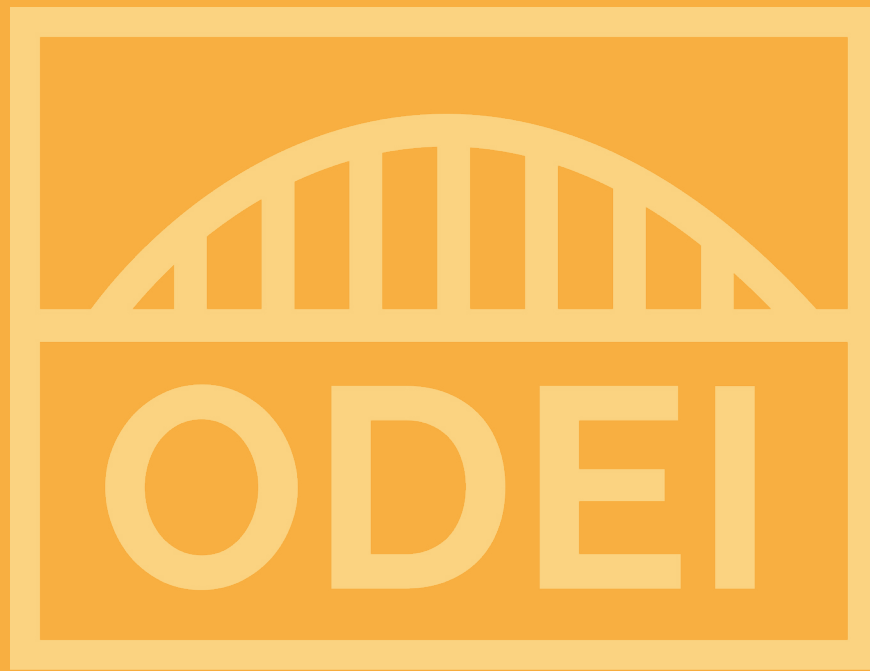
We'd like to hear from you!



www.surveymonkey.com/r/56MVF66



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