

A Report by the

NATIONAL ACADEMY OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

for the Montgomery County Fire and Rescue Service

# Building Organizational Capacity for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in the Fire and Rescue Service



NATIONAL ACADEMY OF  
PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION®

September 2022

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# **Building Organizational Capacity for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in the Fire and Rescue Service**

**EXPERT ADVISORY GROUP OF ACADEMY FELLOWS**

**Anthony Griffin**

**Thelma Harris**

**Michael Massiah**



**Officers of the Academy**

**David Wennergren**, *Chair of the Board*

**William Baity**, *Vice Chair*

**David Mader**, *Treasurer*

**Jane Fountain**, *Secretary*

**Teresa W. Gerton**, *President and Chief Executive Officer*

**Study Team**

**Brenna Isman**, *Director of Academy Studies*

**Adam Darr**, *Project Director*

**Sukumar Rao**, *Senior Advisor*

**Kate Connor**, *Senior Analyst*

**Sharon Yoo**, *Research Analyst*

**E. Jonathan Garcia**, *Research Associate*

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National Academy of Public Administration

1600 K Street, NW

Suite 400

Washington, D.C. 20006

[www.napawash.org](http://www.napawash.org)

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## About the Academy

The National Academy of Public Administration is an independent, nonprofit, and non-partisan organization established in 1967 and chartered by Congress in 1984. It advises government leaders in building more effective, efficient, accountable, and transparent organizations. To carry out this mission, the Academy draws on the knowledge and experience of its nearly 1,000 Fellows—including former cabinet officers, Members of Congress, governors, mayors, and state legislators, as well as prominent scholars, career public administrators, and nonprofit and business executives. The Academy helps public institutions address their most critical governance and management challenges through in-depth studies and analyses, advisory services and technical assistance, congressional testimony, forums and conferences, and online stakeholder engagement. Learn more about the Academy and its work at [www.NAPAwash.org](http://www.NAPAwash.org).

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## Foreword

Montgomery County, Maryland, located directly northeast of the District of Columbia, is home to more than 1 million residents. It is the largest and most diverse county in the state of Maryland and the 44th most populous county in the United States.

In 2020, the Montgomery County Executive developed the County's *Reimagine Public Safety Initiative* (Initiative), which aims to create a more equitable and inclusive Montgomery County for all residents. Around the same time, Montgomery County's Council passed *The Racial Equity and Social Justice Act*, (the Act) requiring each executive and legislative branch department to develop a racial equity and social justice action plan by 2025.

As a result of the Initiative and the Act, the Montgomery County Fire and Rescue Service (MCFRS) contracted with the National Academy of Public Administration (the Academy) to conduct an equity assessment of its Fire and Rescue Service. The Academy is an independent, non-partisan, and non-profit institution chartered by the U.S. Congress to create a just, fair, and inclusive government that strengthens communities and protects democracy. The Academy draws upon the expertise of its nearly 1,000 distinguished Fellows, who are nationally recognized public administration experts. The Academy assembled a three-member Expert Advisory Group (EAG) of Fellows with expertise in county government operations, public safety, human capital management, and social equity. I would like to thank the EAG for their expertise and advice throughout the study and the professional Study Team that provided thoughtful and action-oriented research and analysis throughout the study.

The Academy commends Montgomery County and the Fire and Rescue Service for taking on this social equity assessment. Government agencies that prioritize social equity and evaluate current practices and policies through a social equity lens are making positive changes that support one of the Academy's [Grand Challenges in Public Administration: Fostering Social Equity](#). This report reinforces the Academy's efforts to address all 12 Grand Challenges in Public Administration at all levels of government through our [Center for Intergovernmental Partnerships](#).

We are grateful to the many firefighters and professional staff who participated in this study. We also appreciate the insights offered by MCFRS leaders, the County Executive's Office, the Office of Racial Equity and Social Justice, the Office of Community Partnerships, the Office of County Attorney, and the Office of Human Resources for providing important context for this report. We also thank the leadership from comparable fire departments and subject matter experts who shared best practice research in social equity and organizational change management.

I trust that the research and recommendations in this report will help MCFRS build the organizational capacity necessary to develop a strong racial equity action plan so that it can deliver on the goals of the County's Reimagine Public Safety Initiative and be part of the creation of a more equitable and inclusive Montgomery County for all residents.

Teresa W. Gerton  
President and Chief Executive Officer  
National Academy of Public Administration

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## Acronyms and Abbreviations

| Acronym or Abbreviation | Definition  |
|-------------------------|---|
| Academy                 | National Academy of Public Administration             |
| Commission              | Fire and Emergency Services Commission                |
| COVID-19                | Coronavirus Disease 2019                              |
| CPAT                    | Candidate Physical Abilities Test                     |
| DEI                     | Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion                      |
| EAG                     | Expert Advisory Group                                 |
| EEO                     | Equal Employment Opportunity                          |
| EEOC                    | United States Equal Employment Opportunity Commission |
| EMS                     | Emergency Medical Services                            |
| FDNY                    | Fire Department of the City of New York               |
| GARE                    | Government Alliance on Race and Equity                |
| IAFC                    | International Association of Fire Chiefs              |
| IAFF                    | International Association of Fire Fighters            |
| LFRD                    | Local Fire and Rescue Department                      |
| MCFRS                   | Montgomery County Fire and Rescue Service             |
| MCPD                    | Montgomery County Police Department                   |
| MCPR 2001               | Montgomery County Personnel Regulations               |
| MCVFRA                  | Montgomery County Volunteer Fire Rescue Association   |
| OCP                     | Montgomery County Office of Community Partnerships    |
| ODA                     | Officer Development Academies                         |
| OHR                     | Office of Human Resources                             |
| OLO                     | Office of Legislative Oversight                       |
| OPM                     | Office of Personnel Management                        |
| ORESJ                   | Office of Racial Equity and Social Justice            |

## Executive Summary

At the request of the Montgomery County Fire and Rescue Service (MCFRS), the National Academy of Public Administration, as an independent, non-partisan, non-profit institution chartered by the U.S. Congress, conducted a six-month equity assessment of the Fire and Rescue Service. A three-member Expert Advisory Group (EAG) of Academy Fellows advised the Study Team throughout the study. The Study Team collected relevant background information, conducted 76 interviews with MCFRS members, fielded an organization-wide survey, drafted preliminary observations, and prepared the final report.

Like other fire departments across the country, interviews and survey results showed that MCFRS is in the early stages of learning and embracing diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI). The recommendations in this report focus on the infrastructure required to apply an equity lens to decision making, the training necessary to change institutional culture related to DEI, and the community engagement needed to inform MCFRS's vision of equity and related goals. The research and recommendations in this report will help MCFRS build the organizational capacity necessary to develop a strong racial equity action plan.



The recommendations are organized into seven theme areas that broadly align with frameworks for DEI developed by the Government Alliance on Race and Equity, and the International Association of Fire Chiefs. Each theme area includes at least one recommendation, and each recommendation is organized into two groups: (1) Building the Foundation and (2) Sustaining the Momentum. MCFRS can implement recommendations under Building the Foundation in about 18 months and these recommendations build the organizational capacity required for changing organizational and employee perceptions of DEI. Recommendations under Sustaining the Momentum can be implemented in 18+ months and sustain the momentum created by implementing foundational recommendations, especially as senior leaders promote out of and retire from key positions.



Changing the culture at MCFRS will take time, as it does with all organizations. MCFRS faces a unique challenge as a combination career-volunteer department. This challenge is unique in three respects. First, the Fire Chief must work with local fire rescue department chiefs who themselves maintain some autonomy at their station. Second, changes to policy and procedure require the Fire Chief to work with the International Association of Fire Fighters Local 1664 and the Montgomery County Volunteer Fire Rescue Association, both of which operate under agreements with Montgomery County. Third, any changes to policy and procedure require approval by the Fire and Emergency Services Commission, which holds considerable power as it reviews and approves any shifts in departmental policy.



The key is getting started now. MCFRS should move urgently on recommendations that build the foundation, like appointing an employee DEI council, hiring a DEI Officer, adopting a racial equity framework and vision, and working with Office of Human Resources (OHR) to obtain disaggregated data through the employee lifecycle. This momentum will carry the organization forward as MCFRS incorporates DEI into future planning documents, creates actions and timelines to remain accountable, creates a management academy for first-line supervisors, and incorporates DEI into the operational mission. MCFRS is poised to change and, with additional

support and resourcing from the Montgomery County Council and Executive, will provide Montgomery County residents another reason to celebrate the Fire and Rescue Service as one of the most trusted departments in the county.



While the recommendations and actions are time-bound, they are not entirely prescriptive. Rather, they are offered as a high-level roadmap. The Study Team recognizes that some of these may overlap and need to adjust as progress is made over time. Further, many activities suggested for Building the Foundation will need to continue in the Sustaining Momentum phase.

|   |   |
|---|---|
|  | <b><u>Building the Foundation:</u></b> Recommendations can be implemented in about 0-18 months. These recommendations build the organizational capacity required for changing organizational and employee perceptions of diversity, equity, and inclusion.    |
|  | <b><u>Sustaining the Momentum:</u></b> Recommendations can be implemented in 18+ months. These recommendations sustain the momentum created by implementing foundational recommendations, especially as senior leaders promote and retire from key positions. |



| <b>Recommendation 1: Current and Future Leadership Commitment to DEI</b>            |  |
|---|--|
|  | <b><u>Building the Foundation:</u></b> The County Council and Executive should develop a candidate profile to include key characteristics and attributes of the new fire chief, with a particular focus on commitment to DEI. Obtain feedback from employees in developing the candidate profile.        |
|  | <b><u>Sustaining the Momentum:</u></b> The County Council and Executive must hold the new fire chief and the core leadership team accountable through hearings and performance measures for actions, progress, and accomplishments towards making the department more diverse, equitable, and inclusive. |

| <b>Recommendation 2: DEI Officer and Champion</b>                                   |  |
|---|--|
|  | <b><u>Building the Foundation:</u></b> MCFRS should secure funding commitment and supply the necessary resources for a new DEI Officer to be successful. Hire and empower the DEI Officer to lead DEI efforts and question organizational norms for possible inequities. Firefighters and employees should recognize the DEI Officer as a senior leader with the authority to act on behalf of the Fire Chief. The DEI Officer should champion the development of the racial equity plan and its implementation. |
|  | <b><u>Sustaining the Momentum:</u></b> The DEI Officer must continue a comprehensive review of the priorities, operations, policies, and initiatives based on the racial equity vision. Continue to implement, monitor, and track all DEI-related initiatives and progress of the organization's journey.  |

### Recommendation 3: First-Line Supervisors and DEI



|   |  |
|---|--|
|  | <p><b><u>Building the Foundation:</u></b> MCFRS should leverage the voluntary officer training program as a starting place for an expanded management and leadership academy. Include master firefighters and volunteer firefighters (master, lieutenant, and captain) in the expanded management and leadership academy. Offer training specific to managing and leading diversity at fire stations. Topics should include scenario-based training on diversity, race, sexual orientation, and mental health. Other sessions should focus on accountability practices, performance management, employee recognition, and team building.</p> |
|  | <p><b><u>Sustaining the Momentum:</u></b> MCFRS should work with the County to secure the budget and resources to develop courses and a standard leadership development curriculum. Update job requirements, skillsets, and qualifications in position descriptions so interpersonal skills and abilities are a factor in the promotion process. Incorporate inclusion-focused role-playing scenarios in officer promotional testing and assessment center scenarios.</p>  |

### Recommendation 4: Racial Equity Framework and Vision



|   |   |
|---|---|
|   | <p><b><u>Building the Foundation:</u></b> As a critical step, MCFRS should work with the County's Office of Racial Equity and Social Justice (ORESJ) to define and share what racial equity, diversity, and inclusion mean to MCFRS, including developing a shared set of definitions. MCFRS should refine its vision with leaders and employees working together through facilitated, inclusive discussions to gain organizational commitment. The framework should acknowledge the historical role government has played in maintaining inequities and that implicit and explicit biases are realities.</p> |
|  | <p><b><u>Sustaining the Momentum:</u></b> In this stage, MCFRS should put the vision and framework into practice, applying a racial equity lens to its actions, priorities, and operations. Leadership (at all levels) must reinforce the vision through clear and transparent communications to internal and external stakeholders.</p>  |





### Recommendation 5: Align Racial Equity Vision to Strategic and Master Plans

|   |   |
|---|---|
|  | <b>Building the Foundation:</b> MCFRS should incorporate the racial equity vision into the Strategic Plan and Master Plan. Set specific goals on diversity, equity, and inclusion. Identify specific initiatives to achieve strategic objectives, and document division-level responsibility for each goal and action item. Begin implementation of each initiative, supported by communications, governance and employee engagement. |
|  | <b>Sustaining the Momentum:</b> Continue to measure and track progress. Celebrate quick wins and accomplishments. Obtain employee feedback on implementation and progress and make course corrections as necessary.   |



### Recommendation 6: Develop a Recruitment Strategy to Focus Limited Resources

|   |  |
|---|--|
|    | <b>Building the Foundation:</b> MCFRS should develop a Recruitment Strategy to bring in a more diverse workforce using short and long-term strategies. Using the recruitment strategy, evaluate the required budget and resource needs to effectively recruit the next generation of Montgomery County firefighters and rescuers. Identify clear recruitment priorities and develop action plans to target local and diverse communities. Explore expanding the open application period beyond 1-2 months. |
|  | <b>Sustaining the Momentum:</b> MCFRS should continue to implement recruitment strategies. Measure to identify what strategies are achieving recruitment goals. Work with OHR to secure preference points for cadet and volunteer programs to develop a pipeline of local firefighters. Work with county leadership to make the cadet program a paid opportunity, similar to the Montgomery County Police Department program.  |



### Recommendation 7: Charter a DEI Council to Solicit Employee Input

|   |  |
|---|--|
|  | <b>Building the Foundation:</b> MCFRS should charter a DEI council of interested career, volunteer, and civilian employees. The DEI Council should help develop the equity framework, vision, and recruitment strategy. For the council to be effective and credible, MCFRS should ensure accountability from leaders and transparency in decision making through policy and practice. |
|  | <b>Sustaining the Momentum:</b> The DEI Council should serve as a resource for the Chief and DEI Officer. The Council can help identify internal and external inequities in processes and programs. The DEI Council should be involved in developing the Racial Equity Action Plan, associated actions, and measures.  |



### Recommendation 8: Building County-Level Capacity for EEO

|   |   |
|---|---|
|  | <p><b><u>Building the Foundation:</u></b> The County must fully staff its Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) office. MCFRS should identify internal MCFRS members (with relevant skills on equity, inclusion and associated policies and procedures) to serve as support resources when EEO complaints occur. MCFRS leaders should communicate to employees what the EEO process entails. Continue to provide basic EEO training for leaders, supervisors, and members. Make incremental changes to provide consistent communications and updates on the case status to complainants and respondents.</p> |
|  | <p><b><u>Sustaining the Momentum:</u></b> County OHR should refine EEO training methods based on feedback. Build a more systematic case management capability to streamline communications and processes so complainants and respondents feel the process is transparent. MCFRS should revisit its union agreements and contracts to ensure there are no constraints in sharing information about the process, including aggregate data on numbers and trends of complaints.</p>  |



### Recommendation 9: Track DEI and Connect to Mission and Service Delivery

|   |  |
|---|--|
|   | <p><b><u>Building the Foundation:</u></b> As a beginning step, MCFRS should work with OHR to obtain periodic reports on all aspects of the employee lifecycle, including hiring and recruiting, career advancement and development, performance management, and retention. Employee lifecycle data should be disaggregated by age, gender, race, and ethnicity. MCFRS should conduct a systematic analysis periodically to identify key insights and trends, identify any issues and concerns, and disaggregate data to identify potential inequities. This data and the resulting analyses should form the basis of any key organizational priorities in alignment with the strategic plan and the racial equity vision and priorities.</p> |
|  | <p><b><u>Sustaining the Momentum:</u></b> As the process and organization mature, MCFRS can build on its capability to use data to make better-informed decisions about its organizational climate and workforce. Expanding on the data and metrics will require an investment in resources to secure staff trained in data analytics with the requisite knowledge and understanding to collect and present DEI data in a thoughtful, transparent, and consistent manner.</p>  |

### Recommendation 10: MCFRS' Organizational DEI Profile

|   |   |
|---|---|
|  | <p><b><u>Building the Foundation:</u></b> As a first step, OHR must begin collecting and tracking diversity, equity, and inclusion data on a standard, consistent basis across career and volunteer staff, race and ethnicities, title and ranks, and gender, and on an annual basis. This disaggregated data will allow MCFRS to establish a baseline and measure and track its progress towards its racial equity goals. MCFRS should complement it with annual employee pulse surveys measuring employee perception of progress on DEI-related goals and objectives (short surveys, 8-10 questions on a regular cadence).</p>  |
|  | <p><b><u>Sustaining the Momentum:</u></b> Based on MCFRS' racial equity plan, MCFRS should develop a set of 3-5 key metrics to track and monitor the organization's progress to DEI and its key actions. The metrics should focus on four areas: (1) diversity across employee levels, (2) equitable access to hiring, (3) opportunity and advancement, and (4) employee perceptions of belonging and inclusivity). MCFRS leaders should communicate progress transparently and consistently across the organization. While the focus on outcome metrics is helpful, MCFRS should also complement it with process metrics. MCFRS should use the core DEI-related metrics in the County's CountyStat measures. Doing so provides a clear and consistent accountability framework and a clear line of sight across leadership levels.</p> |

### Recommendation 11: Community Characteristics and Awareness

|   |  |
|---|--|
|  | <p><b><u>Building the Foundation:</u></b> MCFRS should incorporate community awareness/characteristics training as part of ongoing training. Continue to explore ways to disaggregate equity data on its mission service and delivery by partnering with county and non-county community organizations. Examine the root causes and issues for lower ratings in certain geographic areas and with racial and ethnic groups.</p>  |
|  | <p><b><u>Sustaining the Momentum:</u></b> MCFRS should deepen community engagement and partnerships by strengthening relationships with the liaisons in the Office of Community Partnerships (OCP) and other channels to solicit community feedback. Explore ways to collect feedback from residents after incident response, either directly or indirectly. Based on the incident (e.g., less traumatic incidents), a direct approach could involve asking for feedback during follow-up visits from the station personnel. In contrast, an indirect process could involve working with county community liaisons, other county partners (health, family services, etc.), and community partners.</p> |

# Chapter 1: Introduction

## 1.1 Study Mandate and Scope

In 2019, The Montgomery County Council passed "The Racial Equity and Social Justice Act," which established the Office of Racial Equity and Social Justice (ORESJ). The Racial Equity and Social Justice Act required each executive and legislative branch department to designate an employee to serve as the racial equity and social justice lead and develop a department racial equity and social justice action plan by 2025.

In 2020, the County Executive launched the Reimagining Public Safety Initiative, which served as the impetus for this study.<sup>1</sup> The Montgomery County Fire and Rescue Service (MCFRS) contracted with the Academy to conduct an equity assessment of the Fire and Rescue Service. This assessment is intended to assist MCFRS in the beginning stages of developing the racial equity and social justice action plan, as required by the Racial Equity and Social Justice Act.

The study began in March 2022 with a formal presentation and discussion between the MCFRS leadership team, Montgomery County's Assistant Chief Administrative Officer, the Director of the County's ORESJ, and the Academy Study Team. Throughout the study, the Study Team collected relevant background information, conducted interviews, drafted preliminary observations, and prepared its final report.

The Study Team analyzed and interviewed Montgomery County's career and volunteer fire service as one organizational entity, referred to as MCFRS in this report. The findings and recommendations in this report apply equally to the career and volunteer rescue service. If followed, they will enable MCFRS to build the organizational capacity required to support future diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) initiatives. Every effort should involve career and volunteer firefighters in future DEI initiatives.

MCFRS asked the Study Team to analyze the following areas through the lens of DEI:

- Internal practices (recruiting, hiring, training, promotions, evaluations)
- Member perceptions of organizational commitment to DEI
- Knowledge of community characteristics
- Citizen complaints and outcomes
- Emergency and non-emergency calls for service
- Trust and knowledge of the Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) complaint process

## 1.2 Study Methodology

A three-member Expert Advisory Group (EAG) of Academy Fellows advised the Study Team throughout the study (see Appendix A for biographical information on the EAG and Study Team). The EAG included a human capital expert with expertise in EEO processes, a former county executive of Fairfax County (VA), and a retired senior executive and first Chief Diversity, Equity,

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<sup>1</sup> Montgomery County Government, "Reimagining Public Safety," accessed September 14, 2022, <https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/rps/about/vision.html>.

and Inclusion Officer of the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey. The EAG interviewed Montgomery County's Fire Chief and the Assistant Chief Administrative Officer. EAG members provided their expertise and leadership on research strategy, preliminary observations, findings, recommendations, and the final report.

The Study Team reviewed documents from MCFRS, including policies, procedures, data on relevant topics (demographics, EEO complaints, calls for service), organizational charts, budgets, the International Association of Fire Fighters (IAFF) Local 1664 collective bargaining agreement, and the agreement between MCFRS and the Montgomery County Volunteer Fire Rescue Association (MCVFRA). This report is also informed by a literature review of DEI best practice for organizations including research from the Government Alliance on Race and Equity (GARE) and the International Association of Fire Chiefs (IAFC).

The Study Team conducted 76 not-for-attribution interviews with internal and external stakeholders to complement the documentary research and survey analysis. Interviews were conducted with individuals from various demographic and departmental groups; these interviews were representative of and across multiple ranks throughout MCFRS. Additionally, the Study Team interviewed individuals from Montgomery County's Office of Community Partnerships (OCP), Office of the County Attorney, Office of Human Resources (OHR), comparable fire departments, and DEI subject matter experts (Appendix B contains a complete list of all individuals interviewed).

The Study Team developed and administered an online survey with input from MCFRS, IAFF Local 1664, and MCVFRA. The survey was fielded to approximately 3,700 members of MCFRS and measured member perceptions of organizational commitment to DEI and their understanding of the EEO complaint process. Survey questions were designed to help diagnose the organizational culture and to establish the desired future state for MCFRS (see Appendix C for survey questions).

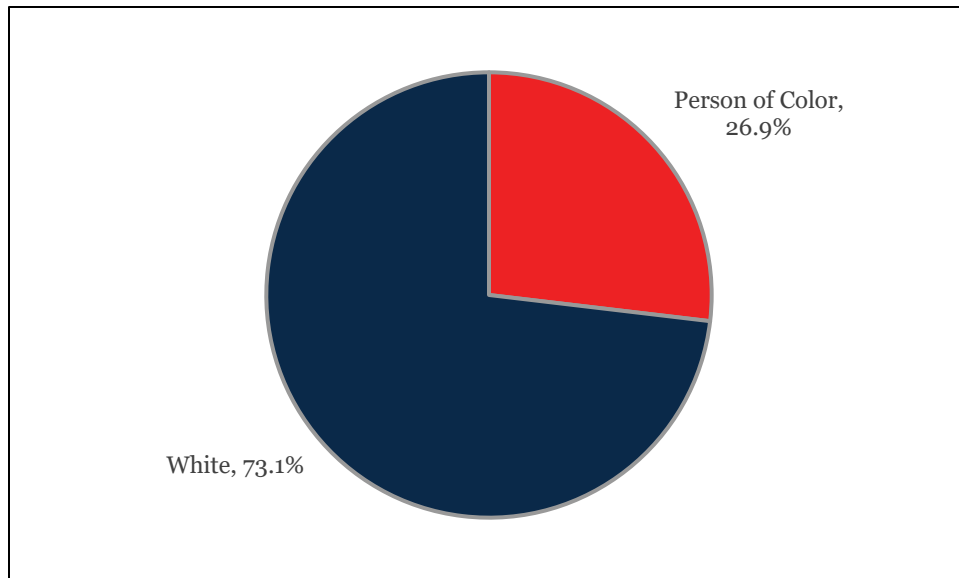
The Study Team reviewed key questions from equity assessment surveys conducted by San Francisco and Seattle Fire Departments and used industry standards provided by the University of Michigan and the Society for Human Resource Management.<sup>2</sup> The survey consisted of four demographic questions (gender, race, ethnicity, and department), 20 multiple choice questions, and four short answer questions to gain a high-level understanding of the current cultural climate at MCFRS (see Figures 1-4 for demographic breakdowns). Employees and firefighters could take the survey at work on computers, at home, or on mobile phones. The Study Team administered the survey online through Survey Monkey; it was open for 20 days and took an average of six

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<sup>2</sup> San Francisco Fire Department, *Racial Equity Action Plan 2021-2023 (REAP v.1)*, accessed August 10, 2022, [https://sf-fire.org/files/2021-05/Fire\\_Racial\\_Equity\\_Action\\_Plan.pdf](https://sf-fire.org/files/2021-05/Fire_Racial_Equity_Action_Plan.pdf); Race & Social Justice Initiative, *2018 RSJI Employee Survey: Employee Experiences of Structural Racism Within Seattle City Government*, accessed August 10, 2022, <https://www.seattle.gov/documents/Departments/RSJI/RSJI%20Survey%20Report%202018%20-%20Final.pdf>; University of Michigan, *Campus Climate Survey on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion*, accessed August 10, 2022 <https://diversity.umich.edu/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/STAFF-SAMPLING-SURVEY.pdf>; SHRM, *Employee Survey: Diversity, Equity and Inclusion*, accessed August 10, 2022, <https://www.shrm.org/resourcesandtools/tools-and-samples/hr-forms/pages/diversitysurveys.aspx>.

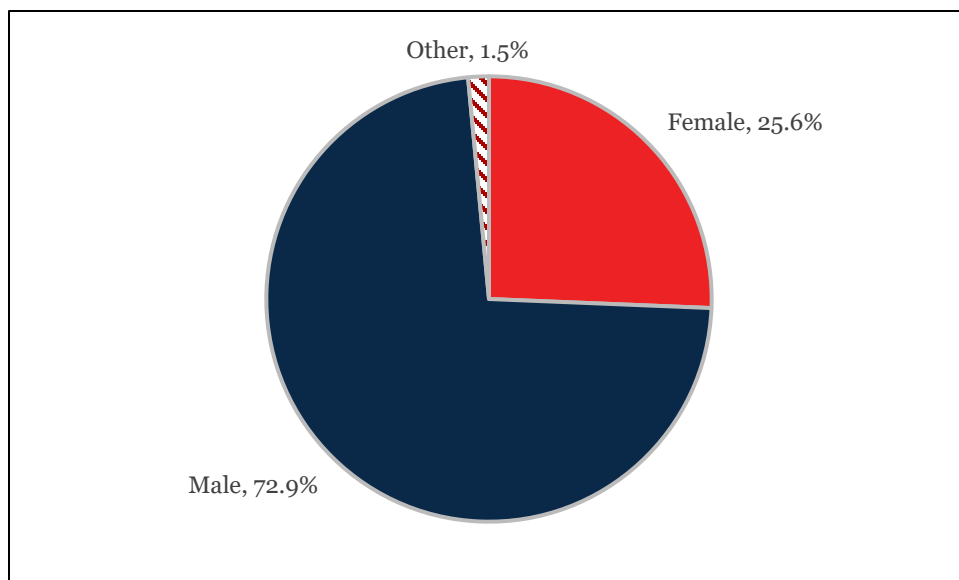
minutes to complete. At the end of the open period, the survey yielded 734 responses out of 3,700 recipients for an overall 19.83 percent response rate.<sup>3</sup> Survey results are available in Appendix D.

*Figure 1. Survey Respondents by Race/Ethnicity*



Source: National Academy of Public Administration

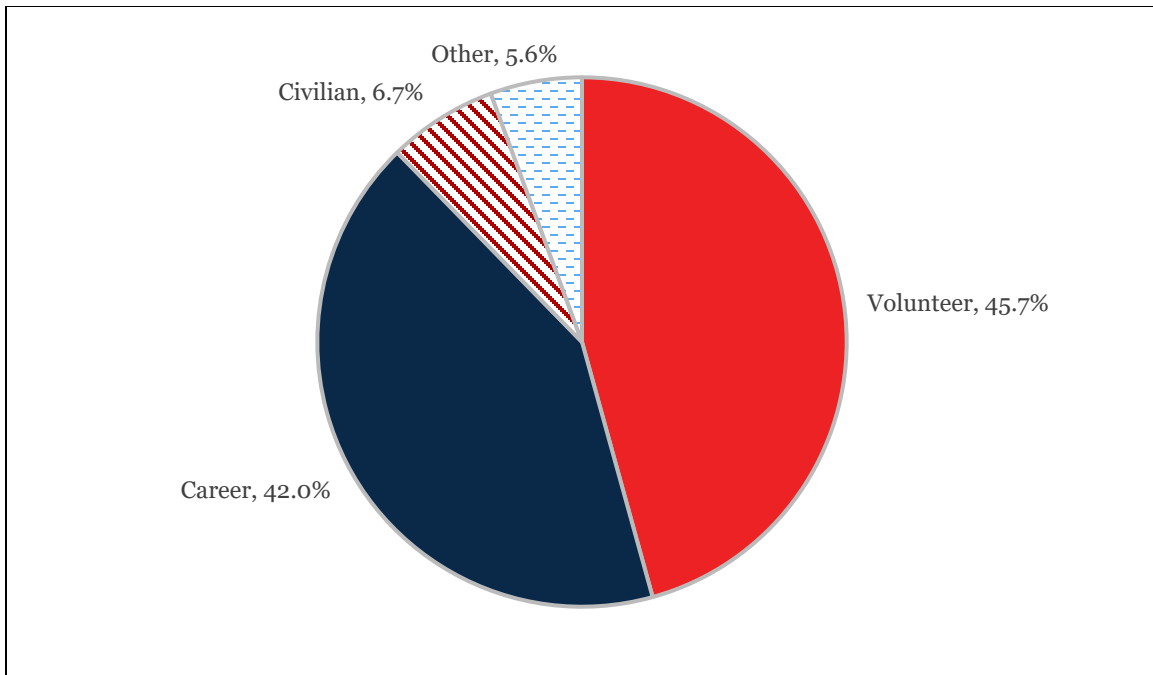
*Figure 2. Survey Respondents by Gender*



Source: National Academy of Public Administration

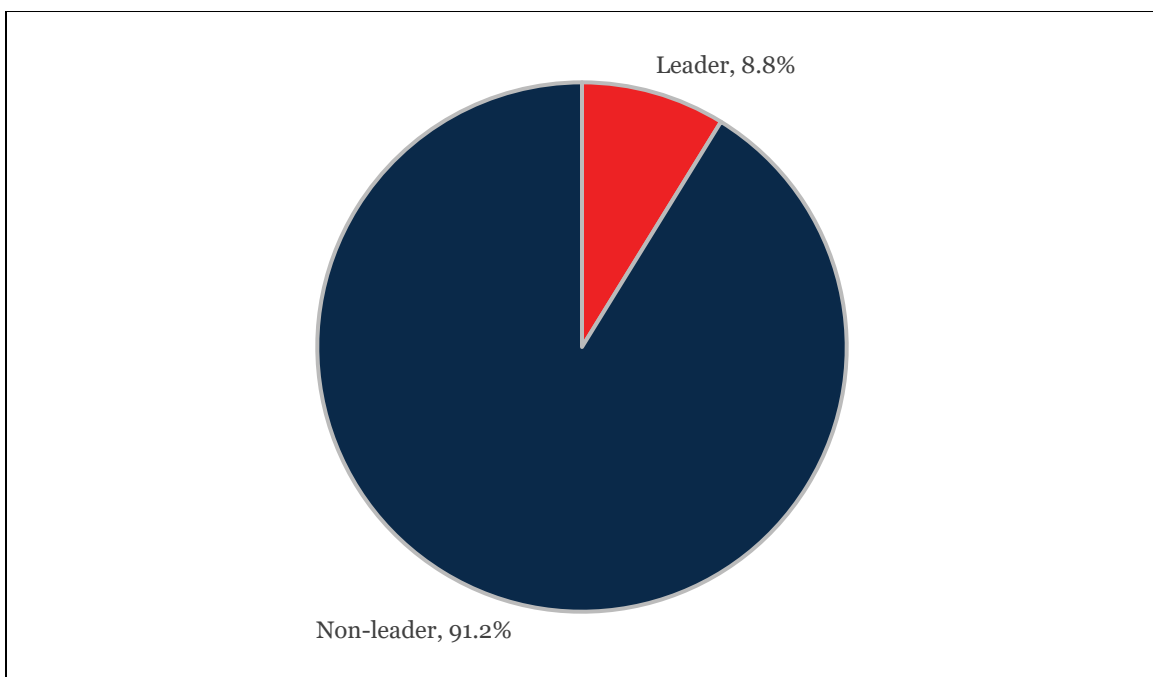
<sup>3</sup> For perspective, the San Francisco Fire Department yielded a 9.3% response rate on its DEI survey. Seattle's Fire Department estimates an 18% response rate on its racial equity and social justice survey.

*Figure 3. Survey Respondents by Role*



Source: National Academy of Public Administration

*Figure 4. Survey Respondents by Leader/Non-leader*



Source: National Academy of Public Administration



In addition to responding to multiple choice and open-ended questions, survey participants could voluntarily sign up for individual interviews with the Study Team. Those who signed up for interviews comprised various demographic groups, ranks, and stations. The interviews with firefighters:

- engaged a broader set of perspectives within MCFRS regarding the current state of institutional culture and DEI at MCFRS, and
- solicited feedback on how MCFRS could improve policies and procedures regarding institutional culture and areas regarding DEI

### **1.3 Report Content and Organization**

The report is organized into three chapters. Chapter 2 provides an overview of demographic trends in Montgomery County and MCFRS's organizational background and history and builds the case for DEI in the fire and rescue service. Chapter 3 is organized by the adapted GARE and IAFC frameworks and proposes recommendations to build organizational capacity for DEI in the fire rescue service. Chapter 4 concludes the report with the final GARE principle (operate with urgency and accountability) and a summary of recommendations. Chapter 3's framework is outlined below:

1. Leadership Buy-In
2. Adopt an Equity Framework
3. Establish DEI in Vision, Mission, and Values
4. Build Infrastructure to make DEI successful
5. Implement racial equity tools in policies, procedures, and practices
6. Be data-driven
7. Partner with community organizations and other county departments

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## Chapter 2: Background

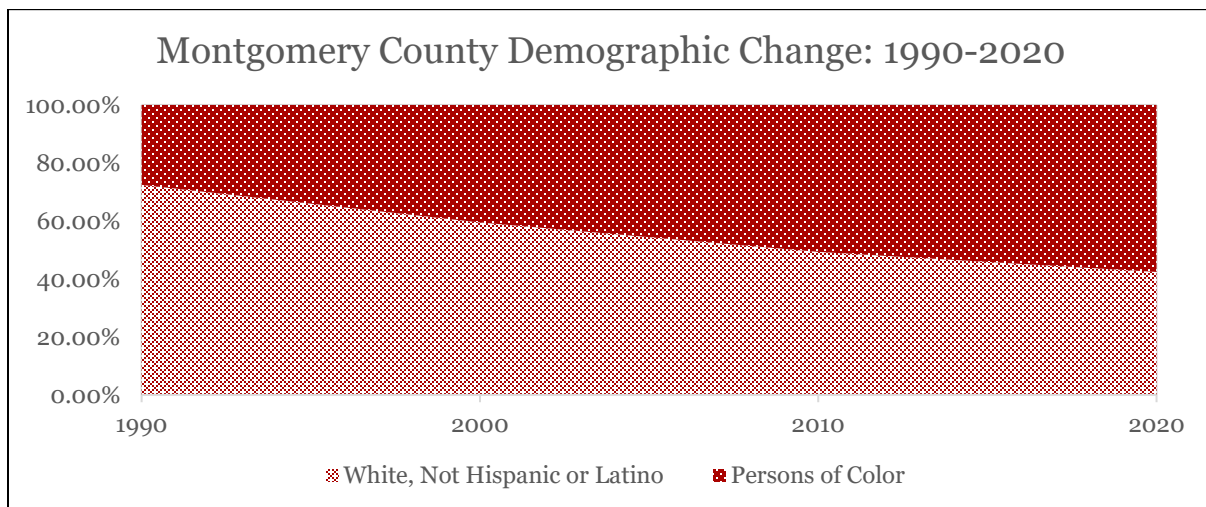
This chapter provides an overview of Montgomery County, a timeline of county action on diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI), a brief history and background on the Montgomery County Fire and Rescue Service (MCFRS) and makes a case for addressing DEI in the fire and rescue service.

### 2.1 Overview of Montgomery County

Montgomery County is located in central Maryland, directly northeast of the District of Columbia. Home to approximately 1,062,061 residents, Montgomery County is the largest county in the state of Maryland and the 44th most populous county in the United States.<sup>4</sup> Since 1990, Montgomery County has experienced a 40 percent population increase.

Montgomery County is home to some of the most diverse towns in the country and is the most diverse county in the state of Maryland.<sup>5</sup> As shown in Figure 5 below, the county became a “minority-majority” county around 2010.

*Figure 5. Montgomery County's Diversifying Population*



Source: National Academy of Public Administration

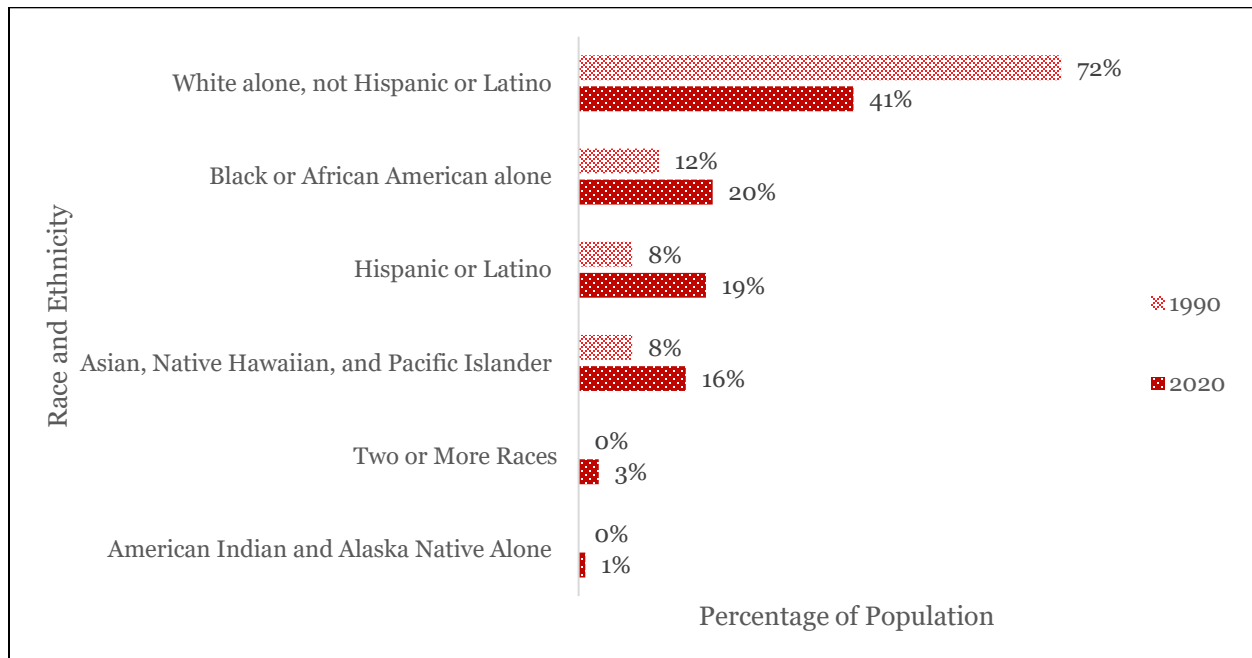
Between 1990 and 2020, the fastest growing populations in Montgomery County are (see Figure 6):

- Hispanic/Latino community (11 percentage point increase)
- Black and African American community (8 percentage point increase)
- Asian, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander community (8 percentage point increase)

<sup>4</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, “County Population Totals: 2020-2021,” accessed August 10, 2022, [https://www.census.gov/data/tables/time-series/demo/popest/2020s-counties-total.html#par\\_textimage\\_242301767](https://www.census.gov/data/tables/time-series/demo/popest/2020s-counties-total.html#par_textimage_242301767).

<sup>5</sup> Bethesda Magazine, Montgomery County is one of two counties in the country with four towns on the ‘most diverse’ list, April 27, 2021, <https://bethesdamagazine.com/bethesda-beat/2021/montgomery-county-is-one-of-two-counties-in-country-with-four-towns-on-most-diverse-list/>.

*Figure 6. Percent of Montgomery County, MD Population by Race and Ethnicity, 1990 and 2020*



Source: National Academy of Public Administration

Montgomery County residents also speak a variety of languages at home. 59.1 percent of residents speak only English, 16.8 percent speak Spanish, 10.3 percent speak an Indo-European language, 9.2 percent speak an Asian-Pacific Islander language, and 4.6 percent speak other languages.<sup>6</sup> Montgomery County has a higher-than-average number of households experiencing language isolation (7%) and a higher-than-average number of people with limited spoken English (14.6%).<sup>7</sup>

Regarding socioeconomic standards and social vulnerabilities, Montgomery County ranks below the national and Maryland-state averages in unemployment, individuals below the poverty line, families below the poverty line, and people living with disabilities (see Table 1).<sup>8</sup>

<sup>6</sup> Data from U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey and visually represented in the CRAIG-1300 tool <https://dashboards.mysidewalk.com/montgomery-county-fire-rescue-services/where-we-are-from>

<sup>7</sup> Language isolation is used "to identify where non-English efforts are best concentrated and which languages might be needed" to better serve residents who do not speak English. The data is sourced from the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey and represented in the CRAIG-1300 tool, <https://dashboards.mysidewalk.com/montgomery-county-fire-rescue-services/language-isolation>

<sup>8</sup> CRAIG1300 Plus, "Poverty and Affordability, accessed September 14, 2022, <https://dashboards.mysidewalk.com/montgomery-county-fire-rescue-services/poverty-and-affordability>.

Table 1. Rates of Social Vulnerabilities in Montgomery County, the State of Maryland, and the United States, 2016-2022

|  | Montgomery County | State of Maryland | United States |
|--|-------------------|-------------------|---------------|
| <b>Unemployment Rate</b>               | 4.6%              | 5.2%              | 5.4%          |
| <b>Individuals Below Poverty Level</b> | 7%                | 9%                | 13%           |
| <b>Families Below Poverty Level</b>    | 4%                | 6%                | 9%            |
| <b>People Living with a Disability</b> | 8.5%              | 11.1%             | 12.7%         |

Source: National Academy of Public Administration

## 2.2 DEI-related Activities over Time

In 2019, the Academy conducted a legislative assessment of the Montgomery County Council. The assessment found “a growing and diversifying Montgomery County population is placing new demands on the Council and its legislative staff offices.”<sup>9</sup> In December 2019, the County Council passed “The Racial Equity and Social Justice Act,” which created an executive branch office called the Office of Racial Equity and Social Justice (ORESJ).<sup>10</sup> ORESJ’s mission is to support the “County Departments in normalizing conversations on race and other equity issues, organizing staff to work together for transformational change, and operationalizing new practices, policies, and procedures that are equity centered.”<sup>11</sup>

The Racial Equity and Social Justice Act also requires each executive and legislative branch department to designate an employee to serve as the racial equity and social justice lead for the department. The lead is responsible for coordinating with ORESJ and developing a department-specific racial equity and social justice action plan.

<sup>9</sup> National Academy of Public Administration, *Strengthening Legislative Branch Support Capacities to Meet the Needs of a New Montgomery County*, November 2019, accessed August 10, 2022, <https://s3.us-west-2.amazonaws.com/napa-2021/studies/Strengthening-Legislative-Branch-Support-Capacities-to-Meet-the-Needs-of-a-New-Montgomery-County.pdf>.

<sup>10</sup> Montgomery County, Maryland, Council Bill 27-19, <https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/COUNCIL/Resources/Files/RacialEquity/Bill27-19.pdf>.

<sup>11</sup> Montgomery County, “Racial Equity & Social Justice,” accessed August 10, 2022, <https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/ore/>.

Department and agency racial equity and social justice action plans must be completed by 2025.<sup>12</sup> The action plans require each county department to disaggregate data by race, ethnicity, and gender, evaluate and analyze data related to equity, and assess each department's:

- “cultural and organizational diversity,
- degree of equity and inclusion in the department or office's culture, and worksite culture, when appropriate,
- suggestions for improvements that support the diversity in composition and engagement,
- disaggregated data of the demographic makeup of employees, vendors, contractors, and population of the community served (client base),
- current equity strategies including levels of engagement and budget allocations for these efforts, and
- resources currently spent on expanding diversity, improving equity in services provided, and tracking community satisfaction.”<sup>13</sup>

The research and recommendations in this report will help MCFRS build the organizational capacity necessary to develop a strong racial equity action plan.

## **2.3 History and Background of the Montgomery County Fire and Rescue Service**

MCFRS is a combination fire and rescue service that employs both career and volunteer firefighters. There are roughly 1,300 career firefighters and 1,100 operational (rides on fire/EMS apparatus) volunteer firefighters.<sup>14</sup> There is a professional support staff of 82, and an additional 1,300 volunteer members who provide various operational support and administrative services to the department.

Montgomery County has a long history of volunteer firefighting, beginning with the first two volunteer fire departments, created in the 1870s and 1880s, in the cities of Rockville and Gaithersburg.<sup>15</sup> The trend continued into the early 1900s when more formal (often called incorporated) volunteer fire departments were created by communities.<sup>16</sup> Some of those volunteer departments still exist to this day. Today, these volunteer departments are referred to as Local Fire and Rescue Departments (LFRDs). Montgomery County has 19 different LFRD departments, and each LFRD retains some autonomy from its peer LFRDs and the career fire and rescue service.

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<sup>12</sup> Selena Mendy Singleton, Racial Equity Manager to the Government Operations and Fiscal Policy Committee, July 16, 2022, [https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/council/Resources/Files/agenda/cm/2022/20220616/20220616\\_GO1.pdf](https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/council/Resources/Files/agenda/cm/2022/20220616/20220616_GO1.pdf).

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> As of August 25, the number of operational volunteer firefighters is 748 and the number of additional volunteer members is 1,200 according to MCFRS's Integrated Emergency Command Structure.

<sup>15</sup> Shannon Fleischer, “Fire Protection in Montgomery County: Bucket Brigade to High Tech,” *The Montgomery County Store*, 46, no. 3 (2003):289-303, [http://montgomeryhistory.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/Vol46No3\\_MCStory.pdf](http://montgomeryhistory.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/Vol46No3_MCStory.pdf).

<sup>16</sup> Montgomery County Maryland Fire and Rescue Services, *Accreditation: Standard of Cover*, May 2013, <https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/frs-ql/resources/files/swsj/accreditation/a.pdf>.

Prior to 1988, firefighters were employed by independent organizations/stations throughout the County.<sup>17</sup> In 1988, the local fire/rescue employees became county employees, subject to the merit system principles of Montgomery County.<sup>18</sup> Many career firefighters work 24-hour shifts at career-only fire stations. Some career firefighters work 10- or 12-hour day shifts to supplement volunteer staffing at some stations. Most volunteer firefighters volunteer for weekday night shifts and on weekends.

In 2004, the County Council passed Bill Number 36-03, amending Montgomery County Code to unify the county's LFRD and career fire departments.<sup>19</sup> The bill created a uniformed, career Fire Chief position, tasked with creating a standardized incident management system and emergency command system that would unify career and LFRD departments, personnel, and apparatus.

Since Bill Number 36-03, the career and volunteer fire services have reached the point that it would be hard for a Montgomery County resident to tell a career firefighter from a volunteer firefighter. The uniforms, apparatus, and basic fire/EMS training and procedures are similar between LFRDs and the career fire and rescue service. Both career and volunteer firefighters are subject to Montgomery County's personnel regulations under the authority of the County government and the career Fire Chief. However, LFRDs retain some autonomy over internal policies and practices related to the day-to-day management of volunteers. Each LFRD has its practices for recruiting, training (beyond basic training), promoting, and reprimanding its volunteers for inappropriate behavior.

Prior to 2009, career and volunteer fire departments made decisions on policies and procedures through a joint committee called the Fire Commission. In 2009, the County Council passed Bill Number 38-08, amending the county code to abolish the old Fire Commission, and creating a new Fire and Emergency Services Commission (the Commission).<sup>20</sup> The Commission comprises seven members: two career firefighters, two volunteer firefighters, and three individuals with no connection to the career or volunteer fire and rescue service.

The Commission holds considerable power, as commissioners "must review and may approve or disapprove any generally applicable Fire and Rescue Service policy or regulation proposed by the Fire Chief, including any regulation that the Executive may issue under this chapter."<sup>21</sup> In practice, any policy or procedure the Fire Chief creates requires approval by the Commission.

In addition to the Commission, the Fire Chief works with the International Association of Fire Fighters (IAFF) Local 1664, which represents career firefighters, and the Montgomery County Volunteer Firefighters Association (MCVFRA), which represents volunteer firefighters. Both organizations have individual agreements with the county that are renegotiated every two to three

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<sup>17</sup> "MCFRS Timeline," MCFRS, 6 May 2020, accessed August 11, 2022, [https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/frs-ql/swsj/operations/mcfrs\\_timeline.html](https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/frs-ql/swsj/operations/mcfrs_timeline.html).

<sup>18</sup> MCFRS, *Accreditation: Standard of Cover*, 10.

<sup>19</sup> Montgomery County, Maryland, Council Bill 36-03, [https://apps.montgomerycountymd.gov/ccllims/downloadFilePage?448\\_1\\_10013\\_Bill\\_36-03\\_Signed\\_20040504.pdf](https://apps.montgomerycountymd.gov/ccllims/downloadFilePage?448_1_10013_Bill_36-03_Signed_20040504.pdf).

<sup>20</sup> Montgomery County, Maryland, Council Bill 38-08, [https://apps.montgomerycountymd.gov/ccllims/downloadFilePage?663\\_1\\_9574\\_Bill\\_38-08\\_Signed\\_20090324.pdf](https://apps.montgomerycountymd.gov/ccllims/downloadFilePage?663_1_9574_Bill_38-08_Signed_20090324.pdf).

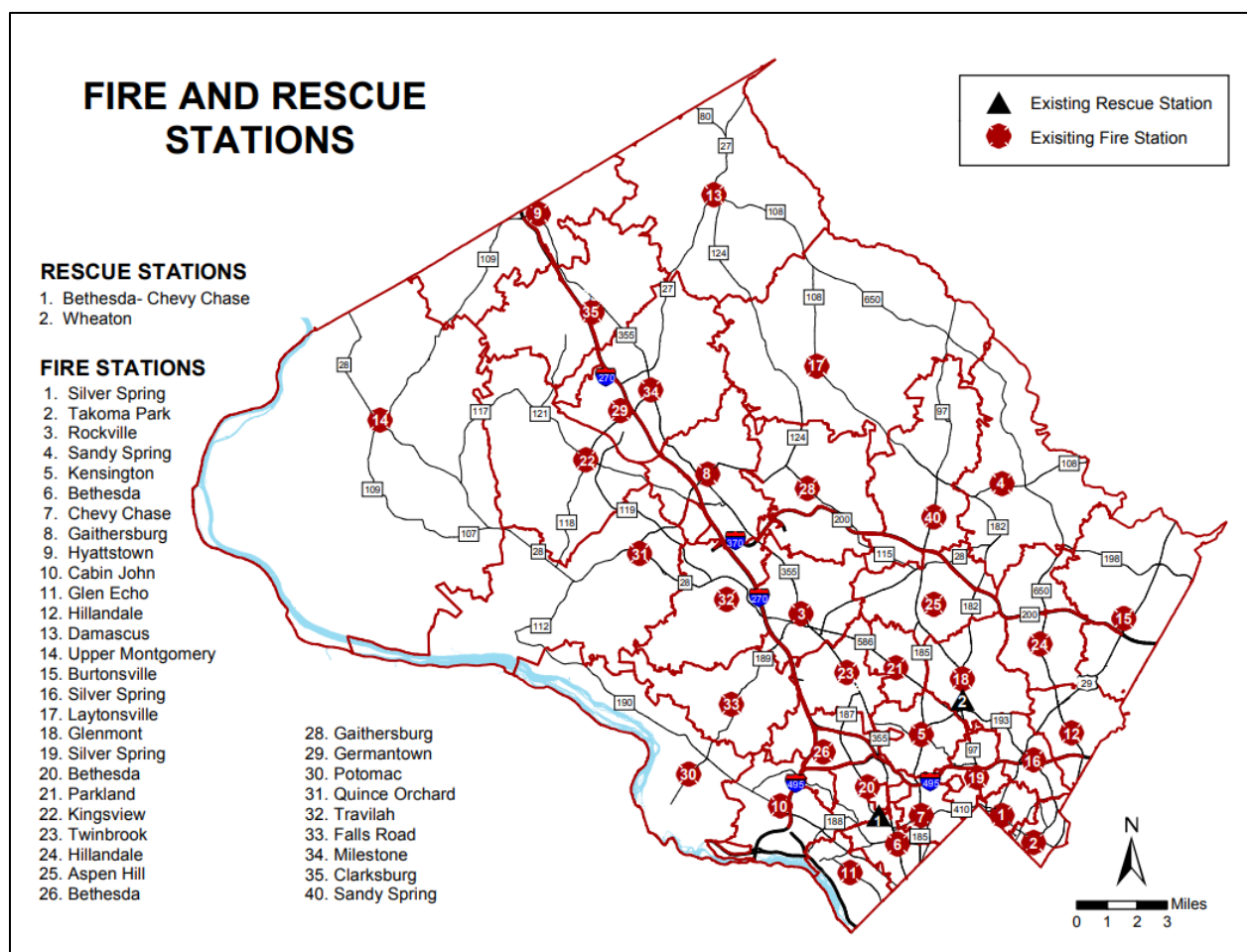
<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 12.



years, and each has a series of requirements for handling routine practices, like station assignments, promotions, discipline, and performance management.

Montgomery County's career and volunteer firefighters are responsible for covering almost five hundred square miles of urban, suburban, and rural land. There are 37 fire and rescue stations serving and protecting Montgomery County's residents (see Figure 7). In addition to traditional firefighting and EMS coverage, MCFRS is an all-hazards response agency, responding to hazmat, fire and explosives, technical rescue, and swift water rescue incidents. Some MCFRS members of the Fire and Rescue Service serve on the National Capital Region incident management team, and Montgomery County is home to Maryland Task Force One – one of 28 world-renowned Federal Emergency Management Agency Urban Search and Rescue Teams.

*Figure 7. MCFRS Fire and Rescue Stations Map*



Source: Montgomery County Fire and Rescue Service

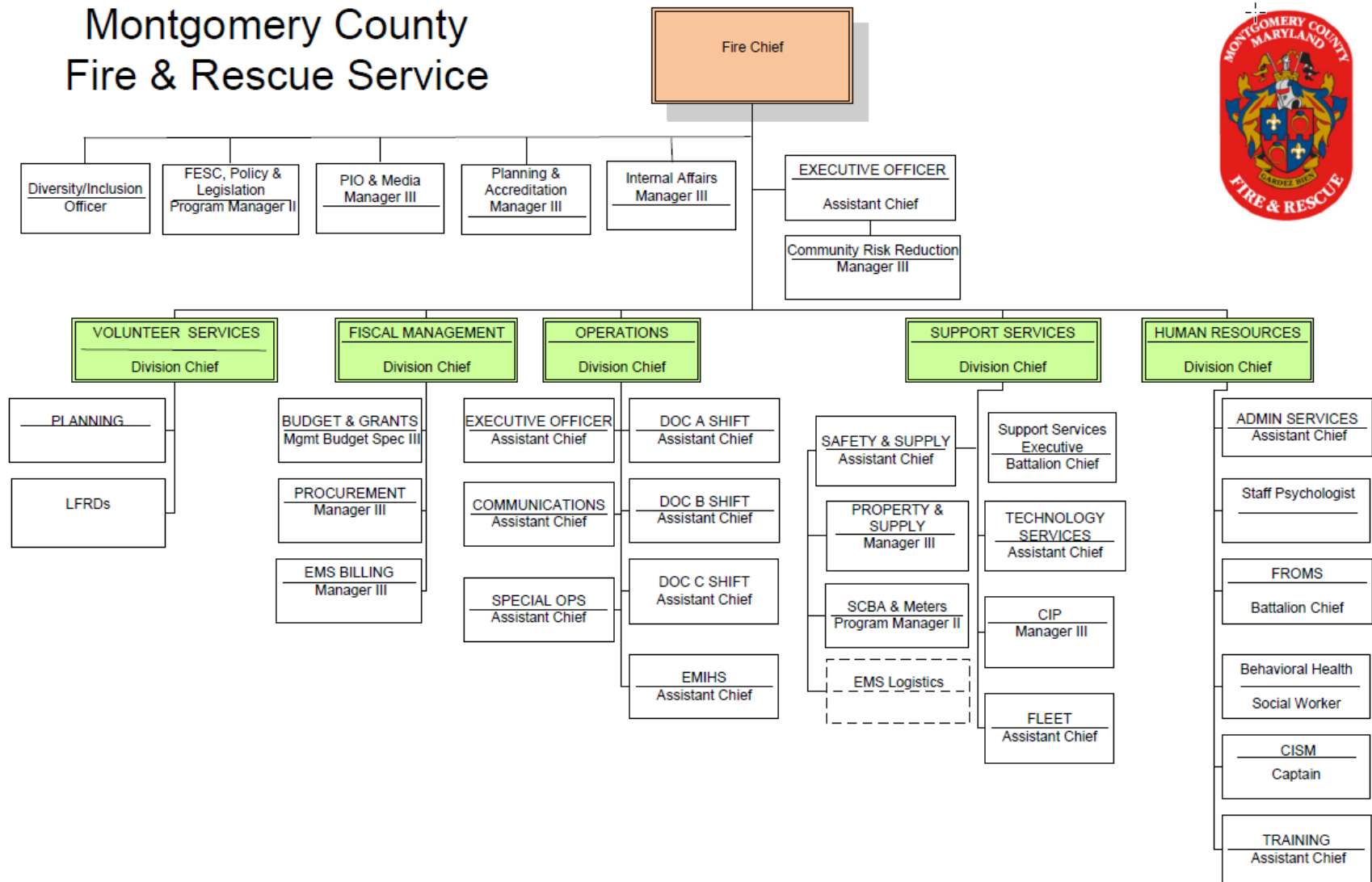
MCFRS is accredited by the Commission on Fire Accreditation International and is one of 301 accredited fire and rescue agencies worldwide. Becoming an accredited agency is a significant undertaking, as accreditation requires a detailed assessment of various governance-, operational-, and community-related measures and analysis.

The FY 2023 budget for the Fire and Rescue Service's 1,352 career employees is \$252,665,621.<sup>22</sup> MCFRS is also supported by about 82 professional support staff in the Office of the Fire Chief, and the Divisions of Fiscal Management, Human Resources, Operations, Support Services, and Volunteer Services (see Figure 8). All functions are overseen by either the Fire Chief or one of five Division Chiefs.

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<sup>22</sup> "Fire and Rescue Service," Montgomery County, MD Operating Budget, accessed August 11, 2022, <https://apps.montgomerycountymd.gov/basisoperating/Common/Department.aspx?ID=45D>.

Figure 8. MCFRS Organizational Chart



Source: Montgomery County Fire and Rescue Service

## 2.4 Addressing Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion can Improve Fire and Rescue Services

In recent years, many organizations recognize the need to focus on DEI. Organizations acknowledge the positive impact that DEI can have on their mission and workforce. More importantly, county governments across the country are exploring historical inequities in the government service and programs they provide to the community.<sup>23</sup>

Historic inequities exist in fire departments across the country.<sup>24</sup> In the fire service everywhere, inequities present themselves internally when women and minorities are underrepresented.<sup>25</sup> Fire Departments that work hard to address internal inequities will likely be more engaged with the communities they serve, and more creative in their solutions to complex organizational challenges.<sup>26</sup> The level of commitment varies county-by-county and department-by-department. However, the benefit of valuing DEI in local fire departments is evident. Focusing on DEI within the fire service yields the following benefits:

- the ability to better achieve mission/services delivery,
- improved partnership with the community,
- greater recruitment and retention, and
- overall increase in employee engagement and experience.

Operationally, fire and rescue services are changing. Across the United States, fire departments respond to more emergency medical services calls than fires. In 2020, 65 percent of total fire department calls nationally were due to medical emergencies.<sup>27</sup> At MCFRS, 78.1 percent of emergency response calls were due to medical emergencies in 2020.<sup>28</sup> Emergency medical services require “intellectual, social, and emotional skills to support each other through traumatic experiences.”<sup>29</sup> The benefits of a more diverse fire department that reflects the community “include reduced language, cultural, and other communication barriers that lead to reduced

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<sup>23</sup> *The Color of Law* explores how government policies have generated today’s social inequities in communities across the United States. Richard Rothstein, *The Color of Law: A Forgotten History of How Our Government Segregated America* (New York, NY: Liveright Publishing Corporation, 2018).

<sup>24</sup> Lexipol, “Leading in the Fire Service: The Importance of Addressing Inequity,” March 24, 2021, accessed August 11, 2022, <https://www.lexipol.com/resources/blog/leading-in-the-fire-service-the-importance-of-addressing-inequity/>.

<sup>25</sup> Yasin A. Khan, Andrea L. Davis, and Jennifer A. Taylor, “Ladders and Lifting: How Gender Affects Safety Behaviors in the Fire Service,” *Journal of Workplace Behavioral Health* 32, no. 3 (2017): 206–25, <https://doi.org/10.1080/1555240.2017.1358642>; Marcos O. Marimon, Natasha Schaefer Solle, Katerina M. Santiago, Manuel Fonseca, Noella Dietz, and Alberto J. Caban-Martinez, “Diversity and Inclusion Leaders in U.S. Fire Departments Impact the Type and Number of Diversity and Inclusion Programs Offered,” *Journal of Occupational and Environmental Medicine* 62, no. 1 (2020): e13–16, <https://doi.org/10.1097/JOM.0000000000001780>; Norma M. Riccucci, and Margaret Riccardelli, “The Use of Written Exams in Police and Fire Departments: Implications for Social Diversity,” *Review of Public Personnel Administration* 35, no. 4 (2015): 352–66, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0734371X14540689>.

<sup>26</sup> Marimon, et. al, “Diversity and Inclusion Leaders in U.S. Fire Departments.”

<sup>27</sup> National Fire Protection Association, “Fire Department Calls,” Accessed August 11, 2022, <https://www.nfpa.org/News-and-Research/Data-research-and-tools/Emergency-Responders/Fire-department-calls>

<sup>28</sup> According to MCFRS, 78.4% of emergency response calls were due to medical emergencies in 2021. Montgomery County Fire & Rescue Service, *Annual Report, 2020*, accessed August 15, 2022, [https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/frs-ql/Resources/Files/accreditation/mcfrs\\_2020\\_annual\\_report.pdf](https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/frs-ql/Resources/Files/accreditation/mcfrs_2020_annual_report.pdf).


<sup>29</sup> Corinne Bendersky, “Making U.S. Fire Departments More Diverse and Inclusive,” *Harvard Business Review*, December 7, 2018, accessed August 11, 2022, <https://hbr.org/2018/12/making-u-s-fire-departments-more-diverse-and-inclusive>.

inequalities in the delivery of care,” and reduce the likelihood that unconscious bias could influence decision making and perpetuate health-related disparities.<sup>30</sup> A growing and diversifying Montgomery County calls for change in how MCFRS recruits and operates.

In addition to providing ongoing and effective public safety and services, a diverse, equitable, and inclusive fire and rescue service strengthens community ties. When the rescuers reflect the community and are culturally competent in its needs, the partnerships between fire and rescue services and the community improves even more. The improved partnership also opens communication and knowledge pipelines regarding fire safety and concerns and provides avenues for fire and rescue services across the country to recruit more diverse candidates to its ranks.

As fire and rescue services seek to recruit and retain talented firefighters, valuing DEI and prioritizing it throughout the fire service fosters an environment of belonging that celebrates community and individual contribution to the fire service. Inclusive culture and work environments at fire stations improves retention and morale as firefighters understand that their identities are respected and valued at their workplace.<sup>31</sup> A sense of belonging can increase commitment and pride in the organization, leading employees to do even more to help the fire and rescue service be the best it can be.<sup>32</sup>

Beyond recruiting for a diverse workforce, fire and rescue services must consider the work environment as different identity groups join an organization. While there is historical evidence that diverse teams increase overall effectiveness, positive outcomes occur when equity and inclusion are part of the work environment.<sup>33</sup> Researchers at Harvard Business School share that “creating psychological safety and building employees’ trust can be an excellent starting point for the second action: taking concrete measures

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| <p><b>Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion</b><br/>in the U.S. Volunteer and Combination<br/>Fire-rescue Service</p> <p>International Association of Fire Chiefs</p>    |
| <p>A national survey of volunteer and combination career-volunteer fire departments found that “while some respondents perceive diversity, inclusion, and equity as tools to help the volunteer fire service thrive, others view them as irrelevant and even harmful to the safety of firefighters and their communities.”</p> <p>Source: International Association of Fire Chiefs</p> |

<sup>30</sup> Remle P. Crowe, William Krebs, Rebecca E. Cash, Madison K. Rivard, Erin W. Lincoln, and Ashish R. Panchal, “Females and Minority Racial/Ethnic Groups Remain Underrepresented in Emergency Medical Services: A Ten-Year Assessment, 2008-2017,” *Prehospital Emergency Care: Official Journal of the National Association of EMS Physicians and the National Association of State EMS Directors* 24, no. 2 (2020): 180–87, <https://doi.org/10.1080/10903127.2019.1634167>.

<sup>31</sup> Bendersky, “Making U.S. Fire Departments More Diverse and Inclusive,” 2018.

<sup>32</sup> Colleen Bordeaux, Betsy Grace, and Naina Sabherwal, “Elevating the Workforce Experience: The Belonging Relationship,” Deloitte, November 23, 2021, accessed August 11, 2022, <https://www2.deloitte.com/us/en/blog/human-capital-blog/2021/what-is-belonging-in-the-workplace.html>.

<sup>33</sup> Robin J. Ely, and David A. Thomas, “Getting Serious about Diversity: Enough Already with the Business Case,” *Harvard Business Review*, November 1, 2020, accessed August 11, 2022, <https://hbr.org/2020/11/getting-serious-about-diversity-enough-already-with-the-business-case>.

to combat forms of discrimination and subordination that inhibit employees' ability to thrive.”<sup>34</sup> Further, they note the importance of leadership in setting and maintaining the tone of DEI within the organization. “Leaders are the stewards of an organization’s culture; their behaviors and mindsets reverberate throughout the organization.”<sup>35</sup> Within the fire and rescue service, leadership starts with the fire chief, flows to the individual station captains, and has an immense impact on organizational culture, workforce retention and morale, and overall performance.

The International Association of Fire Chiefs (IAFC), an international organization representing the leadership of fire and emergency responders worldwide, recognizes the benefits of and need for a more diverse, equitable, and inclusive environment. Some of the benefits of DEI for the fire and rescue service suggested in the IAFC’s *“Guide for Creating a Diverse and Inclusive Department”* include:

- “more creative and better decisions result when there are varied perspectives,
- high levels of support and buy-in are demonstrated by stakeholders,
- recruitment efforts are more successful when work environments are inclusive,
- retaining engaged performers is easier,
- morale is high because members are encouraged to use their talents,
- commitment to department initiatives is strong when decision-making procedures are perceived to be fair,
- stress and burnout are low because the right people are in the right positions and roles, and
- inclusive environments attract greater diversity.”<sup>36</sup>

IAFC also acknowledges that cultural change within any organization, especially within the fire and rescue service, can be an ongoing, difficult journey that may change how the organization traditionally operates. IAFC offers guidance to fire departments on introducing DEI in vision, mission, and values; strategic planning; internal and external communications; policies and procedures; training and development; recruitment; and performance development and reviews.

## **2.5 Best Practices in Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion**

Montgomery County’s Racial Equity and Social Justice Act requires county departments and agencies to create racial equity and social justice action plans by 2025. This requirement has led county departments and agencies to seek best practice research in the field of DEI. The ORESJ identified the Government Alliance on Race and Equity’s (GARE) approach, research, and toolkits as vital to improving its DEI initiatives, as outlined in the Racial Equity and Social Justice Act. The Study Team also used resources from IAFC to inform its best practices research and also conducted interviews with the authors of the resources from GARE and IAFC.

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<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

<sup>36</sup> International Association of Fire Chiefs (IAFC), *Guide for Creating a Diverse and Inclusive Department*, accessed August 11, 2022, [https://www.iafc.org/docs/default-source/ivcos/iafc-diversity-guide-ebook-final-08212020.pdf?utm\\_source=IAFC%20website&utm\\_medium=Resource&utm\\_campaign=Guide%20for%20Creating%20a%20Diverse%20and%20Inclusive%20Department](https://www.iafc.org/docs/default-source/ivcos/iafc-diversity-guide-ebook-final-08212020.pdf?utm_source=IAFC%20website&utm_medium=Resource&utm_campaign=Guide%20for%20Creating%20a%20Diverse%20and%20Inclusive%20Department).



GARE is a national government network promoting actions to achieve racial equity and advance opportunities for all.<sup>37</sup> GARE was founded as a joint project between two separate organizations, Race Forward and the Othering and Belonging Institute at the University of California (Berkeley). GARE brings systematic analysis and innovative approaches to governments in consultation with researchers, stakeholders, communicators, and policy makers. GARE publishes reports and toolkits that assist local, state, and federal organizations on their journeys to address inequity.

The three foundational documents informing best practices research are GARE's *Racial Equity: Getting Results*, *Racial Equity Core Teams: The Engines of Institutional Change*, *Racial Equity Action Plans: How-to Manual*, and IAFC's *Guide for Creating a Diverse and Inclusive Department*. While more specifically tailored to the needs of MCFRS, the framework was derived by utilizing the GARE's *Racial Equity: Getting Results*, which outlines the following strategic approach to address all levels of institutional change:

**Operate with urgency and accountability:** Government agencies that act with urgency achieve change quickly. Change is most effective when organizations create clear action plans with measures holding themselves accountable on their equity journey.

**Use a racial equity framework:** A racial equity framework allows government agencies to clearly articulate their vision for racial equity by defining important concepts such as individual, institutional, and structural racism, as well as implicit and explicit bias. Doing so develops a shared understanding among staff members, creating a better environment for successful conversations about racial equity.

**Build Infrastructure to make Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion successful:** Successful transformation requires engaging all agency employees in the process. While the impetus for change often starts at the top with elected and appointed leaders, successful change occurs when front-line employees participate in organizational change. That means ensuring employees at all levels have equity tools and resources so they may participate in change.

**Implement racial equity tools in policies, procedures, and practice:** Government agencies can perpetuate inequities through organizational policies, procedures, and practices. Reducing inequities requires careful examination of all three. Equity tools allow organizations to identify and change inequitable practices within policies, programs, and procedures and make necessary changes to ensure equity throughout the agency.

**Be data-driven:** Data is key to accountability. Government agencies should use data to measure progress against their equity goals. Programs and policies should include data-informed baselines and measures to assess progress toward equity goals.

**Partner with other institutions and communities:** Government agencies should partner with their communities and other institutions to expand their knowledge base and achieve equity-focused results.

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<sup>37</sup> Government Alliance on Race and Equity (GARE), "Who We Are," accessed August 11, 2022, <https://www.racialequityalliance.org/about/who-we-are/>.



After conducting interviews with MCFRS and speaking with experts in the field of DEI, the Study Team added to this strategic framework by including leadership buy-in and establishing DEI in vision, mission, and values. While not outlined in *GARE's Racial Equity: Getting Results*, GARE emphasizes the importance of Leadership Buy-In in its *Racial Equity Action Plans: How-to Manual* report. IAFC best practice research supports the addition of Establishing DEI in Vision, Mission, and Values in its *Guide for Creating a Diverse and Inclusive Department* report.

Leadership buy-in and establishing DEI in vision, mission, and values are outlined below:

**Leadership buy-in:** Government leaders should demonstrate commitment to racial equity through organizational goals, engaging with employees, partnering with the community, and obtaining necessary resources to sustain focus at all stages of an organization's racial equity journey.

**Establish DEI in vision, mission, and values:** Government agencies should commit to racial equity through its vision, mission, and values. Doing so commits the organization to these important concepts and it becomes the basis for decision making moving forward.



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## Chapter 3: Building Organizational Capacity for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in the Fire and Rescue Service

To better understand organizational readiness for diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI), the Study team interviewed and surveyed the organization to measure organizational attitudes and beliefs toward DEI (see Chapter 1, Section 2, Study Methodology). The survey results and interviews showed that the organization is in the early stages of learning and embracing DEI. While many believe in the value of a diverse and inclusive Montgomery County Fire and Rescue Service (MCFRS), others find the concept unclear and poorly defined. Some individuals view DEI as politically charged, and others believe the fire and rescue service should maintain a “colorblind” orientation.

This chapter includes a series of recommendations providing an incremental, phased approach to change. The recommendations provide a blueprint to assist MCFRS in its DEI journey and to achieve the County’s racial equity vision. It will take time to implement these recommendations. The recommendations are organized into two groups (see Table 2).

*Table 2. Building the Foundation and Sustaining the Momentum*

|   |   |
|---|---|
|   | <b><u>Building the Foundation:</u></b> Recommendations can be implemented in about 0-18 months. These recommendations build the organizational capacity required for changing organizational and employee perceptions of diversity, equity, and inclusion.    |
|  | <b><u>Sustaining the Momentum:</u></b> Recommendations can be implemented in 18+ months. These recommendations sustain the momentum created by implementing foundational recommendations, especially as senior leaders promote and retire from key positions. |

While the recommendations and actions are time-bound, they are not entirely prescriptive. Rather, they are offered as a high-level roadmap. The Study Team recognizes that some of these may overlap and need to adjust as progress is made over time. Further, many activities suggested for Building the Foundation will need to continue in the Sustaining Momentum phase.

### 3.1 Leadership Buy-In

#### **Recommendation 1: Current and Future Leadership Commitment to DEI**

As GARE points out, “many jurisdictions lack the leadership and/or infrastructure to address issues of racial inequity.”<sup>38</sup> This section focuses on the importance of leaders and their impact on the institutional culture of MCFRS. As mentioned in previous sections, leaders create the culture within departments and at stations. Leadership commitment to diversity strategies and inclusive

<sup>38</sup> Government Alliance on Race and Equity (GARE), “About,” accessed August 11, 2022, <https://www.racialequityalliance.org/about/who-we-are/>.

actions goes beyond enforcing policies and procedures. Commitment requires proactive action through communication, education, accountability, and ownership by members throughout every level of the organization.

Montgomery County's Fire Chief is a proponent of DEI and has been for several years. Interviewees generally agree that the Fire Chief acknowledges the importance of DEI. Prior to 2017, MCFRS had an internal EEO position which was a collateral responsibility of a firefighter captain. The Fire Chief charged the EEO position with "evaluating our system, policies and culture - looking for ways to promote the missions of inclusion and diversity."<sup>39</sup> The captain in charge of EEO helped with the intake of EEO complaints and consulted internally on department-wide diversity and inclusion initiatives. In 2017, the captain filling the EEO position trained some other firefighters to support the EEO office. At the direction of the Fire Chief, the growing office expanded its mission to include increasing engagement with the Montgomery County community. In 2018, MCFRS stopped internal EEO support because Montgomery County Personnel Regulations Section 5 outlines the structure and roles of the EEO complaint process.<sup>40</sup>

Rather than disband the group altogether, the Fire Chief focused the group exclusively on community engagement. The community engagement team worked "with a diverse cross-section of the community, its leaders and organizations...to stay on the cutting edge of social change and advise the Fire Chief on how best to account for equity and inclusivity in day-to-day decision making."<sup>41</sup> However, the group was disbanded in 2019 due to high overtime costs.<sup>42</sup>

Respondents to the Study Team's institutional culture survey identified a desire for MCFRS to demonstrate a more substantial commitment to DEI. A little over half of the respondents who took the survey agreed that:

- the Fire and Rescue Service demonstrates a strong commitment to DEI (58.1%),
- senior leadership (battalion chief and higher) are prepared to manage a diverse workforce (54.1%),
- people of all cultures and backgrounds are valued and respected at the Fire and Rescue Service (54.21%).

These survey findings are consistent with a 2019 Montgomery County Employee Survey fielded to all Fire and Rescue career personnel, not volunteers. The 2019 survey found that a statistically significant percentage (31%) of career firefighters and civilian employees disagreed with the statement that "my department treats employees equally regardless of their sex, race, sexual orientation, national origin, religion, ethnicity, age, cultural background, disability, or any other personal characteristic" when compared to all county employees.<sup>43</sup> At the county level, a

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<sup>39</sup> This information was originally found on <https://mcfrcscommunityengagement.wordpress.com/about-us/>, but MCFRS deleted the EEO/Community Engagement website in August 2022.

<sup>40</sup> Montgomery County, Maryland Office of Human Resources, "Section 5. Equal Employment Opportunity," [https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/HR/Resources/Files/Regulation/MCPR\\_2001\\_Section\\_5.pdf](https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/HR/Resources/Files/Regulation/MCPR_2001_Section_5.pdf)

<sup>41</sup> This information was originally found on <https://mcfrcscommunityengagement.wordpress.com/about-us/>, but MCFRS deleted the EEO/Community Engagement website in August 2022.

<sup>42</sup> Montgomery County Maryland Office of Inspector General, "Overtime Costs and Redundancies in the MCFRS EEO/Diversity Office," March, 26, 2020, accessed September 14, 2022,

[https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/council/Resources/Files/agenda/cm/2020/20200618/20200618\\_PS1.pdf](https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/council/Resources/Files/agenda/cm/2020/20200618/20200618_PS1.pdf)

<sup>43</sup> Internal MCFRS 2019 Montgomery County Government Employee Survey Report provided to the Study Team by MCFRS.

statistically significant percentage (20%) of career personnel disagreed with the idea that the County is doing enough to promote DEI.<sup>44</sup> Both suggest there's more the County and MCFRS could do to create and sustain a more inclusive and equitable environment.

Over the last few years, some fire chiefs across the United States have started prioritizing DEI initiatives as key strategic goals (see Chapter 3, Section 3, Case Study on Racial Equity and Strategic Goals). For example, the City of San Francisco (CA) and Fairfax County (VA) have demonstrated the important role fire chiefs play in promoting DEI. Both departments previously operated under federal consent decrees,<sup>45</sup> with Fairfax's 40-year consent decree ending in September 2021.

While their culture changes may have started due to their consent decrees, each department's fire chief now champions DEI strategy. Like Montgomery County, both acknowledge that their departments deal with conversations that reflect the current political and social climate. Discussions about race, religion, politics, gender, and sexual orientation occur at fire stations, especially on long 24-hour shifts.<sup>46</sup> Furthermore, like Montgomery County, the Fairfax and San Francisco Fire Chiefs know that only some firefighters value DEI as a means to help recruit, retain, and motivate employees.

Both departments still face historic inequities related to sexism, bullying, and racist behavior.<sup>47</sup> The reality is, these challenges cannot be solved overnight and require serious leadership commitment over time. Fairfax and San Francisco regularly make public commitments to DEI with both Fire Chiefs often speaking at public events and to news agencies about the importance of DEI in the fire service.<sup>48</sup> As Figures 9 and 10 show, both departments actively celebrate diversity on social media accounts. Both departments also implemented changes to build the organizational capacity required to improve DEI. Building the organizational capacity for DEI is the first step toward by advancing racial equity in organizations.

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<sup>44</sup> A statistically significant number of career firefighters and civilian employees disagreed with the statements that "*Montgomery County effectively promotes inclusion, diversity, and equity,*" and the statement that "*Montgomery County does not tolerate discrimination against employees based on sex, race, sexual orientation, national origin, religion, ethnicity, age, cultural background, disability, or any other personal characteristic.*"

<sup>45</sup> "San Francisco's "Consent Decree stated that the SFFD shall adopt and achieve the goal of recruiting, hiring and promoting qualified minorities and women in sufficient numbers so as to more nearly reflect the composition of the residents of the city." <https://sf-fire.org/files/2021-01/Fire%20Racial%20Equity%20Action%20Plan.pdf>, 4.

<sup>46</sup> Lexipol, "Leading in the Fire Service," 2021. "Leaders in the fire service would be naïve to think the difficult conversations so prevalent in our communities are not also taking place in the firehouse."

<sup>47</sup> Justin Jouvenal, "Fairfax Firefighter Was Sexually Harassed, Suffered Retaliation, Agency Finds," The Washington Post, July 11, 2022, accessed August 12, 2022, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/dc-md-va/2022/07/10/fairfax-firefighter-sexual-harassment/>; Nicholas Chan, "Chief Admits Shortcomings in Fire Department Diversity," San Francisco Examiner, July 31, 2020, accessed August 12, 2022, [https://www.sfexaminer.com/news/chief-admits-shortcomings-in-fire-department-diversity/article\\_c4c64b98-0b9e-532f-8407-b2e8af9cc857.html](https://www.sfexaminer.com/news/chief-admits-shortcomings-in-fire-department-diversity/article_c4c64b98-0b9e-532f-8407-b2e8af9cc857.html).

<sup>48</sup> Marc Bashoor, "Metro Chiefs Event Spotlights DEI Efforts," FireRescue1, May 25, 2022, accessed August 12, 2022, <https://www.firerescue1.com/leadership/articles/metro-chiefs-event-spotlights-dei-efforts-9T5JaLPgiNRRtncm/>; San Francisco Bay Times, "Chief Jeanine Nicholson Leads San Francisco Fire Department to National Acclaim for Service and Diversity," October 7, 2021, accessed August 12, 2022, <https://sfbaytimes.com/chief-jeanine-nicholson-leads-san-francisco-fire-department-to-national-acclaim-for-service-and-diversity/>.

Figure 9. Example of San Francisco Women's History Month Tweet





Source: Twitter @SFFDPIO, Mar. 26, 2022

Figure 10. Example of Fairfax County Black History Month Tweet



Source: Twitter @ffxfirerescue, Feb. 4, 2022

Montgomery County's Fire Chief is set to retire in 2024, meaning MCFRS's ability to sustain momentum depends on who the next Fire Chief is. The County Executive should develop a candidate profile that includes a focus on DEI as a key selection criterion. To sustain momentum, the County Council and Executive should hold the Fire Chief accountable for progress through hearings and performance measures (see Chapter 3, Section 3, Be Data Driven).

| Recommendation 1: Current and Future Leadership Commitment to DEI                   |  |
|---|--|
|  | <b><u>Building the Foundation:</u></b> The County Council and Executive should develop a candidate profile to include key characteristics and attributes of the new fire chief, with a particular focus on commitment to DEI. Obtain feedback from employees in developing the candidate profile.        |
|  | <b><u>Sustaining the Momentum:</u></b> The County Council and Executive must hold the new fire chief and the core leadership team accountable through hearings and performance measures for actions, progress, and accomplishments towards making the department more diverse, equitable, and inclusive. |



## Recommendation 2: DEI Officer and Champion

The fire chief plays a vital role establishing DEI as an organizational priority and communicating its importance internally and externally. However, the fire chief position requires attention to all facets of the Fire and Rescue Service, including day-to-day operational and administrative tasks and being responsive to the community, County Executive, and County Council. DEI is only one component of the fire chief's responsibility.

Changing the culture around DEI at MCFRS will require someone whose sole focus will be working with the upwards of 3,700 career, volunteer, and civilian employees at MCFRS. Only half of the survey respondents (50.78%) agreed that MCFRS treats all employees fairly. Interviewees and qualitative responses to the survey both identify the need for sustained focus action on DEI.

For example, Fairfax County and the City of San Francisco have created a chief diversity, equity, and inclusion officer position and view this position as a vital component to successful implementation of DEI service wide. Comparatively, in Fairfax County, a similar position is filled by a firefighter captain who reports directly to the fire chief (see Figure 11). San Francisco created an assistant deputy chief of diversity, equity, and inclusion who is in the command staff of the organization.<sup>49</sup> The essential organizational feature here is that the position reports directly to the chief and has the authority to work with divisions and fire stations to affect change.

*Figure 11. Example of Equity Breakfast from Fairfax County Fire and Rescue*



Source: Twitter @ffxfirerescue, Jul. 13, 2022

Interviewees and qualitative survey feedback revealed that some firefighters believe MCFRS says the right things when creating a more inclusive and diverse fire and rescue service, but they do not see action. MCFRS can make noteworthy progress by appointing a knowledgeable DEI expert empowered by the Chief to examine MCFRS policies and procedures for inequities. Appointing a full-time staff position to focus on DEI demonstrates commitment and ensures continuity as fire chiefs, division chiefs, and assistant chiefs retire or get promoted from their current jobs to new positions. Montgomery County's current Fire Chief supports the concept of a full-time staff member responsible for DEI, and this support pre-dates this study.



<sup>49</sup> The command staff of an organization is equivalent to a senior leadership team.

The Chief Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Officer should be empowered to:

- create trainings and roundtable discussions with career and volunteer members and professional staff on the benefits of diversity in the fire service, the realities of implicit explicit bias, appropriate workplace practices, and the EEO complaint process,
- work with division chiefs to better connect DEI to division-level work,
- identify inequities in the recruitment, promotional, daywork assignments, and overtime processes using disaggregated data,
- lead the development of MCFRS’s racial equity action plan,
- develop and facilitate role playing scenarios for future supervisors (master firefighters) and first-line supervisors (lieutenants and captains) as part of a future management and leadership training academy initiative (see Chapter 3, Section 1, Recommendation 3: First-Line Supervisors and DEI).

MCFRS should consider whether the chief diversity, equity, and inclusion officer is a civilian or firefighter. Organizationally, it is essential that this position report directly to the Fire Chief. Appointing a firefighter to the position can bring credibility through lived firefighting experience. Alternatively, a civilian employee might bring more background and expertise in DEI. Whereas firefighters in officer positions tend to be promoted or reassigned every 2-3 years, a civilian might bring more stability to the position.

Finding a civilian chief diversity, equity, and inclusion officer with the experience to understand and influence MCFRS’s culture might be a challenge. There is a scarcity of such talent in the market with the competencies required at constrained government salary levels. A third option is to offer an internal firefighter selection coupled with the hiring of a journey-level DEI professional for expertise and sustainability. This combination, with the support of a DEI council discussed later in this report (see Chapter 3, Section 4, Build Infrastructure to Make Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Successful), might provide the right balance.

| <b>Recommendation 2: DEI Officer and Champion</b>                                   |  |
|---|--|
|  | <b><u>Building the Foundation:</u></b> MCFRS should secure funding commitment and supply the necessary resources for a new DEI Officer to be successful. Hire and empower the DEI Officer to lead DEI efforts and question organizational norms for possible inequities. Firefighters and employees should recognize the DEI Officer as a senior leader with the authority to act on behalf of the Fire Chief. The DEI Officer should champion the development of the racial equity plan and its implementation. |
|  | <b><u>Sustaining the Momentum:</u></b> The DEI Officer must continue a comprehensive review of the priorities, operations, policies, and initiatives based on the racial equity vision. Continue to implement, monitor, and track all DEI-related initiatives and progress of the organization’s journey.  |



### Recommendation 3: First-Line Supervisors and DEI

First-line supervisors in MCFRS play an important role at fire stations across the county. Station captains command all firefighters and apparatus within their station (see Figure 12). Lieutenants command the individual apparatus (engine, truck, rescue, or ambulance) and manage the firefighters that ride that apparatus. Captains and lieutenants are responsible for addressing inappropriate behavior in the station when they witness it, and when it is reported to them by a master firefighter (up the chain of command).

Master firefighters are the informal, floor-level leaders who arrange daily assignments (e.g., cleaning apparatus, equipment checks, etc.) and trainings (e.g., pump operations, ladder work, etc.) for firefighters in their stations. Some master firefighters eventually promote to station lieutenants, who are considered first-line supervisors.

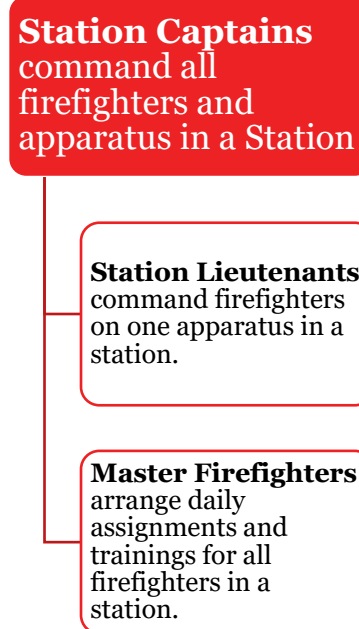
Promotions to the rank of master firefighter and lieutenant (as well as other ranks) require completing a series of training courses before promotion. In addition to operational recertifications, master firefighters and lieutenants take a one-time Fire Officer development course (covering problem solving and discipline), and a 6–8-hour human relations overview course which can be substituted for a course on the EEO process and managing diversity. Lieutenants receive additional training on performance planning and appraisals. As discussed below, these one-time training courses are inadequate preparation for newly promoted supervisory officers.

Stations have significant autonomy regarding how they handle their day-to-day activities. Station captains set the tone (attitudes, behaviors, and norms) for the station they command. Master firefighters work closely with all firefighters in a station and have credibility as peer mentors in the eyes of many firefighters. They are also the first line of accountability when implementing the Chief's vision for an inclusive department.

Many interviewees emphasized that MCFRS is made up of many excellent firefighters and officers, and the 2019 Montgomery County employee survey also confirms that firefighters and employees are generally happy with their direct supervisor.

However, based on the station, interviewees noted that there are numerous instances of racial and sexual harassment and bullying, among other instances of bad behavior. Several interviewees and survey respondents described instances where station-level officers failed to address inappropriate behaviors at the station. Only half of survey participants agreed that MCFRS would take appropriate action if an instance of harassment or discrimination were reported, and a little more than a third have witnessed incidents, issues, or concerns related to interpersonal racism in MCFRS. During follow-up interviews, almost all participants indicated that they would not report

*Figure 12. Station Captains, Station Lieutenants, and Master Firefighters Supervisory Chain of Command*



Source: National Academy of Public Administration

an instance of harassment or discrimination due to a concern that they would be ostracized or that the report would not be taken seriously.

One of the solutions identified by firefighters (through interviews and survey feedback) is additional recurring management and leadership training for officers at fire stations. Captains, lieutenants, and master firefighters are technical experts at commanding a fire/EMS scene, but this makes up a relatively small portion of their day-to-day duties. Master firefighters, lieutenants, and captains spend most of their time at the station training, teaching, and working with firefighters. As such, these first-line supervisors are the first to see inappropriate behavior and should be responsible for addressing inappropriate behavior at the station.

However, without recurring management and leadership training, a newly promoted officer's ability to manage and lead firefighters is only as good as the officer overseeing their work. In some cases, that means training is excellent, but in other cases, bad habits pass from officer to newly promoted officer. This inconsistency in management and leadership education means each station addresses workplace harassment, bullying, and sexism differently. Some stations are better than others, and it is primarily dependent on station-level supervisors.

MCFRS offers voluntary officer training (i.e., Company Officer Leadership Academy) but could not provide statistics on the number of courses and the number of officers who have attended. According to interviewees, voluntary training is insufficient and focuses too heavily on operational leadership. Interviewees would like the voluntary leadership academy training on management skills required of station-level officers, including peer-to-peer mentoring, improving morale, conflict resolution, and improving mental health. Some interviewees even identified the need for role-playing scenarios teaching supervisors how to handle difficult conversations and events that arise at fire stations.

An element of this training needs to address how to manage a diverse workforce, carry out inclusive workplace practices, and hold firefighters accountable for discriminatory and sexist behavior. Ideally, officers would begin their management training *before* they advance to their new rank.



**GUIDE FOR CREATING A DIVERSE AND INCLUSIVE DEPARTMENT**

**International Association of Fire Chiefs: Guide for Creating a Diverse and Inclusive Department**



“The number one reason people leave organizations is dissatisfaction with their immediate supervisor. Often the problem stems from a lack of leadership development, an avoidable and controllable outcome. While fire-rescue professionals typically undergo extensive training in operational areas, the same cannot be said about non-operational areas. Too often, people who pass the FFI and FFII tests are promoted without any assessment of their interpersonal or leadership skills. It is truly scary to think that the safety of your members and community could be at risk because of a lack of leadership skills.”

Fairfax County created mandatory Officer Development Academies (ODA) to prepare rising officers for their leadership promotion.<sup>50</sup> Only a small percentage of ODA work is operational fire/EMS command competency. Instead, ODAs primarily focus on managing, leading, and engaging firefighters in the firehouses. ODAs use role-playing scenarios to provide newly promoted officers the opportunity to practice difficult management situations that arise at fire stations. Actors portray different scenarios, and each scene is debriefed as a team to identify what worked and what could be improved. Fairfax County Fire/Rescue’s Chief Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Officer develops scenarios dealing with race, gender, sexual orientation, and mental health.

San Francisco’s Fire Chief is also working on intensive management training, including scenarios for officers and staff. San Francisco’s Officer Leadership Academy makes the coursework available to firefighters of all ranks and divisions. Doing so helps firefighters prepare for their promotions by teaching the leadership competencies required for the position before they are promoted.

One of the goals of the Officer Leadership Academy is to teach the interpersonal skills required to address inappropriate behavior. San Francisco also teaches firefighters about the tools available to report inappropriate behavior. To achieve buy-in from station-level firefighters, the assistant deputy chief for diversity, equity, and inclusion partners with the operations division chief, who leads all station-level firefighters in San Francisco.

It will be vital for MCFRS to offer comprehensive leadership and management training. Building officers’ people-management skills is one of the most important steps the Fire and Rescue Service can undertake to create a more inclusive organization. Providing station-level officers with the necessary management skills provides the foundation for implementing the Fire Chief’s vision of an inclusive fire service. Without it, adherence to the Fire Chief’s vision will vary station by station.

| <b>Recommendation 3: First-Line Supervisors and DEI</b>                             |   |
|---|---|
|  | <p><b>Building the Foundation:</b> MCFRS should leverage the voluntary officer training program as a starting place for an expanded management and leadership academy. Include master firefighters and volunteer firefighters (master, lieutenant, and captain) in the expanded management and leadership academy. Offer training specific to managing and leading diversity at fire stations. Topics should include scenario-based training on diversity, race, sexual orientation, and mental health. Other sessions should focus on accountability practices, performance management, employee recognition, and team building.</p> |
|  | <p><b>Sustaining the Momentum:</b> MCFRS should work with the County to secure the budget and resources to develop courses and a standard leadership development curriculum. Update job requirements, skillsets, and qualifications in position descriptions so interpersonal skills and abilities are a factor in the promotion process. Incorporate inclusion-focused role-playing scenarios in officer promotional testing and assessment center scenarios.</p>  |

<sup>50</sup> ODAs are mandatory for lieutenants, captains, and battalion chiefs.

## 3.2 Adopt an Equity Framework

### Recommendation 4: Racial Equity Framework and Vision

MCFRS needs to build a racial equity framework and vision consistent with and tied to Montgomery County's vision for racial equity. The Office of Racial Equity and Social Justice (ORESJ) supports broadening the equity focus beyond racial equity. The office encourages the examination of other social identities and how they may "illuminate other important dynamics that shape equity issues" when examining existing programs and policies and creating new ones.<sup>51</sup>

Many interviewees and some survey respondents shared that they hope for a diverse and inclusive MCFRS. However, others find DEI to be too vague or even too politically charged for them to engage on the topic. As the GARE framework illustrates, "talking about race in our society can be difficult, but it doesn't have to be the case. Much of the challenge exists because we do not have a common understanding or shared definitions."<sup>52</sup> Survey results indicate the same is true at MCFRS. Only 51 percent of survey respondents said they would feel comfortable discussing their background, beliefs, and cultural experiences with their colleagues, and only 54 percent of respondents indicated they believe that people of all cultures and backgrounds are valued and respected at MCFRS.

The County has developed several resources to help inform the development and adoption of an equity framework for county departments and agencies:

- ORESJ adopted GARE's Normalizing, Organizing, Operationalizing equity framework.<sup>53</sup> The framework might serve as a model for MCFRS.
- The Office of Legislative Oversight (OLO) authored a Racial Equity Profile of Montgomery County that "offers a starting point for County agencies and departments to consider the disparities and inequities that characterize their policy areas."<sup>54</sup>
- OLO also authored a guide for considering racial equity in government decision making, which discusses the Normalize, Organize, and Operationalize racial equity framework.<sup>55</sup> It provides a history of state and local Montgomery County policies that exacerbated racial inequities, and it debunks "common myths" about race and racism, including how to address a "colorblind" mentality.

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<sup>51</sup> Singleton to Government Operations and Fiscal Policy Committee Memo, July 16, 2022.

<sup>52</sup> GARE, "Resource Guide, Advancing Racial Equity & Transforming Government," accessed August 12, 2022, [https://racialequityalliance.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/GARE-Resource\\_Guide.pdf](https://racialequityalliance.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/GARE-Resource_Guide.pdf).

<sup>53</sup> Montgomery County Racial Equity and Social Justice, "Our Equity Framework," accessed August 12, 2022, <https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/ore/framework.html>

<sup>54</sup> Jupiter Independent Research Group, *Racial Equity Profile Montgomery County*, Office of Legislative Oversight, Report Number 2019-7, July 15, 2019, <https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/OLO/Resources/Files/2019%20Reports/RevisedOLO2019-7.pdf>.

<sup>55</sup> Elaine Bonner-Tompkins and Victoria H. Hall, *Racial Equity in Government Decision-Making: Lessons from the Field*, Office of Legislative Oversight, Report Number 2018-8, September 25, 2018, [https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/OLO/Resources/Files/2018%20Reports/OLOReport2018\\_8.pdf](https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/OLO/Resources/Files/2018%20Reports/OLOReport2018_8.pdf).

- The Montgomery County Planning Commission has developed Equity Focus Areas that could help MCFRS prioritize certain areas and demographics in the county.<sup>56</sup>

Getting to agreement on definitions of relevant DEI terms must be done with the input of MCFRS employees. The County’s racial equity and social justice action plan guidance requires “consensus building on definitions of equity and approaches related to the work of each department and office.”<sup>57</sup> The County’s ORESJ definitions can serve as a template for discussion and development of definitions tailored specifically to MCFRS.<sup>58</sup>

Equally important is recognizing that implicit and explicit biases exist within an organization (see Figure 13). Although not formally documented in an equity framework, MCFRS leaders recognize that implicit and explicit biases exist. For example, MCFRS revised the process for selecting potential recruits to eliminate any implicit or explicit biases during the selection process. To do

*Figure 13. Explicit and Implicit Bias*

| Explicit Bias   | Implicit Bias  |
|---|--|
| Expressed directly  | Expressed Indirectly   |
| Aware of bias   | Unaware of bias  |
| Operates consciously  | Operates Unconsciously   |
| E.g. Sign in the window of an apartment building–“We don’t rent to_____.” | E.g. A property manager doing more criminal background checks on African Americans than on whites. |

Source: Racial Equity Alliance

so, MCFRS implemented a form of “blind auditions,” one of GARE’s recommended intervention strategies for eliminating inequities and nepotism. MCFRS pulls together a selection committee that is diverse in gender and ethnicity, and then provides each candidate with a number. An independent human resources staff member reads the candidate’s education, work history, references, driving record, criminal history, military service, and other relevant background information. The committee then votes on whether the candidate should receive a job offer given their qualifications and background.

#### Recommendation 4: Racial Equity Framework and Vision



**Building the Foundation:** As a critical step, MCFRS should work with the ORESJ to define and share what racial equity, diversity, and inclusion mean to MCFRS, including developing a shared set of definitions. MCFRS should refine its vision with leaders and employees working together through facilitated, inclusive discussions to gain organizational commitment. The framework should acknowledge the historical role government has played in maintaining inequities and that implicit and explicit biases are realities.

<sup>56</sup> Montgomery Planning, “The Equity Focus Areas Analysis: Background,” July 13, 2022, accessed August 12, 2022, <https://montgomeryplanning.org/planning/equity-agenda-for-planning/the-equity-focus-areas-analysis/>. The County Council also passed a resolution adopting the Metropolitan Washington Council of Government’s equity emphasis areas as a framework for planning. Montgomery County Council, “Council Enacts Resolutions to Endorse Equity Emphasis Areas and High-Capacity Transit Areas as Key Concept Tools for Regional Planning, November 16, 2021, accessed September 13, 2022, [https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/council/Resources/Files/agenda/col/2021/20211116/20211116\\_5G.pdf](https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/council/Resources/Files/agenda/col/2021/20211116/20211116_5G.pdf)

<sup>57</sup> Singleton to Government Operations and Fiscal Policy Committee Memo, July 16, 2022.

<sup>58</sup> Montgomery County Racial Equity and Social Justice, “Our Equity Framework.”





**Sustaining the Momentum:** In this stage, MCFRS should put the vision and framework into practice, applying a racial equity lens to its actions, priorities, and operations. Leadership (at all levels) must reinforce the vision through clear and transparent communications to internal and external stakeholders.

### 3.3 Establish Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in Vision, Mission, and Values

#### Recommendation 5: Align Racial Equity Vision to Strategic and Master Plans

MCFRS's FY21 strategic plan and 2016-2022 Master Plan both acknowledge the importance of diversity and equity in the Fire and Rescue Service that serves a community that is also growing and diversifying. The Master Plan discusses the idea of disaggregating a patient's race from the Electronic Patient Care Reporting system so MCFRS can evaluate fire-related risk and service needs. MCFRS recognizes the need to "intensify its efforts to attract minority and female applicants in an attempt to create a work force that is more reflective of the diversity of County residents."<sup>59</sup> Moreover, MCFRS talks about developing and implementing "ethnic-cultural awareness and sensitivity training for firefighters, EMS providers, investigators, inspectors, community outreach personnel and other personnel to improve interaction with the County's increasingly diverse population."<sup>60</sup>

While both the FY 21 Strategic Plan and 2016-22 Master Plan provide evidence that MCFRS is thinking about DEI's role in fire and emergency services, there are no DEI-specific goals, objectives, or timelines. MCFRS is currently working on an updated version of the Master Plan, and it is expected that findings and recommendations from this report may be incorporated. MCFRS' recognition that DEI needs to be a primary focus is promising.

The next step should be a serious commitment to operationalizing these concepts at MCFRS. One survey respondent wrote, "MCFRS has great policies on paper; however, we need to act on them." Another respondent noted that there are no "specific plans to discuss and prepare the workforce for the generational and ethnic diversity of the new workforce." MCFRS could operationalize these concepts by setting more specific goals on DEI; adding action items to the plan; documenting division-level responsibility for each goal and action item; and adding timelines for completion. Page 31-32 includes a case study on aligning racial equity visions with strategic and master plans.


#### Recommendation 5: Align Racial Equity Vision to Strategic and Master Plans



**Building the Foundation:** MCFRS should incorporate the racial equity vision into the Strategic Plan and Master Plan. Set specific goals on diversity, equity, and inclusion. Identify specific initiatives to achieve strategic objectives, and document division-level responsibility for each goal and action item. Begin

<sup>59</sup> Montgomery County Fire and Rescue Service, *2016-2022 Fire, Rescue, Emergency Medical Services and Community Risk Reduction Master Plan*, September 30, 2015, <https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/MCFRS/Resources/Files/MasterPlan/MCFRS%20Master%20Plan%20-%20v4.pdf>.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid.

|   |  |
|---|--|
|   | implementation of each initiative, supported by communications, governance and employee engagement.  |
|  | <b><u>Sustaining the Momentum:</u></b> Continue to measure and track progress. Celebrate quick wins and accomplishments. Obtain employee feedback on implementation and progress and make course corrections as necessary. |

## Aligning Racial Equity Vision to Strategic and Master Plans: A Case Study

This case study presents five different fire departments across the U.S. that have aligned a vision inclusive of racial equity to their strategic plans. While these strategic plans have variations, they also have common themes that prioritize racial equity in their goals.

**New York City's Fire Department's** (FDNY) strategic planning goals on diversity and inclusion include five subgoals that include:

- instituting an enhanced FDNY cadet program,
- training all staff on inclusion and diversity,
- increasing their recruitment of women, people of color and veterans,
- creating internal talent pipelines through mentorships and leadership programs, and
- establishing metrics and program evaluation criteria to monitor progress on diversity and inclusion.<sup>61</sup>

**Fairfax County, VA Fire Department's** strategic plan includes objectives, time frames, and critical tasks.<sup>62</sup> Fairfax also developed a county-required Equity Impact Plan that ties into the County's "One Fairfax" vision.<sup>63</sup> Their strategic plan includes a context section with an honest assessment of station-level awareness of DEI: "FRD recognizes that its personnel currently have minimal knowledge of formal equity and the efforts underway by the County."

The Equity Impact Plan includes goals, stakeholders, and timelines for achieving specific actions. Fairfax Fire & Rescue's equity-specific goals include reducing risk experienced by residents, focusing on communities with non-English speakers and readers, focusing on hard-to-reach communities, disaggregating data by race/gender/age/ethnicity, implementing equity and implicit bias training for Fire/Rescue personnel, creating an inclusive work environment, and developing a recruitment and retention plan. Each equity-specific goal includes several specific action items (see Table 3).

Table 3: Fairfax County, VA Fire Department's Equity Impact Plan

|   |           |   |   |              |           |                                 |   |
|---|-----------|---|---|--------------|-----------|---------------------------------|---|
| 6. Create an inclusive culture in our various work environments that ensure all employees, volunteers, and guests feel welcomed and empowered to serve. | 6, 16, 17 | 6a. Facilitate station-level equity conversations to allow for a safe space for learning.                                     | FRD-Staff FC<br>FRD – Senior Staff<br>FRD – Command Staff | October 2022 | FRD-Staff | FRD-OFC, Operations DFC and BC  | # OF Conversations held at the stations & section level.<br><br># Of Conversation attendee who completed evaluations. |
|   |           | 6b. All Battalion Chief's will complete train the trainer training on how to lead and facilitate equity-focused conversation. | FRD-Staff   | October 2022 | FRD-Staff | FRD-OFC, Operations DFC, and BC | # Of BC conducting station level training.  |

Source: Fairfax County Fire and Rescue Department Strategic Plan 2023-2025

<sup>61</sup> FDNY, *Strategic Plan 2015-2017*, [https://www.nyc.gov/html/fdny/pdf/ofc/FDNY\\_strategic\\_plan\\_2015\\_2017.pdf](https://www.nyc.gov/html/fdny/pdf/ofc/FDNY_strategic_plan_2015_2017.pdf)

<sup>62</sup> Fairfax County Fire and Rescue Department, *2023-2025 Strategic Plan*, <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/fire-ems/sites/fire-ems/files/assets/documents/pdf/2023-2025%20frd%20strategic%20plan.pdf>.

<sup>63</sup> Fairfax County Fire and Rescue Department, *Fire & Rescue CY 2022 Equity Impact Plan*, January 28, 2022, <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/topics/sites/topics/files/assets/documents/one%20fairfax%20equity%20plans/fire%20and%20rescue%20department%202022%20equity%20impact%20plan.pdf>.



**Baltimore City’s Fire Department’s** strategic plan documents specific action items (critical tasks) the department will take under each goal and objective area (see Table 4).<sup>64</sup>

*Table 4. Baltimore City’s Fire Department’s Strategic Plan*

| <b>Objective 4C</b>     | <b>Establish and maintain a comprehensive recruiting campaign to attract a candidate pool that is a reflection of the city’s diversity.</b>  |   |
|-------------------------|--|---|
| <b>Timeframe</b>        | 1 year   | <b>Assigned to:</b>                           |
| <b>Critical Tasks</b>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify the city’s diversity by meeting with local organizations.</li> <li>• Establish a recruitment committee that includes key stakeholders (HR, Vulcan Blazers, Emerald Society, fire academy, and physical ability test mentors).</li> <li>• Work with city youth organizations to build explorer programs.</li> <li>• Improve the cadet program to gain citywide interest.</li> <li>• Attend recruitment events for targeted groups (female athletes, city schools, Hispanic population).</li> <li>• Ensure the Recruitment Committee has accurate hiring information.</li> <li>• Re-evaluate annually and after every new hiring process.</li> </ul> |   |
| <b>Funding Estimate</b> | Capital Costs:<br>Personnel Costs:   | Consumable Costs:<br>Contract Services Costs: |

Source: Baltimore City Fire Department Strategic Plan 2016-2021

The **City of Orlando, FL Fire Department** organized its Inclusivity and Equity Action Plan into two major theme areas – Recruitment and Professional Standards.<sup>65</sup> The city then organized its action items in both areas by short-term (0-3 years), mid-term (3-5 years), and long-term recommendations (5 plus years).

**San Francisco’s Fire Department** developed an extensive racial equity action plan.<sup>66</sup> The action plan acknowledges the department’s troubled history under a federal consent decree because of racist and sexist behavior. The plan ties detailed action items to higher-level racial equity goals that align with the city’s vision of racial equity. Each action item includes a brief implementation plan and timeline (see Figure 14).

*Figure 14. Example Goal and Action from San Francisco Fire Dept.*

### 3.1. Create a clear, equitable, and accountable protocol for disciplinary actions

**3.1.1. Track disciplinary actions and analyze subsequent disaggregated data. Pay special attention to data pointing to biases against staff of color.**

#### IMPLEMENTATION PLAN:

The Department will collaborate with its Human Resource Division to obtain historical data for analysis and develop a plan to accurately collect and aggregate data for all disciplinary actions.

TIMELINE: Q1 2021

Source: San Francisco Fire Department Racial Equity Action Plan 2023-23

<sup>64</sup> Baltimore City Fire Department, “Strategic Plan 2016-2021,” <https://fire.baltimorecity.gov/sites/default/files/Baltimore%20Strategic%20Plan%202016-2021%20FINAL%2016%2010%2016%20corrected.pdf>.

<sup>65</sup> City of Orlando, “Orlando Fire Department: Inclusivity and Equity Action Plan,” February 2020, <https://www.orlando.gov/files/sharedassets/public/departments/public-safety/ofd/ofdinclusivityandequityactionplan2020h.pdf>.

<sup>66</sup> San Francisco Fire Department, “Racial Equity Action Plan 2021-2023 (REAP v.1).”

### 3.4 Build Infrastructure to Make Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Successful

#### Recommendation 6: Develop a Recruitment Strategy to Focus Limited Resources

Before COVID-19, MCFRS could expect 1,000-3,000 applications for the county's entry-level firefighter/rescuer position. Most recently, MCFRS received 900+ applications during its two-month July 2022 open vacancy period. The hiring process includes:

- an initial application,
- a written critical thinking exam,
- the candidate physical abilities test (CPAT),
- a medical exam,
- a psychological exam, and
- a detailed background investigation.

MCFRS loses applicants because of the lengthy recruitment and hiring process. It takes months for an individual to get through the application process and into a recruit school. Data was not available to examine how many applicants drop out at a given stage of the application process. However, it is safe to say many applicants drop out along the way (either voluntarily or involuntarily), making it more challenging to fill an entire recruit class with quality applicants. This is not unique to Montgomery County; many fire chiefs across the country and around the world face the same recruiting problem.<sup>67</sup>As discussed later in this section, a focused recruitment strategy prioritizing diversity and inclusion in the fire service is one step in addressing the broad recruitment shortfalls faced by fire departments across the country.

Prior to 2020, MCFRS's recruiter was a captain, who retired shortly before the pandemic. The recruiter position remained vacant for two years as MCFRS focused its operations on its COVID-19 pandemic response. In November 2021, the Fire Chief demonstrated a serious commitment to recruitment by elevating the vacant position to the rank of battalion chief and filling the position. Recruiting is the primary function of this battalion chief, in addition to managing the firefighter exam process in coordination with the County's Office of Human Resources (OHR) and serving as an additional resource for the MCFRS labor relations team when necessary.

About 30 informal recruiters on the Candidate Physical Abilities Testing (CPAT) team support the battalion chief in charge of recruiting. The CPAT exam tests an applicant's required minimum physical abilities, like pulling hose lines, raising ladders, and breaching a ceiling. CPAT team members are the face of MCFRS to applicants and are an informal set of leaders at MCFRS. The Battalion Chief of Recruiting uses CPAT team members to assist in recruiting efforts during visits to schools and colleges.

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<sup>67</sup> Gary Ludwing, "Who will be left to respond?" Firerescue1, February 4, 2022, accessed August 12, 2022, <https://www.firerescue1.com/recruitment/articles/who-will-be-left-to-respond-I6J5X91BtGVYMVuw/>; Bronnie Mackintosh, "How diversity in Fire and Rescue will build a safer society," filmed 2018, TED video, <https://tedxsydney.com/talk/how-diversity-in-fire-and-rescue-will-build-a-safer-society-bronnie-mackintosh/>.

MCFRS does not have a documented recruitment strategy, but their goal is to get as many individuals to enter the recruitment process as soon as possible, especially as application numbers are down. MCFRS is looking for diversity, education, leadership skills, and a team player mentality. Recruiting takes place at job fairs and public schools, and the recruiter visits every high school in Montgomery County and joins middle school career days. The recruiter meets college sports teams in nearby Pennsylvania and Maryland to recruit athletes with leadership skills into MCFRS.

The MCFRS recruitment twitter account is active the month before the firefighter/rescuer job application opens and throughout the application period. MCFRS uses several infographics to communicate information quickly (see Figure 15). There are videos and testimonials of what it is like working at MCFRS. The recruitment twitter account only has about 200 followers, but its messages are occasionally amplified by MCFRS's main Twitter account, with over 43,000 followers.

MCFRS implemented two noteworthy inclusive recruiting practices. The written exam is the first step in recruiting and involves a lengthy proctored exam. Traditionally, this exam takes place at an on-site location with limited exceptions. MCFRS now offers both an in-person and online exam applicants can take from the comfort of their homes. Both exams are proctored and have accountability mechanisms in place to ensure fairness. Offering both virtual and in-person exams allow applicants more flexibility. The next step MCFRS wants to take is to offer the exam on the weekends, so applicants do not have to take time from work to take the exam.

Figure 15. Example of MCFRS Recruiting Twitter Postings



Source: Twitter @MCFRSRecruiting, Jun, 1, 2022 and Jun. 8, 2022

The second inclusive recruiting practice is mentoring in preparation for the CPAT. MCFRS created a 12-week mentoring process to prepare applicants (see Figure 16). The CPAT exam is an intense physical agility test that applicants must complete in 10 minutes and 20 seconds. The mentoring program provides potential applicants opportunities to practice for the CPAT exam. It also provides applicants with strength training and advice on proper nutrition in preparation for the CPAT exam. CPAT mentoring is a promising practice that other departments across the country should consider implementing because the CPAT exam is one of the primary challenges facing potential recruits.<sup>68</sup>

MCFRS also faces internal challenges related to recruitment. The human resources staff at MCFRS is small, with a four-person Administrative Services unit responsible for processing personnel actions, new civilian and firefighter hires, compensation issues, and labor relations. MCFRS does not have any full-time background investigators. There are 13 investigators who work part-time hours or intermittently (i.e., some do not work during the summer). For comparison, the Montgomery County Police Department has 11 full-time background investigators and 10 internal affairs investigators.

Typically, MCFRS opens its entry-level firefighter/rescuer position for no more than a month. In July 2022, MCFRS posted the job announcement for a full month, then extended it for a second month to accommodate several large in-county events used for recruiting. Prior to July 2022, the position was only posted for 2-3 weeks. The short recruitment period limits the variety of applications MCFRS receives. Such a short recruitment period lends itself to those who are “in the know,” typically multi-generational firefighters or firefighters from outside of the Montgomery County area looking for higher pay.

Some cities and counties run recruitment periods longer than a month. Fairfax County’s recruitment period is ten months, and they are working on making it a year-round job posting. This longer open announcement allows the department to get potential applicants into the pipeline almost immediately, rather than waiting months for the application to open.

As the International Association of Fire Chiefs (IAFC) points out, recruiting in a one-dimensional one-size-fits-all (i.e., the “the more, the merrier”) strategy does not work. MCFRS should identify

Figure 16. MCFRS CPAT Mentoring





Source: Twitter @mcfrsPIO7, Aug. 25, 2022

<sup>68</sup> Pieper, Shannon, “Building a More Inclusive Environment for Women Firefighters,” Lexipol, April 6, 2018, <https://www.lexipol.com/resources/blog/building-a-more-inclusive-environment-for-women-firefighters/>.



its short, medium, and long-term recruitment goals. IAFC recommends that fire departments adapt recruitment strategies to suit the individuals in the community. Introducing racial and gender diversity into the fire service requires targeted recruitment strategies to those groups to build their interest in the fire and rescue service.

| <b>Recommendation 6: Develop a Recruitment Strategy to Focus Limited Resources</b> |  |
|--|--|
|   | <b>Building the Foundation:</b> MCFRS should develop a Recruitment Strategy to bring in a more diverse workforce using short and long-term strategies. Using the recruitment strategy, evaluate the required budget and resource needs to effectively recruit the next generation of Montgomery County firefighters and rescuers. Identify clear recruitment priorities and develop action plans to target local and diverse communities. Explore expanding the open application period beyond 1-2 months. |
|   | <b>Sustaining the Momentum:</b> MCFRS should continue to implement recruitment strategies. Measure to identify what strategies are achieving recruitment goals. Work with OHR to secure preference points for cadet and volunteer programs to develop a pipeline of local firefighters. Work with county leadership to make the cadet program a paid opportunity, similar to the Montgomery County Police Department program.  |

As MCFRS develops its recruitment plan, it must consider the staff and budget required to meet its recruitment goals. Improving the recruitment of local, diverse talent will cost additional money. The Montgomery County Police Department (MCPD) employs three full-time recruiters, 41 “decentralized recruiters,” and has a paid cadet program that bridges high school to college.<sup>69</sup> MCFRS will likely need additional resources for recruiting in order to implement the County’s vision for recruiting locally and for diversity.

MCFRS also partnered with Montgomery County Public Schools to host a high school cadet firefighter program for local juniors and seniors (see Figure 17). The cadet program represents an opportunity to improve both local recruiting and recruiting diversity into MCFRS. Cadets receive the same fire and emergency medicine training and certifications as career and volunteer firefighters. Cadet programs are a proven method of recruiting more diverse candidates into public safety programs.<sup>70</sup> Unfortunately, the cadet program has been dormant in recent years due to COVID-19. Also, despite the considerable time and monetary investment in cadets, they receive no preference when applying to become career firefighters.

The MCPD cadet program is cited as a promising practice in the County’s Reimagining Public Safety initiative. Police “cadets work in a paid civilian capacity for the Department, undergo training, and are mentored by police officers. The department has increased minority representation through this program, and the program has the potential to continually bring

<sup>69</sup> Effective Law Enforcement for All, *Review of MCPD*.

<sup>70</sup> The International Association of Fire Fighters notes that cadet programs are a useful tool in recruiting diversity into fire departments. IAFF, “Recruiting Diverse First Responders Toolkit,” accessed August 12, 2022, <https://www.iaff.org/toolkits/diverse-recruitment/#getting-started>.

Figure 17. Fire Science and Rescue Cadet Program



Source: Twitter @mcfrsPIO, Sep. 7, 2019  
Figure 18. Example of City of Orlando Recruitment Tweet



Source: Twitter @OrlandoFireDept, Jan. 14, 2022

greater numbers of local residents into MCPD's organization, promote diversity and to increase community knowledge within the officer ranks."<sup>71</sup> MCFRS's cadets are not paid, unlike MCPD's cadets. Creating a paid cadet program might result in converting more cadets into career firefighters.

Several fire departments across the country have well-established recruiting strategies. The City of Orlando Fire Department has a 5-year strategy for recruiting. Orlando is seeing an increase in retirements which "presents an opportunity to immediately develop recruitment strategies to recruit capable replacements and provides an opportunity to increase the representations of females, minorities and veterans in the department."<sup>72</sup> This is a powerful acknowledgment and sets the tone for recruitment efforts moving forward. In the short term, Orlando is working on a social media campaign "that highlights the department's diversity and uses language that promotes a message of inclusiveness," examining the recruitment and hiring process for possible inequities and developing mentoring programs for candidates (see Figure 18). Orlando's strategy also includes a listing of multicultural community events the fire department will attend. Mid-term strategies include implementing a cadet firefighting program, increasing the recruiting budget, and implementing strategies to reform the hiring process. In the long-term, Orlando plans to justify increasing the budget and staff numbers to a level that is comparable with other similarly sized fire departments.

San Francisco Fire Department's equity plan considers hiring and recruiting as one of its key elements. The plan includes 26 actions the department will take over the coming months and years to make hiring and recruiting more inclusive and equitable. Strategies include developing a "pre-academy" for recruits and assessing barriers impeding applicants' ability to apply to positions. San Francisco is fostering relationships with non-traditional outlets, including local professional networks in the BIPOC

<sup>71</sup> Effective Law Enforcement for All, "Review of MCPD."

<sup>72</sup> City of Orlando, "Orlando Fire Department: Inclusivity and Equity Action Plan."

community (Black, Indigenous, and people of color), re-entry programs, the community college system, trade schools, and local social service organizations.

Fairfax County's Fire & Rescue Department has not developed a recruiting plan but has identified that as one of its essential action items in the coming year.<sup>73</sup> In addition to developing a recruitment plan, Fairfax is working on increasing accessibility and outreach to historically Black colleges and universities and cultural communities.

### **Recommendation 7: Charter a DEI Council to Solicit Employee Input**

Creating a more inclusive station environment will require input and buy-in from firefighters at the stations. Some career and volunteer firefighters at the stations feel senior leaders do not value their work.<sup>74</sup> Unlike other comparable fire departments, MCFRS firefighters and employees have few options to provide their input on DEI efforts at MCFRS. The International Association of Fire Fighters (IAFF) Local 1664 and the Montgomery County Volunteer Fire Rescue Association (MCVFRA) agreements require members to work through IAFF or MCVFRA representatives. According to MCFRS, management cannot solicit feedback through formal feedback sessions because it could be construed as direct dealing, which is a prohibited practice in both agreements.

MCFRS senior leaders can informally receive feedback from membership through casual conversations with the Fire and Division Chiefs. Speaking and communicating with employees is particularly important. IAFC's guide for creating diverse and inclusive fire departments points out that "when people or organizations fail, ineffective communication often is the culprit."<sup>75</sup> The first implementation step IAFC recommends is listening to career and volunteer members and letting "your members know that you value their ideas and opinions and take them seriously."<sup>76</sup> To do so, IAFC recommends departments:<sup>77</sup>

- "approach new ideas, people and experiences with an open mind,
- solicit input from personnel on decisions that affect them,
- create safe forums for people to discuss and ask questions about diversity-related issues, and
- host events that bring personnel together."

IAFF recommends that fire departments establish a Human Relations Committee of constituency groups in each fire department.<sup>78</sup> The Human Relations Committee, as described by IAFF, is analogous to a DEI committee. Responsibility includes developing policy, creating, and monitoring mentoring programs, sponsoring cultural events, training, assisting in conflict resolution, and building relationships with the community.<sup>79</sup>

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<sup>73</sup> Fairfax County Fire and Rescue Department, *Fire & Rescue CY 2022 Equity Impact Plan*.

<sup>74</sup> The 2019 Montgomery County Employee Survey found a statistically significant number of negative responses to the "The leadership of my department values and appreciates my work (32%)," and "the leadership of my department cares about me as a person (36%)." Volunteers did not take the 2019 survey.

<sup>75</sup> International Association of Fire Chiefs (IAFC), "Guide for Creating a Diverse and Inclusive Department."



<sup>76</sup> Ibid.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid.

<sup>78</sup> IAFF, "Recruiting Diverse First Responders Toolkit."

<sup>79</sup> Ibid.

Through interviews and open-ended survey responses, it became apparent that some MCFRS employees are eager to get involved and help when possible. Employees were hesitant to suggest formalizing affinity groups at MCFRS. Instead, MCFRS interviewees expressed interest in the DEI council concept. Formalizing a standing council to advise the Fire Chief and future Chief Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Officer would ensure employees have a voice and provides senior leaders with some insight regarding the culture at fire stations.

| <b>Recommendation 7: Charter a DEI Council to Solicit Employee Input</b>          |   |
|---|---|
|  | <b><u>Building the Foundation:</u></b> MCFRS should charter a DEI council of interested career, volunteer, and civilian employees. The DEI Council should help develop the equity framework, vision, and recruitment strategy. For the council to be effective and credible, MCFRS should ensure accountability from leaders and transparency in decision making through policy and practice. |
|  | <b><u>Sustaining the Momentum:</u></b> The DEI Council should serve as a resource for the Chief and DEI Officer. The Council can help identify internal and external inequities in processes and programs. The DEI Council should be involved in developing the Racial Equity Action Plan, associated actions, and measures.  |

MCFRS could model Fairfax County Fire & Rescue’s Equity and Inclusion Council. Fairfax’s council served as a model for IAFC and won an IAFC recognition award.<sup>80</sup> Fairfax’s equity council includes representatives of formalized affinity groups, the volunteer association, and a representative from the recruiting office. Some of the roles and responsibilities of the council include:<sup>81</sup>

- driving internal changes that foster gender equality, and diversity of the workforce,
- identifying obstacles to inclusivity,
- recommending professional development training,
- focusing on recruiting, retention, and promotion of females and people with diverse backgrounds,
- using data to inform decision-making,
- connecting with the broader “One Fairfax” equity initiative,
- mentoring other firefighters, and
- reviewing and recommending changes to operational policy.

The City of San Francisco implemented a Racial Equity Advisory Committee. The committee is staffed by 25 racial equity leaders from all seven divisions of the San Francisco Fire Department. The committee supported the development of the department’s Racial Equity Action Plan. A future MCFRS equity council could help develop the upcoming Racial Equity Action Plan.

<sup>80</sup> Fairfax County Fire & Rescue, “Fire Chief John Butler Selected as a Recipient of the 2020 International Association of Fire Chiefs President’s Awards of Recognition,” FCFRD press release, August 25, 2020, <https://ffxfirerescue.wordpress.com/2020/08/25/fire-chief-john-butler-selected-as-a-recipient-of-the-2020-international-association-of-fire-chiefs-presidents-awards-of-recognition/>.

<sup>81</sup> Fairfax County Fire and Rescue Department, “Informational Bulletin: Fire Chief’s Equity and Inclusion Council (FCEIC),” April 3, 2019, <https://www.iafc.org/docs/default-source/ivcos/fairfax-county-fire-chiefs-equity-and-inclusion-council.pdf>.



## 3.5 Implement Racial Equity Tools in Policies, Procedures, and Programs

### Recommendation 8: Building County-Level Capacity for EEO

An Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) office should play a role preventing discrimination in the workplace against a job applicant or an employee. According to the United States Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), discriminations can occur in the following categories: race, color, religion, sex (including pregnancy, transgender status, and sexual orientation), national origin, age, disability, or genetic information.<sup>82</sup> While it is often viewed as reactive to complaints, a successful EEO office works proactively to prevent incidents from happening – by providing information, tools, and resources to employers and employees in order to promote healthy workplace practices.

The County EEO office is in OHR. The EEO office is understaffed and has been for many years. Understaffing of the County EEO office has many negative effects on county operations. At a high level, the county is no longer auditing agencies to ensure compliance with annual training on appropriate workplace practices and the EEO process. Due to a conflict of interest between personnel in the MCFRS EEO office and FRS personnel, the County intentionally gave the Office of County Attorney oversight of FRS EEO cases. The County Attorney's Office has numerous responsibilities in the county, so the County Attorney periodically outsources MCFRS EEO investigations to outside counsel. MCFRS is kept apprised of status of EEO investigations.

Outsourcing EEO investigations to the County's EEO officer is not ideal. In many state and county governments, EEO offices are a stand-alone office or associated with OHR. In addition, people handling EEO complaints need to possess the requisite skills. Among other skills and knowledge, EEO officers and managers should have experience with affirmative action plans, personnel, and human resources. As an example, the Office of Personnel Management (OPM), which sets and oversees federal human capital strategy and policy, has requirements for EEO officers. OPM has established guidelines for assigning EEO responsibilities as collateral assignment as well.<sup>83</sup>

Based on data provided by the County Attorney, most EEO complaints in 2021 and 2020 were primarily related to discrimination based on gender, race/ethnicity, and retaliation. More specifically, there were six complaints of discrimination based on race/ethnicity, five based on retaliation, and five based on gender. There were also three complaints of sexual assault. Research and interviews reveal several such instances were recorded and contributed to a toxic culture and workplace in several stations. According to the interviewees, such instances were due to a few 'bad actors' in the organization.

In its FY18 Budget Submission to the Office of Management and Budget, MCFRS included supporting rationale that addressing EEO matters proactively and conducting EEO training had

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<sup>82</sup> U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, "Overview," accessed August 12, 2022, [Overview | U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission \(eeoc.gov\)](https://www.eeoc.gov/).

<sup>83</sup> U.S. Office of Personnel Management, "Position Classification Standard for Equal Employment Opportunity Series, GS-0260," accessed August 12, 2022, [Position Classification Standard for Equal Employment Opportunity Series, GS-0260 \(opm.gov\)](https://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/classifications-qualifications/position-classification-standard-for-equal-employment-opportunity-series-gs-0260/); U.S. Office of Personnel Management, "Policy, Data, Oversight Classification & Qualifications" accessed August 12, 2022, [Positions Involving Equal Employment Opportunity Collateral Assignments \(opm.gov\)](https://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/classifications-qualifications/positions-involving-equal-employment-opportunity-collateral-assignments/).

helped to improve the culture of the department, and it required a full-time position.<sup>84</sup> However, the request was denied, so the Fire Chief created an EEO position as a collateral responsibility of a firefighter captain. While the EEO position did not conduct formal investigations, it did fill an unmet need addressing EEO issues, raising awareness of diversity issues, consulting with personnel interested in making EEO complaints, and evaluating the Fire and Rescue Service's policies and culture. In 2018, MCFRS stopped internal EEO support because Montgomery County Personnel Regulations Section 5 outlines the structure and roles of the EEO complaint process.<sup>85</sup>

Montgomery County's Personnel Regulations (MCPR 2001) Section 5 EEO regulations prohibit discrimination or harassment based on any basis covered by federal, state, and local laws. EEO and Diversity Management Training is conducted by the County EEO office, and training is mandatory for new hires, new supervisors, and managers, with a refresher required every three years.<sup>86</sup>

If employees need to file a complaint, they can use the Online EEO Complaint Filing System which requires an employee to log on to the county's ePortal.<sup>87</sup> MCFRS also implemented an internal solution that allows LFRD personnel, who were prohibited from using the County's system due to active directory limitations to file complaints electronically through the Station Activity Management System. Alternatively, complaints can be filed by any member in hard copy using a downloadable complaint form.<sup>88</sup> As a parallel step, employees have an option to file complaints with external agencies, including the Human Rights Commission, Maryland Commission on Civil Rights, and the United States EEOC.

While employees have equitable access to filing an EEO complaint, less than half of the survey participants agreed that the EEO complaint process and policies to report instances of harassment or discrimination are clear and transparent. In addition, many employees are not aware of the external options, resulting in gaps in knowledge and process.

More importantly, there is little faith in the process. Many employees fear retaliation or do not believe the complaint will produce fair outcomes. As a result, firefighters are reluctant to make EEO complaints. Further, employees expressed frustration with the process, citing the lack of consistent communication on progress, status, and eventual outcome of existing complaints.

Some of these challenges result from a lack of staffing capacity at the County EEO office. Still, there is also a lack of awareness and knowledge among MCFRS employees about the process. OHR's EEO section on the website states that neither the complaint details nor the final investigative report are shared with the parties due to privacy and confidentiality reasons, but all

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<sup>84</sup> Megan Davey Limarzi, Esq., *Overtime Costs and Redundancies in the MCFRS EEO/Diversity Office*, OIG Publication # OIG-20-009, March 26, 2020, [https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/OIG/Resources/Files/PDF/IGActivity/FY2020/mcfrs\\_ot\\_eeo\\_office\\_report\\_26\\_mar\\_2020.pdf](https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/OIG/Resources/Files/PDF/IGActivity/FY2020/mcfrs_ot_eeo_office_report_26_mar_2020.pdf).

<sup>85</sup> Montgomery County, Maryland Office of Human Resources, "Section 5. Equal Employment Opportunity."

<sup>86</sup> Montgomery County, Maryland Office of Human Resources, "Equal Employment Opportunity, Compliance & Diversity Management," accessed August 12, 2022, <https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/HR/EqualEmploymentOpportunity/EEO.html>.



<sup>87</sup> Montgomery County, Maryland, "MCG Application Portal," accessed August 12, 2022, [https://ex01.montgomerycountymd.gov/cas/login?service=https%3a%2f%2fex01.montgomerycountymd.gov%2fportal%2f%3fmcgoptions%3deportal\\_defaults](https://ex01.montgomerycountymd.gov/cas/login?service=https%3a%2f%2fex01.montgomerycountymd.gov%2fportal%2f%3fmcgoptions%3deportal_defaults).

<sup>88</sup> Montgomery County, Maryland Office of Human Resources, "Complaint Form," accessed August 12, 2022, [COMPLAINT\\_INTAKE\\_FORM.pdf \(montgomerycountymd.gov\)](https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/COMPLAINT_INTAKE_FORM.pdf).

parties should receive either a closure notification or a letter of determination. Some interviewees expressed interest in knowing more information about the case and its outcomes, which would require changes to state laws.

Another challenge arises from the amount of time between when a complaint is made and the resolution. The lack of transparency and communication during that time frustrates all parties involved. Employee perception of the EEO process is not good, discouraging some from using the County's EEO complaint process.

Ultimately, reinvesting in the County's EEO office will reduce costs to the County as proactively addressing issues and heading off complaints through education and training will potentially prevent complaints from occurring or, at a minimum, provide tools to settle complaints at the lowest level.

| <b>Recommendation 8: Building County-Level Capacity for EEO</b>                     |   |
|---|---|
|    | <b><u>Building the Foundation:</u></b> The County must fully staff its EEO office. MCFRS should identify internal MCFRS members (with relevant skills on equity, inclusion and associated policies and procedures) to serve as support resources when EEO complaints occur. MCFRS leaders should communicate to employees what the EEO process entails. Continue to provide basic EEO training for leaders, supervisors, and members. Make incremental changes to provide consistent communications and updates on the case status to complainants and respondents. |
|  | <b><u>Sustaining the Momentum:</u></b> County OHR should refine EEO training methods based on feedback. Build a more systematic case management capability to streamline communications and processes so complainants and respondents feel the process is transparent. MCFRS should revisit its union agreements and contracts to ensure there are no constraints in sharing information about the process, including aggregate data on numbers and trends of complaints.   |

### 3.6 Be Data Driven

#### **Recommendation 9: Track DEI and Connect to Mission and Service Delivery**

Data and insights from data serve as critical enablers for an organization's equity journey. MCFRS can use data to hold leaders and employees accountable. Disaggregating data can provide valuable insights into understanding individuals' experiences across various groups. Sharing data across the organization transparently and consistently - showing progress and areas for improvement - creates goodwill and trust in the organization and its leaders. Without the use of data and metrics to evaluate progress, it is difficult to keep staff motivated to work toward collective goals, particularly goals as ambitious as achieving racial equity.<sup>89</sup>

<sup>89</sup> GARE, "Resource Guide, Advancing Racial Equity & Transforming Government Section 4: Use Data and Metrics," accessed August 12, 2022, <https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/HR/EqualEmploymentOpportunity/EEO.html/>.

It is important to collect data with strategic intent. Data should align with the organization's priorities and address the questions that interest the organization and its employees.<sup>90</sup> Collecting large amounts of data with no goal in sight leads to distraction and analysis paralysis. Starting small with a core set of key metrics will allow the organization to align its efforts with racial equity priorities and use data to inform key decisions. Metrics should be based on the three focus areas: diversity across employee levels, equitable access to hiring, opportunity and advancement, and employee belonging and inclusivity (see Chapter 3, Section 6, Recommendation 10: MCFRS' Organizational DEI Profile).

In this section, the Study Team examines the benefits of being data-driven in mission and service delivery and to what extent MCFRS, as an organization, supports its employees and is representative of the community it serves. All three lenses are connected and should reinforce each other.

### **Collection, Access, and Use of Human Capital Data**

OHR collects and maintains human capital data for MCFRS and other county agencies. This arrangement is called a “shared services” approach. OHR holds data on the employee lifecycle from hiring to termination/retirement, except for training data, which is collected and maintained by MCFRS.<sup>91</sup>

Many organizations use a similar shared services model for the HR function as a value-added service providing insights, trends, and best practices to help its “customers” better manage their agency. Shared services can be successful when resourced and implemented well, meaning there are agreed-upon service level agreements and performance measures.

Here lies the issue: MCFRS needs access to OHR's data on a timely basis. Providing data in a timely manner has been, and continues to be, a challenge because of OHR's limited bandwidth and capacity. The Study Team faced similar challenges trying to obtain disaggregated race and gender data on MCFRS personnel and applicants at all stages of the recruiting style.

There is little periodic or consistent analysis of data by OHR. As a result, MCFRS does not receive much human capital analysis to help in its decision making. A major priority of ORESJ is disaggregating race and gender data to examine internal inequities in organizational policies and practices. OHR is unable to process this data reliably.

An added challenge unique to MCFRS is human capital data related to the volunteer workforce. While OHR collects data on the MCFRS career workforce, it does not collect, maintain, or update volunteer workforce data on an annual, periodic basis. More importantly, it does not collect information on the race and ethnicity of volunteers. An administrative specialist in the Volunteer



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<sup>90</sup> Laura Morgan Roberts and Melissa Thomas-Hunt, “Data-Driven Approaches to Diversity, Equity and Inclusion,” SHRM, January 19, 2022, <https://www.shrm.org/executive/resources/people-strategy-journal/winter2022/pages/feature-approach-dei-data-morgan-roberts.aspx>.

<sup>91</sup> OHR holds training data for many other departments and agencies in the county. MCFRS and other public safety agencies maintain their own training records due to their requirements. While, MCFRS can still maintain their own records, sharing this with County OHR will provide to way for both parties to compare with other county agencies, and it provides OHR important data to evaluate career development.

Services Division collects demographic data on the volunteers during the background process. It is stored, tracked, and available for analysis in the Personnel Information Management System.

When coupled with periodic employee pulse surveys, collecting and understanding data about the workforce provides numerous potential benefits. It could improve retention and employee experience, assist an employee’s professional and career development, and prevent possible misconduct. Without actionable analysis, MCFRS has a limited view of its workforce (career and volunteer) and potential inequities.

| <b>Recommendation 9: Track DEI and Connect to Mission and Service Delivery</b>     |   |
|--|---|
|   | <b><u>Building the Foundation:</u></b> As a beginning step, MCFRS should work with OHR to obtain periodic reports on all aspects of the employee lifecycle, including hiring and recruiting, career advancement and development, performance management, and retention. Employee lifecycle data should be disaggregated by age, gender, race, and ethnicity. MCFRS should conduct a systematic analysis periodically to identify key insights and trends, identify any issues and concerns, and disaggregate data to identify potential inequities. This data and the resulting analyses should form the basis of any key organizational priorities in alignment with the strategic plan and the racial equity vision and priorities. |
|  | <b><u>Sustaining the Momentum:</u></b> As the process and organization mature, MCFRS can build on its capability to use data to make better-informed decisions about its organizational climate and workforce. Expanding on the data and metrics will require an investment in resources to secure staff trained in data analytics with the requisite knowledge and understanding to collect and present DEI data in a thoughtful, transparent, and consistent manner.  |

## **Recommendation 10: MCFRS’ Organizational DEI Profile**

### **The State of Diversity in MCFRS**

As discussed earlier in section 2.1, Montgomery County is one of the most diverse counties in the US. Approximately 20 percent of Montgomery County’s residents are Hispanic, 18 percent identify as African American, and 14 percent identify as Asian. This increasing trend in diversity continues to grow over the years – between 1990 to 2020, there was an 11-percentage point increase in the Hispanic/Latino population, an 8-percentage point increase in the Black and African Community, and 8-percentage point increase in the Asian, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander community).

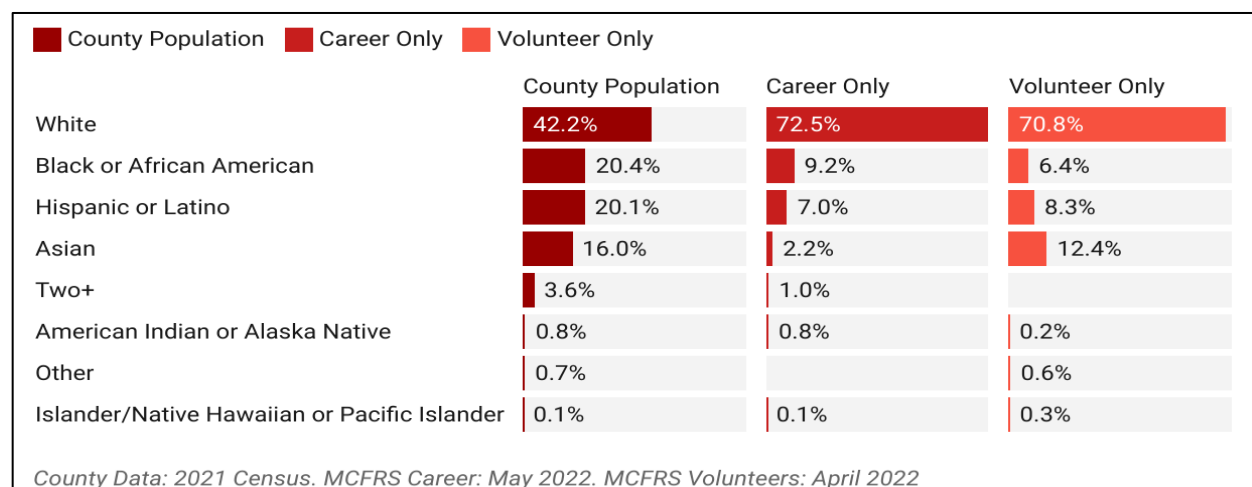
### ***Career Workforce***

#### **Racial Diversity**

In comparison, MCFRS is not representative of the community it serves (see Figures 19 and 20). The White demographic is overrepresented (Career – 72.5%, Volunteers – 70.8%) in MCFRS. Other racial and ethnic groups are under-represented in MCFRS. While its demographic

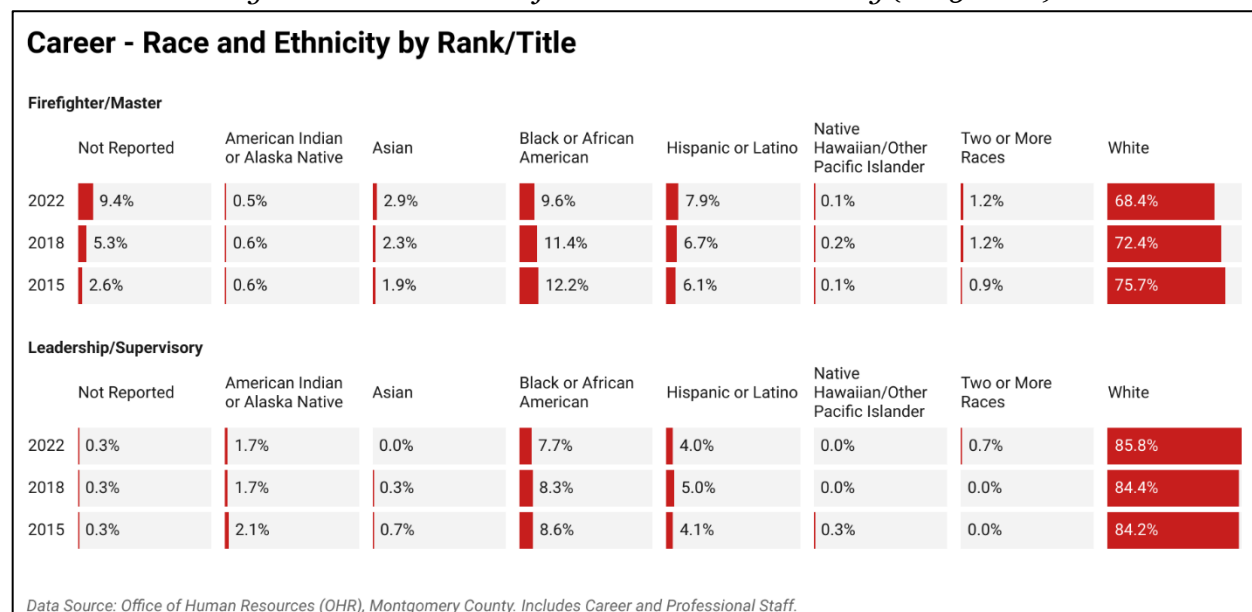
representation does not need to be exactly similar, MCFRS should strive to achieve a workforce that looks like the residents it serves – this will help MCFRS serve the community more effectively (see Chapter 2, Section 4, Addressing Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion can Improve Fire and Rescue Services).

*Figure 19. Race and Ethnicity (2020) - Montgomery County vs MCFRS workforce*



Source: National Academy of Public Administration

*Figure 20. Career Workforce – Race and Ethnicity (2015-2022)*



Source: National Academy of Public Administration

Note: Firefighter/Master category includes Firefighter1-3 and Master; Leadership/Supervisory includes Lieutenant/Captain and ranks above

When the Study Team examined diversity by rank and title over the years (2015-2022), a few observations were noteworthy. First in the category of Firefighter/Master, the White population decreases over time, in addition to decreases in the Black or African American population. However, all other racial and ethnic groups have either stayed constant or have increased over the



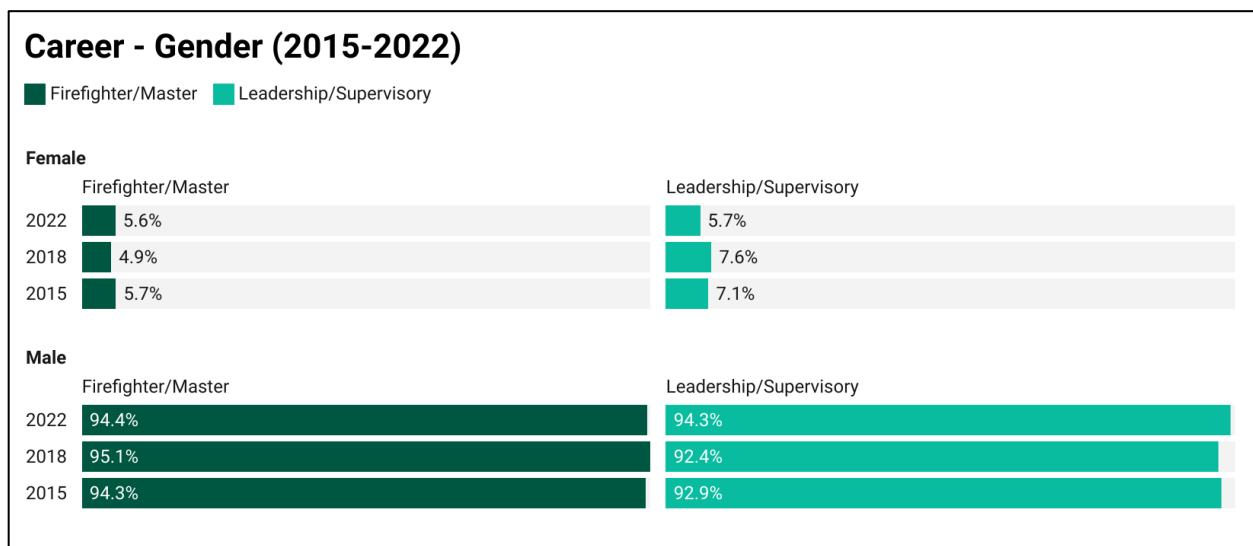
years. The number of people not reporting have increased as well. The reduction in the Black or African American population and the increases in people not reporting warrant further exploration for root causes. On the other end, there could be valuable insights from looking at practices that resulted in the increase of other racial and ethnic groups.

In the Leadership/Supervisory category, there is a small increase in the White population – the results are mixed for other racial and ethnic groups. The most significant relative decreases are in the Black or African American population and Asian population – other groups have stayed consistent over the years. The data is helpful for MCFRS to establish a baseline and start examining the root causes of both the increasing and decreasing trends in its workforce.

### ***Career Workforce – Gender Diversity***

In terms of diversity in gender among career workforce, the share of female firefighters in the category of Firefighter/Master has stayed constant, while their share of leadership roles has decreased from 7.1 percent to 5.7 percent over the last few years (2015-2022). Interestingly, while there as a small increase from 2015 to 2018, between 2018 to 2022, there has been a marked decrease in female leaders in MCFRS (see Figure 21). This is another important result for MCFRS to explore the underlying reasons.

*Figure 21. Gender – Staff and Leadership (2015-2020)*



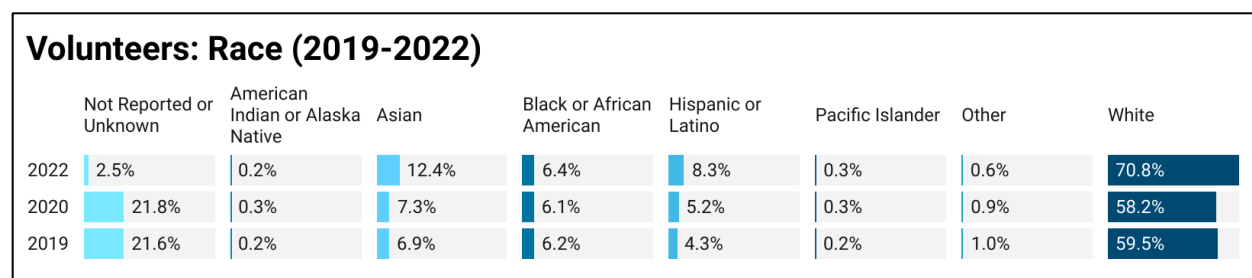
Source: National Academy of Public Administration

In summary, while there is some progress in racial and gender diversity in the MCFRS career workforce, there is still work to be done disaggregating data to inform organizational priorities and actions. While data on the diversity of career staff is collected, there is no periodic analysis of this data to determine specific actions to increase or promote diversity, nor is there analysis to identify any key trends or patterns.

## Volunteer Workforce

In terms of race, the volunteer workforce in MCFRS presents a similar diversity profile compared to the career workforce though there is a significant difference in some races. As an example, the portion of the Asian volunteer firefighters is much higher (12.4% Volunteer vs 2.2% Career in 2022) while the portion of Black/African American firefighter is lower (6.4% Volunteer vs 9.2% Career in 2022) (see Figures 19 and 22).

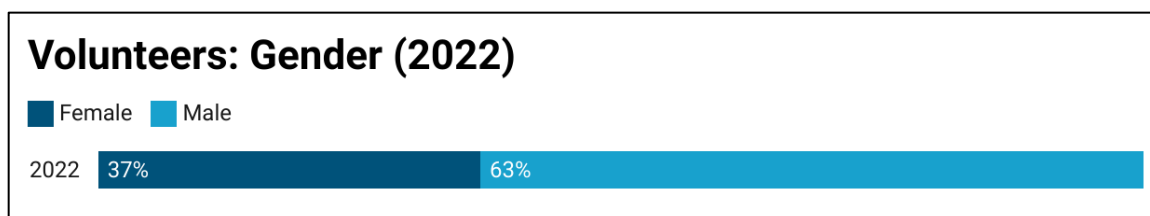
Figure 22. Volunteers – Race and Ethnicity (2019-2020)



Source: National Academy of Public Administration

Overall, there is a significant gender diversity in the volunteer workforce compared to gender diversity in the career workforce (see Figure 23). According to interviews, this increased diversity can be attributed to the volunteer fire service having EMS-only roles.

Figure 23. Volunteers – Gender (2022)

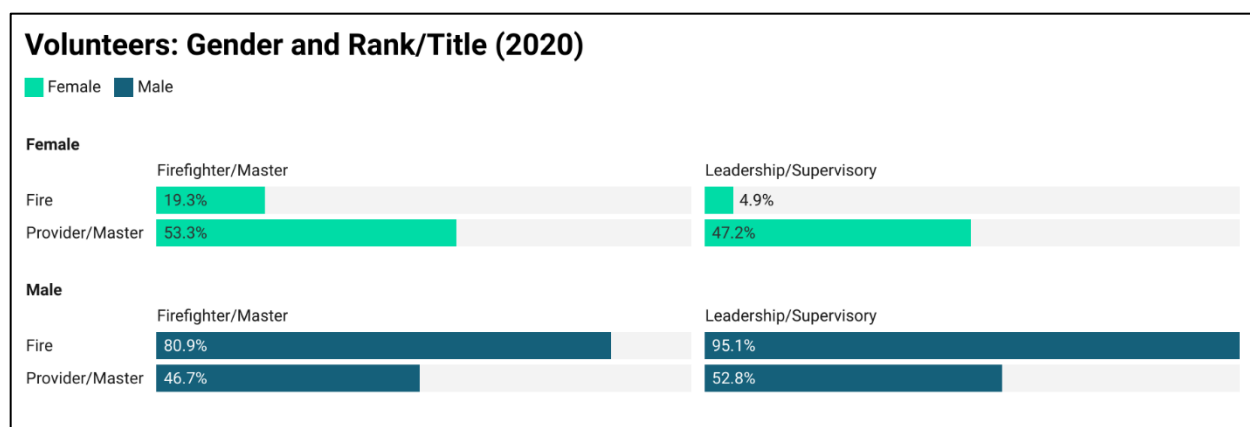


Source: National Academy of Public Administration

In the rank or position of Firefighter/Master, gender diversity differs from the career workforce – there is a much higher proportion of females in Firefighter/Master positions, and they outnumber their male counterparts in EMS. However, this equity is not consistent in leadership/supervisory positions, and it is much lower compared to females in the career workforce (see Figure 24).



Figure 24. Volunteers – Gender and Rank/Title (2020)



Source: National Academy of Public Administration

On the volunteer side, information is collected on each new volunteer for race and gender during the background process. Ethnicity is not captured for volunteers.



If DEI is an organizational priority, then tracking and reporting disaggregated data is an important next step. As Table 5 shows, MCFRS needs a standard set of race and ethnicity groups across the career and volunteer workforce, consistent with the County's categories. Doing so ensures the data is comparable across departments and allows MCFRS to compare its career and volunteer workforce.

Table 5. Race and Ethnicity Groups - Career and Volunteers

| Career  | Volunteers  |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>White (Not Hispanic or Latino)</li> <li>Black or African American</li> <li>Asian</li> <li>Hispanic or Latino</li> <li>Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander</li> <li>American Indian or Alaska Native</li> <li>Two or More Races</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>White</li> <li>Black</li> <li>Asian</li> <li>Hispanic</li> <li>Pacific Islander</li> <li>Alaskan Native</li> <li>American Indian</li> <li>Unknown</li> </ul> |

MCFRS should work with OHR to collect data on DEI and all aspects of the employee lifecycle – hiring and recruiting, career advancement and promotion, training, and retention. More importantly, MCFRS should also track and monitor employee engagement and experience around DEI. As a starting point, MCFRS can benefit from collecting and tracking data in three primary focus areas:

- diversity across employee levels in the organization,
- equitable access to hiring, opportunity, and advancement, and
- the extent to which employees feel included and have a sense of belonging in the organization.

| <b>Recommendation 10: MCFRS' Organizational DEI Profile</b>                       |  |
|---|--|
|  | <b><u>Building the Foundation:</u></b> As a first step, OHR must begin collecting and tracking diversity, equity, and inclusion data on a standard, consistent basis across career and volunteer staff, race and ethnicities, title and ranks, and gender, and on an annual basis. This disaggregated data will allow MCFRS to establish a baseline and measure and track its progress towards its racial equity goals. MCFRS should complement it with annual employee pulse surveys measuring employee perception of progress on DEI-related goals and objectives (short surveys, 8-10 questions on a regular cadence).  |
|  | <b><u>Sustaining the Momentum:</u></b> Based on MCFRS' racial equity plan, MCFRS should develop a set of 3-5 key metrics to track and monitor the organization's progress to DEI and its key actions. The metrics should focus on four areas: (1) diversity across employee levels, (2) equitable access to hiring, (3) opportunity and advancement, and (4) employee perceptions of belonging and inclusivity). MCFRS leaders should communicate progress transparently and consistently across the organization. While the focus on outcome metrics is helpful, MCFRS should also complement it with process metrics. MCFRS should use the core DEI-related metrics in the County's CountyStat measures. Doing so provides a clear and consistent accountability framework and a clear line of sight across leadership levels. |

### 3.7 Partner with Community Organizations and Other County Departments

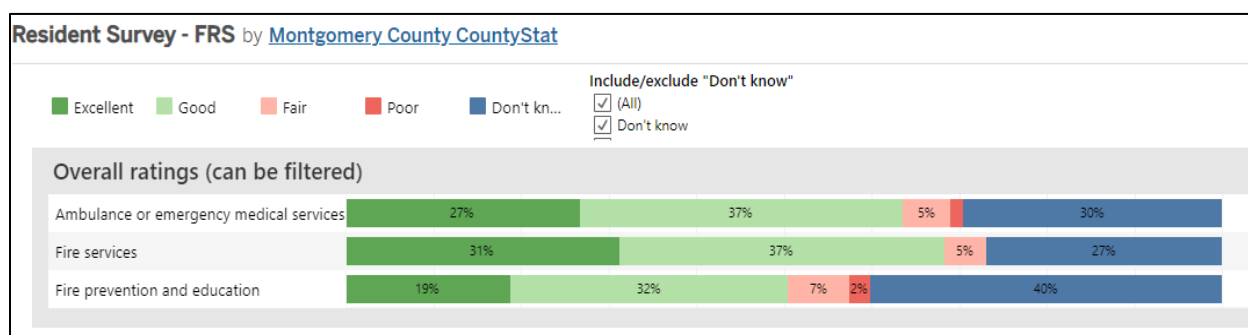
#### Recommendation 11: Community Characteristics and Awareness

GARE identifies community partnership as a key strategic component for institutional change, and departments and agencies must work in partnership with communities and other institutions to achieve meaningful results. Community engagement is quite relevant for MCFRS, considering its mission requires a deep understanding of community risks and characteristics.

Montgomery County residents generally rate MCFRS and its services very well. In a recent Montgomery County Resident Survey (2021), many of the respondents (64-68%) rated the fire and ambulance/emergency services as good or excellent, while fire prevention and education services scored lower (only 51% of respondents scored these services as excellent or good) (see Figure 25).<sup>92</sup>

<sup>92</sup> Montgomery County Resident Survey, report provided by MCFRS.

Figure 25. Montgomery County Resident Survey (2021)



Source: National Academy of Public Administration

Note: Survey responses include respondents that said "Don't Know"

There are very few complaints from the community addressed directly or indirectly to MCFRS. Research and interviews reinforced the important role that MCFRS plays in the community and the quality of services it provides. However, when the results of the resident survey are disaggregated by respondent race, ethnicity, and geographic area, there are indications of concern among certain groups and regional areas, which deserve some attention. As an example, 25 percent of Hispanic, Spanish, and Latin respondents in Mid-County and 24 percent of Black/African American residents in Bethesda-Chevy Chase regional area, rated ambulance and emergency services as 'poor.' Exploring these areas of concern, examining service levels, and soliciting feedback might improve potential inequities in service.

MCFRS collects a lot of operational data including type of incident, dispatched units, service delivery efficiency, and geographic location. However, asking questions about race and ethnicity during a response can be perceived as insensitive and/or discriminatory by the affected person(s).

Given these circumstances, MCFRS is considering other ways to collect this information using equity focus areas at a higher level of disaggregation (e.g., areas/census tracts that are majority-white vs. non-white).<sup>93</sup> While this may not be ideal, it does show MCFRS is exploring creative solutions in support of the County's racial equity goals. MCFRS also partners with public health agencies to improve public health outcomes for county residents. Both efforts are helpful and deserve leadership support and resourcing, consistent with the organization's racial equity vision.

MCFRS does collect feedback from the community on its website. EMS collects feedback on transports and MCFRS' Office of Community Risk Reduction collects some customer satisfaction data. The County requires all departments to include a link on their websites - an email address to which residents may send feedback or complaints. More proactive approaches to solicit feedback from the community include adding channels (e.g., social media, print media at events, community meetings), and partnering with the County's community liaisons in Montgomery County's Office of Community Partnerships (OCP) and other community organizations. In

<sup>93</sup> Montgomery Planning, "The Equity Focus Areas Analysis: Background," July 13, 2022, accessed August 12, 2022, <https://montgomeryplanning.org/planning/equity-agenda-for-planning/the-equity-focus-areas-analysis/>.

partnership with these groups, MCFRS could solicit feedback on its service delivery, identify any disparities, and build a more effective relationship with the community it serves.

Strengthening its community engagement will also allow MCFRS to apply an equity lens and make data-informed decisions in its capital investments and allocation of resources in future years. A stronger relationship with community members will help MCFRS better understand the needs of underrepresented community members and their concerns. It will also serve as complementary input to the formulaic approach for budget decisions by engaging the community in the decision-making process.

*Figure 26. MCFRS Recruits use CRAIG-1300*



Source: Twitter @mcfrs Jul. 1, 2022



available on the intranet, there is no formal training provided for the rest of the employees nor is a refresher course required. MCFRS should provide this training to all its employees - a better understanding of the community and its characteristics will help MCFRS in providing improved services.

Currently, MCFRS uses a data-driven approach to understand community risk; the Community Risk Reduction team has the lead in the department to train recruits in a focused, three-day community risk training using data from CRAIG 1300. CRAIG 1300 allows the fire service to evaluate risk in their community at a detailed level of analysis.<sup>94</sup> Recruits are taught to use data to assess risk in station areas using a combination of presentations and scenarios (see Figure 26). This robust data and important training allow recruits to better understand their fire department and community characteristics. It is essential to understand community characteristics – though 76 percent of career staff are Maryland residents, only about 19 percent live in Montgomery County.<sup>95</sup> While new recruits are taught community risk and characteristics, and a link is

<sup>94</sup> CRAIG1300 Plus, “Identify, Prioritize, and Plan,” accessed August 12, 2022, <https://dashboards.mysidewalk.com/montgomery-county-fire-rescue-services/welcome>

<sup>95</sup> Montgomery County, Maryland Office of Human Resources Data.

In addition to using data to evaluate community risks and understand community characteristics, MCFRS can leverage community partnerships. Community organizations, including county's community liaisons, play a vital role in their communities. They can offer critical insights, including challenges and concerns that communities face - in partnership with these groups, MCFRS can strengthen its community engagement and better understand the community and its characteristics.

| <b>Recommendation 11: Community Characteristics and Awareness</b>                 |  |
|---|--|
|  | <b><u>Building the Foundation:</u></b> MCFRS should incorporate community awareness/characteristics training as part of ongoing training. Continue to explore ways to disaggregate equity data on its mission service and delivery by partnering with county and non-county community organizations. Examine the root causes and issues for lower ratings in certain geographic areas and with racial and ethnic groups.   |
|  | <b><u>Sustaining the Momentum:</u></b> MCFRS should deepen community engagement and partnerships by strengthening relationships with the liaisons in the OCP and other channels to solicit community feedback. Explore ways to collect feedback from residents after incident response, either directly or indirectly. Based on the incident (e.g., less traumatic incidents), a direct approach could involve asking for feedback during follow-up visits from the station personnel. In contrast, an indirect process could involve working with county community liaisons, other county partners (health, family services, etc.), and community partners. |

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## Chapter 4: Looking Forward – Act with Urgency and Accountability

Building organizational capacity for diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) takes serious leadership commitment. From the beginning, Montgomery County Fire and Rescue Service (MCFRS) sought an honest evaluation of the Fire and Rescue Service’s readiness to embrace DEI as a strategic imperative. To do so, MCFRS leaders and staff made themselves available for meetings and interviews to support this assessment. By seeking an independent equity assessment, MCFRS leaders demonstrate that maintaining the status quo is not enough.

This report highlights 11 recommendations that represent the input of the 76 interviewees and the hundreds of survey participants in this study. The recommendations in this report focus on the infrastructure required to apply an equity lens to decision making, the training necessary to change institutional culture related to DEI, and the community engagement needed to inform MCFRS’s vision of equity and related goals. These recommendations build a foundation for MCFRS to develop its racial equity action plan and continue its equity journey.

Changing the culture at MCFRS will take time, as it does with all organizations. MCFRS faces a unique challenge as a combination career-volunteer department. This challenge is unique in three respects.

First, the Chief must work with local fire rescue department (LFRD) chiefs who themselves maintain some autonomy at their station. LFRDs tend to have their own unique culture within MCFRS, and the County Fire Chief has only general authority over personnel behaviors and conduct.



Second, changes to policy and procedure require the Chief to work with the International Association of Fire Fighters (IAFF) Local 1664 and the Montgomery County Volunteer Fire Rescue Association (MCVFRA). While it is important to note that both IAFF Local 1664 and MCVFRA supported the study, both organizations operate under agreements with Montgomery County, which require renegotiations every few years. As such, change will not be instantaneous.



Third, any changes to policy and procedure require approval by the Fire and Emergency Services Commission. The Commission holds considerable power, as it must review and approve or disapprove any shift in policy. The Commission meets monthly, providing more opportunities to enact change.



The key is getting started now. MCFRS should move urgently on recommendations that build momentum, like appointing an employee DEI council, hiring a DEI Officer, adopting a racial equity framework and vision, and working with Office of Human Resources (OHR) to obtain disaggregated data through the employee lifecycle. This momentum will carry the organization forward as MCFRS incorporates DEI into future planning documents, creates actions and timelines to remain accountable, creates a management academy for first-line supervisors, and incorporates DEI into the operational mission of MCFRS (see summary of recommendations on the next page). MCFRS is poised to change and, with additional support and resourcing from the Montgomery County Council and Executive, will provide Montgomery County residents another

reason to celebrate the Fire and Rescue Service as one of the most trusted departments in the county.

While the recommendations and actions are time-bound, they are not entirely prescriptive. Rather, they are offered as a high-level roadmap. The Study Team recognizes that some of these may overlap and need to adjust as progress is made over time. Further, many activities suggested for Building the Foundation will need to continue in the Sustaining Momentum phase.



|   |   |
|---|---|
|  | <b><u>Building the Foundation:</u></b> Recommendations can be implemented in about 0-18 months. These recommendations build the organizational capacity required for changing organizational and employee perceptions of diversity, equity, and inclusion.    |
|  | <b><u>Sustaining the Momentum:</u></b> Recommendations can be implemented in 18+ months. These recommendations sustain the momentum created by implementing foundational recommendations, especially as senior leaders promote and retire from key positions. |

| <b>Recommendation 1: Current and Future Leadership Commitment to DEI</b>            |  |
|---|--|
|   | <b><u>Building the Foundation:</u></b> The County Council and Executive should develop a candidate profile to include key characteristics and attributes of the new fire chief, with a particular focus on commitment to DEI. Obtain feedback from employees in developing the candidate profile.        |
|  | <b><u>Sustaining the Momentum:</u></b> The County Council and Executive must hold the new fire chief and the core leadership team accountable through hearings and performance measures for actions, progress, and accomplishments towards making the department more diverse, equitable, and inclusive. |



| <b>Recommendation 2: DEI Officer and Champion</b>                                   |  |
|---|--|
|  | <b><u>Building the Foundation:</u></b> MCFRS should secure funding commitment and supply the necessary resources for a new DEI Officer to be successful. Hire and empower the DEI Officer to lead DEI efforts and question organizational norms for possible inequities. Firefighters and employees should recognize the DEI Officer as a senior leader with the authority to act on behalf of the Fire Chief. The DEI Officer should champion the development of the racial equity plan and its implementation. |
|  | <b><u>Sustaining the Momentum:</u></b> The DEI Officer must continue a comprehensive review of the priorities, operations, policies, and initiatives based on the racial equity vision. Continue to implement, monitor, and track all DEI-related initiatives and progress of the organization's journey.  |





### Recommendation 3: First-Line Supervisors and DEI

|   |  |
|---|--|
|  | <p><b><u>Building the Foundation:</u></b> MCFRS should leverage the voluntary officer training program as a starting place for an expanded management and leadership academy. Include master firefighters and volunteer firefighters (master, lieutenant, and captain) in the expanded management and leadership academy. Offer training specific to managing and leading diversity at fire stations. Topics should include scenario-based training on diversity, race, sexual orientation, and mental health. Other sessions should focus on accountability practices, performance management, employee recognition, and team building.</p> |
|  | <p><b><u>Sustaining the Momentum:</u></b> MCFRS should work with the County to secure the budget and resources to develop courses and a standard leadership development curriculum. Update job requirements, skillsets, and qualifications in position descriptions so interpersonal skills and abilities are a factor in the promotion process. Incorporate inclusion-focused role-playing scenarios in officer promotional testing and assessment center scenarios.</p>  |



### Recommendation 4: Racial Equity Framework and Vision

|   |   |
|---|---|
|  | <p><b><u>Building the Foundation:</u></b> As a critical step, MCFRS should work with the County's Office of Racial Equity and Social Justice (ORESJ) to define and share what racial equity, diversity, and inclusion mean to MCFRS, including developing a shared set of definitions. MCFRS should refine its vision with leaders and employees working together through facilitated, inclusive discussions to gain organizational commitment. The framework should acknowledge the historical role government has played in maintaining inequities and that implicit and explicit biases are realities.</p> |
|  | <p><b><u>Sustaining the Momentum:</u></b> In this stage, MCFRS should put the vision and framework into practice, applying a racial equity lens to its actions, priorities, and operations. Leadership (at all levels) must reinforce the vision through clear and transparent communications to internal and external stakeholders.</p>  |



### Recommendation 5: Align Racial Equity Vision to Strategic and Master Plans

|   |   |
|---|---|
|  | <b>Building the Foundation:</b> MCFRS should incorporate the racial equity vision into the Strategic Plan and Master Plan. Set specific goals on diversity, equity, and inclusion. Identify specific initiatives to achieve strategic objectives, and document division-level responsibility for each goal and action item. Begin implementation of each initiative, supported by communications, governance and employee engagement. |
|  | <b>Sustaining the Momentum:</b> Continue to measure and track progress. Celebrate quick wins and accomplishments. Obtain employee feedback on implementation and progress and make course corrections as necessary.   |



### Recommendation 6: Develop a Recruitment Strategy to Focus Limited Resources

|   |  |
|---|--|
|    | <b>Building the Foundation:</b> MCFRS should develop a Recruitment Strategy to bring in a more diverse workforce using short and long-term strategies. Using the recruitment strategy, evaluate the required budget and resource needs to effectively recruit the next generation of Montgomery County firefighters and rescuers. Identify clear recruitment priorities and develop action plans to target local and diverse communities. Explore expanding the open application period beyond 1-2 months. |
|  | <b>Sustaining the Momentum:</b> MCFRS should continue to implement recruitment strategies. Measure to identify what strategies are achieving recruitment goals. Work with OHR to secure preference points for cadet and volunteer programs to develop a pipeline of local firefighters. Work with county leadership to make the cadet program a paid opportunity, similar to the Montgomery County Police Department program.  |



### Recommendation 7: Charter a DEI Council to Solicit Employee Input



|   |  |
|---|--|
|  | <b>Building the Foundation:</b> MCFRS should charter a DEI council of interested career, volunteer, and civilian employees. The DEI Council should help develop the equity framework, vision, and recruitment strategy. For the council to be effective and credible, MCFRS should ensure accountability from leaders and transparency in decision making through policy and practice. |
|  | <b>Sustaining the Momentum:</b> The DEI Council should serve as a resource for the Chief and DEI Officer. The Council can help identify internal and external inequities in processes and programs. The DEI Council should be involved in developing the Racial Equity Action Plan, associated actions, and measures.  |



### Recommendation 8: Building County-Level Capacity for EEO

|   |   |
|---|---|
|  | <p><b><u>Building the Foundation:</u></b> The County must fully staff its Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) office. MCFRS should identify internal MCFRS members (with relevant skills on equity, inclusion and associated policies and procedures) to serve as support resources when EEO complaints occur. MCFRS leaders should communicate to employees what the EEO process entails. Continue to provide basic EEO training for leaders, supervisors, and members. Make incremental changes to provide consistent communications and updates on the case status to complainants and respondents.</p> |
|  | <p><b><u>Sustaining the Momentum:</u></b> County OHR should refine EEO training methods based on feedback. Build a more systematic case management capability to streamline communications and processes so complainants and respondents feel the process is transparent. MCFRS should revisit its union agreements and contracts to ensure there are no constraints in sharing information about the process, including aggregate data on numbers and trends of complaints.</p>  |

### Recommendation 9: Track DEI and Connect to Mission and Service Delivery

|   |  |
|---|--|
|   | <p><b><u>Building the Foundation:</u></b> As a beginning step, MCFRS should work with OHR to obtain periodic reports on all aspects of the employee lifecycle, including hiring and recruiting, career advancement and development, performance management, and retention. Employee lifecycle data should be disaggregated by age, gender, race, and ethnicity. MCFRS should conduct a systematic analysis periodically to identify key insights and trends, identify any issues and concerns, and disaggregate data to identify potential inequities. This data and the resulting analyses should form the basis of any key organizational priorities in alignment with the strategic plan and the racial equity vision and priorities.</p> |
|  | <p><b><u>Sustaining the Momentum:</u></b> As the process and organization mature, MCFRS can build on its capability to use data to make better-informed decisions about its organizational climate and workforce. Expanding on the data and metrics will require an investment in resources to secure staff trained in data analytics with the requisite knowledge and understanding to collect and present DEI data in a thoughtful, transparent, and consistent manner.</p>  |

| <b>Recommendation 10: MCFRS' Organizational DEI Profile</b>                       |   |
|---|---|
|  | <p><b><u>Building the Foundation:</u></b> As a first step, OHR must begin collecting and tracking diversity, equity, and inclusion data on a standard, consistent basis across career and volunteer staff, race and ethnicities, title and ranks, and gender, and on an annual basis. This disaggregated data will allow MCFRS to establish a baseline and measure and track its progress towards its racial equity goals. MCFRS should complement it with annual employee pulse surveys measuring employee perception of progress on DEI-related goals and objectives (short surveys, 8-10 questions on a regular cadence).</p>  |
|  | <p><b><u>Sustaining the Momentum:</u></b> Based on MCFRS' racial equity plan, MCFRS should develop a set of 3-5 key metrics to track and monitor the organization's progress to DEI and its key actions. The metrics should focus on four areas: (1) diversity across employee levels, (2) equitable access to hiring, (3) opportunity and advancement, and (4) employee perceptions of belonging and inclusivity). MCFRS leaders should communicate progress transparently and consistently across the organization. While the focus on outcome metrics is helpful, MCFRS should also complement it with process metrics. MCFRS should use the core DEI-related metrics in the County's CountyStat measures. Doing so provides a clear and consistent accountability framework and a clear line of sight across leadership levels.</p> |

| <b>Recommendation 11: Community Characteristics and Awareness</b>                   |  |
|---|--|
|  | <p><b><u>Building the Foundation:</u></b> MCFRS should incorporate community awareness/characteristics training as part of ongoing training. Continue to explore ways to disaggregate equity data on its mission service and delivery by partnering with county and non-county community organizations. Examine the root causes and issues for lower ratings in certain geographic areas and with racial and ethnic groups.</p>  |
|  | <p><b><u>Sustaining the Momentum:</u></b> MCFRS should deepen community engagement and partnerships by strengthening relationships with the liaisons in the Office of Community Partnerships (OCP) and other channels to solicit community feedback. Explore ways to collect feedback from residents after incident response, either directly or indirectly. Based on the incident (e.g., less traumatic incidents), a direct approach could involve asking for feedback during follow-up visits from the station personnel. In contrast, an indirect process could involve working with county community liaisons, other county partners (health, family services, etc.), and community partners.</p> |

## Appendices

### Appendix A: Expert Advisory Group and Study Team Member Biographies

#### *Expert Advisory Group of Academy Fellows*

**Anthony Griffin:** Anthony Griffin had a 37-year career in local government management, including 20 years as a Chief Administrative Officer. He served three localities in Northern Virginia: Arlington, Falls Church, and Fairfax County. At Fairfax County, he served as County Executive for 11 years and Deputy County Executive for Public Safety and Planning and Development. He served as chair of the Chief Administrative Officers Committee for the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments for 10 years and similarly chaired the UASI funding committee for 8 years. He has participated in police and fire training and has been directly involved in the selection of fire and police chiefs. As County Executive, he also had the responsibility of being the Director of Emergency Management.

**Thelma Harris:** Ms. Harris is a senior executive recognized for establishing new organizations, developing systems, providing professional advice and consultation, and delivering exceptional customer service. She has broad experience with the public and private sectors, including the federal government, nonprofit organizations, academia, and for-profit organizations. She has decades of experience in the human capital and EEO and Diversity areas. She has provided consultation in these and many other areas, including business processes, systems analysis, human resources, and leadership strategies. Ms. Harris worked with IRS and Booz Allen Hamilton professionals to conduct and analyze surveys, design new organizational structures, and develop relationship strategies for labor and management. Ms. Harris also served as Team Lead for the EEO and Diversity Team, which ultimately led to the implementation of a new organization of which Ms. Harris was the first executive leader. Ms. Harris founded a leadership development consulting firm to mentor, teach, and assist college students in navigating government and corporate cultures and connect employers with upcoming talent to meet their needs. Ms. Harris served as the IRS Corporate Education Senior Manager, wherein she coordinated executive mentoring and coaching processes, led candidate selection and training programs, and managed programs for aspiring executives.

**Michael Massiah:** In 1981, Michael Massiah was hired as a management trainee, a renowned program that develops management talent for future leadership positions by providing varied experience and development activities across the agency. Following the 9/11 attacks on the World Trade Center, Mr. Massiah led efforts to rebuild the agency's human resources functions and was subsequently promoted to Director in 2003. While Director of HR Mr. Massiah also served as Director of the Office of Organizational Effectiveness and Change Management where he identified and helped implemented over \$150 million of cost efficiencies throughout the agency. In June of 2014, Mr. Massiah became the Chief, Capital Planning, Execution & Asset Management. Mr. Massiah was appointed the first Chief Diversity & Inclusion Officer at the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey in December 2017. In this position, Mr. Massiah works closely with the Executive Director to ensure that Diversity & Inclusion receives the highest focus across the

agency, which are included in the action within the workforce and in its external business affairs and contract. In June 2020, Michael was appointed Chairperson of the Leadership Steering Committee on Race Dynamics (LSC) following the murder of George Floyd and the resulting call to address social injustice. Under Mr. Massiah's leadership, the LSC listened to over 2,400 employees, analyzed data, and formed diverse employee volunteer Action Teams, ultimately producing 25 far-reaching initiatives that raise standards for workplace fairness, equity, diversity, and inclusion. In the fall of 2021, Mr. Massiah retired from the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey.

## ***Study Team***

**Brenna Isman**, *Director of Academy Studies*. Ms. Isman has worked for the Academy since 2008 and provides oversight across the Academy's studies. She recently served as the Project Director for the Academy's project that assisted a national regulatory and oversight board in developing and implementing its strategic plan. She also recently directed the Academy's statutorily required assessments of the NASA's use of its Advisory Council and the Environmental Protection Agency's practices for determining the affordability of regulatory mandates, as well as the Academy's organizational assessments of the U.S. State Department's Office of Inspector General and the Amtrak Office of the Inspector General. Ms. Isman has served as a Senior Advisor on strategic plan development for the Postal Regulatory Commission (PRC) and Social Security Administration (SSA), and organizational change consulting support for the Coast Guard. Her prior consulting experience includes both public and private sector clients in the areas of communication strategy, performance management, and organizational development. Prior to joining the Academy, Ms. Isman was a Senior Consultant for the Ambit Group and a Consultant with Mercer Human Resource Consulting facilitating effective organizational change and process improvement. She holds an MBA from American University and a Bachelor of Science in Human Resource Management from the University of Delaware.

**Adam Darr**, *Project Director*. Mr. Darr joined the Academy in 2015 as a Research Associate, having previously interned in the summer of 2013. He has served on numerous Academy projects, including work for the National Science Foundation, National Nuclear Security Administration, Farm Service Agency, U.S. Secret Service, Federal Aviation Administration, and the Federal Bureau of Prisons. His areas of emphasis have been governance and management reform, organizational change, human capital, and project and acquisition management. Mr. Darr is currently pursuing a Master's in Public Administration at The George Washington University and holds a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science and Homeland Security/Emergency Management from Virginia Commonwealth University.

**Sukumar Rao**, *Senior Advisor*. Sukumar Rao is President of the Parnin Group and has specialized in cross-agency program implementation, performance improvement, IT strategy, digital transformation, and information architecture and data management. Previously, he was a Principal at SRA International. He brings cross-agency experience in performance management and improvement of operations and service delivery of the 24 CFO ACT agencies, including mission areas, IT, and mission-support/administrative operations. In addition, he brings a depth of IT strategy experience that includes evaluation of government-wide high-risk IT projects,

assessment of cloud computing and shared services, and design and implementation of digital transformation initiatives. Finally, his experience includes designing and implementing a \$30 million R&D program to improve a nationwide emergency alert system. He has an MBA from Columbia University and Master of Science and Bachelor of Engineering degrees in Telecommunications. He is a Project Management Professional (PMP) and Certified Technology Business Management Executive (CTBME). He is on the Board of Directors at the Child and Family Network Centers (CFNC), a non-profit organization based in Alexandria.

**Kate Connor**, *Senior Analyst*. Ms. Connor joined the Academy in 2018 and has served on several Academy studies, including work for the U.S. Department of Commerce Office of Inspector General and the Defense Nuclear Facilities Safety Board. Prior to joining the Academy, she served as a Public Policy and Government Relations Intern with the American Association of University Women and as an intern on the U.S. Senate Committee on the Budget. Ms. Connor taught high school social studies for several years before graduating from Georgetown University with a Master's in Public Policy. Ms. Connor also holds a Bachelor of Arts in History and Political Science and a Master's in Teaching from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

**Sharon Yoo**, *Research Analyst*. Ms. Yoo has had extensive research experience in various topics including international development including sustainable energy, access to equitable education, and technology. She has interned and worked with organizations such as the United Nations Development Fund and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology Media Lab. At the Academy, she has focused on several projects focusing on technology, education, and innovation for the Agricultural Research Service and Federal Aviation Administration. Most recently focusing on safe learning environments including diversity, equity, and inclusion and the prevention of sexual harassment and sexual assault at the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy. She holds a dual degree master's from The Johns Hopkins University – School of Advanced International Studies and Harvard Graduate School of Education.

**E. Jonathan Garcia**, *Research Associate*. Mr. Garcia joined the Academy as a Research Associate in November 2020. His focus areas include diversity, equity, inclusion, accessibility, and belonging initiatives in higher education, strategic planning, and human capital planning. Mr. Garcia also served on studies for the Department of Homeland Security Office of Inspector General, U.S. Coast Guard Academy, and the Office of Personnel Management. Mr. Garcia graduated in May 2020 from the University of Maryland, earning a B.A. in Public Policy, a B.A. in Communication, and a Minor in Law and Society.



## **Appendix B: List of Interviewees**

### ***Montgomery County Fire and Rescue Service***

- **Individual Interviews with 35 Career and Volunteer Firefighters between the ranks of Firefighter and Captain.**
- **Charles Bailey**, Operation Division Chief
- **Eric Bernard, MCVFRA** Executive Director
- **Jay Blake**, Recruitment/Human Resources Battalion Chief
- **Michael Brady**, Internal Affairs Manager
- **Jeffrey Buddle**, Master Firefighter & President of IAFF Local 1664
- **Tim Burns**, Quality Improvement Officer
- **Gary Cooper**, Support Services Division Chief
- **Scott Goldstein**, Fire Chief
- **Michael Kelley**, Volunteer Services Division Chief
- **John Kinsley**, Human Resources Division Chief
- **Jacqueline LaRocca**, Employee Services Program Manager
- **Beth Anne Nesselt**, Community Risk Reduction Manager
- **David Pazos**, Administrative Services Assistant Chief
- **Dominic Del Pozzo**, Fiscal Management Division Chief
- **Frantz Pinthiere**, Labor Relations Battalion Chief
- **Dorcus (Dee) Howard Richards**, Assistant Chief/Executive Officer
- **Elizabeth Sanford**, Training Section Assistant Chief
- **Melissa Schulze**, Planning and Accreditation Manager
- **Gam Wijetunge**, President, Wheaton Volunteer Rescue Squad

### ***County Executive's Office***

- **Earl Stoddard**, Assistant Chief Administrative Officer
- **Tiffany Ward**, Chief Equity Officer

### ***Office of Community Partnerships***

- **Kate Chance**, Faith Community Liaison
- **Arwa ElBoraei**, Middle Eastern Liaison
- **Amena Johnson**, LGBTQA Liaison
- **Diane Nguyen-Vu**, Director
- **Julian Norment**, African American Liaison
- **Harrieta Shangarai**, African Affairs Liaison
- **Yi Shen**, Asian Liaison
- **Jessy Mejia Terry**, Latino Liaison
- **Rodrigue Vital**, Caribbean Liaison

### ***Office of the County Attorney***

- **Silvia Kinch**, Division Chief of Labor Relations and Public Safety

### ***Office of Human Resources***

- **Jacquelyn Anderson**, Fire/Rescue Liaison
- **Anita Brady**, Training Division Director

- **Darryl Gorman**, Acting Director
- **Patricia Miller**, Investigator

#### ***Comparable Fire Departments***

- **John Butler**, Fire Chief, Fairfax County Fire and Rescue Department
- **Jeanine Nicholson**, Fire Chief, San Francisco Fire Department

#### ***Subject Matter Experts***

- **Debbie Carpenter**, Diversity Executive Leadership Program Chief, IAFC
- **Gordon Goodwin**, Director, GARE

#### ***National Academy of Public Administration Fellows***

- **Judy England-Joseph**, Academy Fellow

## Appendix C: MCFRS Institutional Culture Employee Survey Questions

### Definitions:

- **Diversity:** Differences based on, but not limited to race, ethnicity, region, religion, gender, language, socio-economic status, age, and disability.<sup>96</sup>
- **Equity:** Fair and just opportunities and outcomes for all people.<sup>97</sup>
- **Inclusion:** The act of creating environments in which any individual or group can be and feel welcomed, respected, supported, and valued to fully participate and bring their full, authentic selves to work. An inclusive and welcoming climate embraces differences and offers respect in the words/actions/ thoughts of all people. <sup>98</sup>
- **Individual/Interpersonal Racism:** Explicit or implicit pre-judgment bias or discrimination by an individual based on race.<sup>99</sup>
- **Institutional racism:** Policies, practices, and procedures that work better for some members of a community than others based on race.<sup>100</sup>
- **Accessibility:** The "ability to access" the functionality of a system or entity and gain the related benefits. The degree to which a product, service, or environment is accessible by as many people as possible. Accessible design ensures both direct (unassisted) access and indirect access through assistive technology (e.g., computer screen readers). Universal design ensures that an environment can be accessed, understood, and used to the greatest extent possible by all people.<sup>101</sup>
- **Belonging:** Belonging means that everyone is treated and feels like a full member of the larger community and can thrive.<sup>102</sup>

### Survey Questions

#### Demographic Data

- **Gender:** male, female, other (\_\_\_\_)
- **Race/Ethnicity:** White or Caucasian; Black or African American; Hispanic or Latino; Asian or Asian American; American Indian or Alaska; Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander; Middle Eastern; Two or More Races
- **Department Type:** Career Fire Rescue/EMS; Fire Leadership (Battalion Chief onwards (B3, B4, etc.); IAFF member; MCGEO member; Volunteer Fire Leadership (Battalion Chief onwards (B3, B4, etc.); Volunteer member; Civilian/Professional Staff (HR, EEO, Lawyers, etc.); Unrepresented; Other (please specify);

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<sup>96</sup> Montgomery County Public School Office of Staff Development, "Plan for Systemic Diversity Training and Development," accessed September 14, 2022, [https://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/uploadedFiles/departments/clusteradmin/equity/Diversity Plan.pdf](https://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/uploadedFiles/departments/clusteradmin/equity/Diversity%20Plan.pdf)

<sup>97</sup> Montgomery County Office of Legislative Oversight, "Racial Equity in Government Decision-Making: Lessons from the Field," September 25, 2018, accessed September 15, 2022, [https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/OLO/Resources/Files/2018%20Reports/OLOReport2018\\_8.pdf](https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/OLO/Resources/Files/2018%20Reports/OLOReport2018_8.pdf)

<sup>99</sup> Ibid.

<sup>100</sup> Ibid.

<sup>101</sup> Harvard Human Resources, "Glossary of Diversity, Inclusion, and Belonging (DIB) Terms," accessed September 14, 2022, [https://edib.harvard.edu/files/dib/files/dib\\_glossary.pdf](https://edib.harvard.edu/files/dib/files/dib_glossary.pdf).

<sup>102</sup> Ibid.

## **Ordinal Scale Questions**

(Rate from 1-5)

*1- Strongly Disagree 2- Disagree 3- Neither Agree nor Disagree 4- Agree 5- Strongly Agree*

### *Personal Experience:*

1. I feel psychologically safe and included at work.
2. I have personally experienced incidents, issues or concerns related to interpersonal racism in MCFRS.
3. I have personally experienced incidents, issues, or concerns, directed at myself, related to institutional racism in MCFRS.
4. I trust the Department to treat all employees with fairness.

### *Department-level Experience:*

5. I believe MCFRS demonstrates a strong commitment Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion
6. I believe the Department values diverse opinions and ideas.
7. I believe MCFRS senior leadership (Battalion Chief onwards (B3, B4, etc.)) is prepared to manage a diverse workforce.

### *Institutional Culture Questions:*

8. I believe people of all cultures and backgrounds are valued and respected in MCFRS.
9. I feel comfortable discussing my background, beliefs, and cultural experiences with my colleagues.
10. I have witnessed incidents, issues or concerns related to interpersonal racism within MCFRS.
11. I have witnessed incidents, issues or concerns of institutional racism directed at others in MCFRS.
12. I believe MCFRS provides an environment for the free and open expression of ideas, opinions, and beliefs.

### *Career Development:*

13. I have regular access to training opportunities and professional development.
14. I believe there are career development opportunities for everyone in my organization regardless of my race/ethnicity, gender, or background.
15. I believe I have equal access to advancement and promotional opportunities within my department regardless of my race/ethnicity, gender, or background.
16. Decisions about promotions are made fairly at MCFRS regardless of my race/ethnicity, gender, or background.

### *EEO/Incident Response:*

17. I believe that the Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) complaint process and policies to report instances of harassment or discrimination are clear and transparent.
18. I believe everyone has equitable access to the Equal employment opportunities (EEO) Complaint Process regardless of their differences.
19. I believe MCFRS would take appropriate action if an instance of harassment or was reported.

### *Optional Short Answer Questions:*

20. What are the departmental policies and practices (both formal and informal) that actively promote an inclusive and diverse culture?

21. What does MCFRS do well to promote an inclusive and diverse culture? (E.g., what policy, procedures, initiatives are going well?)
22. Over the short (0-2 years) and long term (more than 2 years), what changes would you want implemented at MCFRS to improve inclusion, equity, diversity, etc.?
23. What else you would like to share with the NAPA Study Team?
24. If you would like to be a part of a not-for-attribution focus group or individual interview, please leave your email, and indicate your preference.

## Appendix D: MCFRS Institutional Culture Employee Survey Results

The following table provides overall survey results for each question.

|    | Survey Question  | Agree | Disagree | Neither |
|----|--|-------|----------|---------|
| 1  | I feel psychologically safe and included at work.  | 75.5% | 11.5%    | 12.9%   |
| 2  | I have personally experienced incidents, issues or concerns of interpersonal racism in MCFRS.                              | 29.2% | 58.3%    | 12.5%   |
| 3  | I have personally experienced incidents, issues or concerns, directed at myself, related to institutional racism in MCFRS. | 17.3% | 70.0%    | 12.6%   |
| 4  | I trust MCFRS treats all employees with fairness.  | 50.7% | 29.5%    | 19.8%   |
| 5  | I believe MCFRS demonstrates a strong commitment to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion.                                      | 58.0% | 20.6%    | 21.4%   |
| 6  | I believe that MCFRS values diverse opinions and ideas.  | 53.2% | 24.3%    | 22.5%   |
| 7  | I believe MCFRS senior leadership (Battalion Chief onwards (B3, B4, etc.)) is prepared to manage a diverse workforce.      | 54.8% | 22.0%    | 23.2%   |
| 8  | I believe all employees (volunteer and career) feel psychologically safe and included at work.                             | 41.5% | 34.0%    | 24.5%   |
| 9  | I believe people of all cultures and backgrounds are valued and respected in MCFRS.  | 54.3% | 27.5%    | 18.3%   |
| 10 | I feel comfortable discussing my background, beliefs, and cultural experiences with my colleagues.                         | 51.2% | 30.7%    | 18.1%   |
| 11 | I have witnessed incidents, issues or concerns related to interpersonal racism within MCFRS.                               | 37.4% | 47.7%    | 14.8%   |
| 12 | I have witnessed incidents, issues or concerns of institutional racism directed at others in MCFRS.                        | 26.1% | 55.5%    | 18.4%   |

| <b>Survey Question</b> |  | <b>Agree</b> | <b>Disagree</b> | <b>Neither</b> |
|------------------------|--|--------------|-----------------|----------------|
| <b>13</b>              | <b>I believe that MCFRS provides an environment for the free and open expression of ideas, opinions and beliefs.</b>   | 39.6%        | 34.0%           | 26.4%          |
| <b>14</b>              | <b>I have regular access to training opportunities and professional development.</b>   | 73.3%        | 12.5%           | 14.2%          |
| <b>15</b>              | <b>I believe there are career development opportunities for everyone in my organization regardless of my race/ethnicity, gender, or background.</b>                        | 72.7%        | 14.5%           | 12.8%          |
| <b>16</b>              | <b>I believe I have equal access to advancement and promotional opportunities within my department regardless of my race/ethnicity, gender, or background.</b>             | 64.7%        | 18.6%           | 16.7%          |
| <b>17</b>              | <b>Decisions about promotions are made fairly at MCFRS regardless of my race/ethnicity, gender, or background.</b>   | 48.8%        | 18.4%           | 32.8%          |
| <b>18</b>              | <b>I believe that the Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) complaint process and policies to report instances of harassment or discrimination are clear and transparent.</b> | 48.0%        | 24.3%           | 27.6%          |
| <b>19</b>              | <b>I believe everyone has equitable access to the Equal Employment Opportunities (EEO) Complaint Process regardless of their differences.</b>                              | 62.9%        | 15.9%           | 21.2%          |
| <b>20</b>              | <b>I believe MCFRS would take appropriate action if an instance of harassment or discrimination was reported.</b>  | 50.9%        | 30.6%           | 18.6%          |



For each question below, the responses have been disaggregated by race/ethnicity, gender, leadership status and role.

**1. I feel psychologically safe and included at work.**

| Race/<br>Ethnicity | Agree | Disagree | Neither |
|--------------------|-------|----------|---------|
| Persons of Color   | 73.7% | 13.4%    | 12.9%   |
| White              | 76.2% | 10.8%    | 13.0%   |

| Gender | Agree | Disagree | Neither |
|--------|-------|----------|---------|
| Female | 69.9% | 18.4%    | 11.7%   |
| Male   | 77.9% | 8.7%     | 13.4%   |

| Leadership  | Agree | Disagree | Neither |
|-------------|-------|----------|---------|
| Leaders*    | 84.6% | 11.5%    | 3.9%    |
| Non-Leaders | 75.7% | 11.4%    | 12.9%   |

\*Includes career and volunteer leaders

| Role                   | Agree | Disagree | Neither |
|------------------------|-------|----------|---------|
| Career <sup>±</sup>    | 72.6% | 12.4%    | 15.0%   |
| Volunteer <sup>€</sup> | 78.7% | 11.5%    | 9.8%    |
| Civilian <sup>∞</sup>  | 86.1% | 4.7%     | 9.3%    |
| Other                  | 60.5% | 13.2%    | 26.3%   |

± Includes Fire Leadership, IAFF Member, Career Fire Rescue/EMS,  
 € Includes Volunteer Leadership, Volunteer member  
 ∞ Includes Civilian/Professional Staff, MCGEO Member, Unrepresented

**2. I have personally experienced incidents, issues, or concerns of interpersonal racism in MCFRS.**

| Race/<br>Ethnicity | Agree | Disagree | Neither |
|--------------------|-------|----------|---------|
| Persons of Color   | 42.5% | 44.1%    | 13.4%   |
| White              | 24.0% | 63.9%    | 12.1%   |

| Gender | Agree | Disagree | Neither |
|--------|-------|----------|---------|
| Female | 27.0% | 59.5%    | 13.5%   |
| Male   | 30.0% | 58.1%    | 11.9%   |

| Leadership  | Agree | Disagree | Neither |
|-------------|-------|----------|---------|
| Leaders     | 42.3% | 50.0%    | 7.7%    |
| Non-Leaders | 29.2% | 59.2%    | 11.6%   |

| Role      | Agree | Disagree | Neither |
|-----------|-------|----------|---------|
| Career    | 40.9% | 48.5%    | 10.6%   |
| Volunteer | 21.3% | 66.9%    | 11.8%   |
| Civilian  | 18.6% | 69.8%    | 11.6%   |
| Other     | 13.2% | 55.3%    | 31.6%   |

**3. I have personally experienced incidents, issues or concerns, directed at myself, related to institutional racism in MCFRS.**

| Race/<br>Ethnicity | Agree | Disagree | Neither |
|--------------------|-------|----------|---------|
| Persons of Color   | 33.0% | 52.5%    | 14.5%   |
| White              | 11.3% | 76.8%    | 11.9%   |

| Gender | Agree | Disagree | Neither |
|--------|-------|----------|---------|
| Female | 19.6% | 68.1%    | 12.3%   |
| Male   | 16.4% | 71.1%    | 12.6%   |

| Leadership  | Agree | Disagree | Neither |
|-------------|-------|----------|---------|
| Leaders     | 13.5% | 73.1%    | 13.5%   |
| Non-Leaders | 18.5% | 69.6%    | 12.0%   |

| Role      | Agree | Disagree | Neither |
|-----------|-------|----------|---------|
| Career    | 24.5% | 62.8%    | 12.8%   |
| Volunteer | 11.5% | 76.4%    | 12.2%   |
| Civilian  | 16.3% | 74.4%    | 9.3%    |
| Other     | 7.9%  | 71.1%    | 21.1%   |

**4. I trust MCFRS treats all employees with fairness.**

| Race/<br>Ethnicity | Agree | Disagree | Neither |
|--------------------|-------|----------|---------|
| Persons of Color   | 52.0% | 30.7%    | 17.3%   |
| White              | 50.2% | 29.0%    | 20.8%   |

| Gender | Agree | Disagree | Neither |
|--------|-------|----------|---------|
| Female | 43.6% | 30.7%    | 25.8%   |
| Male   | 53.8% | 28.7%    | 17.5%   |

| Leadership  | Agree | Disagree | Neither |
|-------------|-------|----------|---------|
| Leaders     | 61.5% | 25.0%    | 13.5%   |
| Non-Leaders | 50.5% | 30.4%    | 19.0%   |

| Role      | Agree | Disagree | Neither |
|-----------|-------|----------|---------|
| Career    | 47.8% | 37.2%    | 15.0%   |
| Volunteer | 53.7% | 24.7%    | 21.6%   |
| Civilian  | 62.8% | 18.6%    | 18.6%   |
| Other     | 39.5% | 21.1%    | 39.5%   |

**5. I believe MCFRS demonstrates a strong commitment to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion.**

| Race/<br>Ethnicity | Agree | Disagree | Neither |
|--------------------|-------|----------|---------|
| Persons of Color   | 52.5% | 25.7%    | 21.8%   |
| White              | 60.2% | 18.6%    | 21.2%   |

| Gender | Agree | Disagree | Neither |
|--------|-------|----------|---------|
| Female | 49.7% | 25.8%    | 24.5%   |
| Male   | 61.7% | 18.3%    | 20.0%   |

| Leadership  | Agree | Disagree | Neither |
|-------------|-------|----------|---------|
| Leaders     | 65.4% | 15.4%    | 19.2%   |
| Non-Leaders | 58.2% | 21.0%    | 20.8%   |

| Role      | Agree | Disagree | Neither |
|-----------|-------|----------|---------|
| Career    | 55.5% | 24.1%    | 20.4%   |
| Volunteer | 60.5% | 18.6%    | 21.0%   |
| Civilian  | 74.4% | 9.3%     | 16.3%   |
| Other     | 47.4% | 21.1%    | 31.6%   |

**6. I believe that MCFRS values diverse opinions and ideas.**

| Race/<br>Ethnicity | Agree | Disagree | Neither |
|--------------------|-------|----------|---------|
| Persons of Color   | 48.0% | 27.4%    | 24.6%   |
| White              | 55.2% | 23.2%    | 21.7%   |

| Gender | Agree | Disagree | Neither |
|--------|-------|----------|---------|
| Female | 49.7% | 30.7%    | 19.6%   |
| Male   | 54.9% | 21.7%    | 23.4%   |

| Leadership  | Agree | Disagree | Neither |
|-------------|-------|----------|---------|
| Leaders     | 65.4% | 15.4%    | 19.2%   |
| Non-Leaders | 52.5% | 25.7%    | 21.7%   |

| Role      | Agree | Disagree | Neither |
|-----------|-------|----------|---------|
| Career    | 47.8% | 37.2%    | 15.0%   |
| Volunteer | 53.7% | 24.7%    | 21.6%   |
| Civilian  | 65.1% | 14.0%    | 20.9%   |
| Other     | 44.7% | 15.8%    | 39.5%   |

**7. I believe MCFRS senior leadership (Battalion Chief onwards (B3, B4, etc.)) is prepared to manage a diverse workforce.**

| Race/<br>Ethnicity | Agree | Disagree | Neither |
|--------------------|-------|----------|---------|
| Persons of Color   | 53.1% | 24.0%    | 22.9%   |
| White              | 55.4% | 21.2%    | 23.4%   |

| Gender | Agree | Disagree | Neither |
|--------|-------|----------|---------|
| Female | 50.3% | 25.2%    | 24.5%   |
| Male   | 57.0% | 20.4%    | 22.6%   |

| Leadership  | Agree | Disagree | Neither |
|-------------|-------|----------|---------|
| Leaders     | 59.6% | 21.2%    | 19.2%   |
| Non-Leaders | 55.1% | 22.6%    | 22.3%   |

| Role      | Agree | Disagree | Neither |
|-----------|-------|----------|---------|
| Career    | 52.6% | 28.5%    | 19.0%   |
| Volunteer | 58.1% | 17.9%    | 24.0%   |
| Civilian  | 58.1% | 16.3%    | 25.6%   |
| Other     | 44.7% | 13.2%    | 42.1%   |

**8. I believe all employees (volunteer and career) feel psychologically safe and included**

| Race/<br>Ethnicity | Agree | Disagree | Neither |
|--------------------|-------|----------|---------|
| Persons of Color   | 42.5% | 38.0%    | 19.6%   |
| White              | 41.1% | 32.5%    | 26.4%   |

| Gender | Agree | Disagree | Neither |
|--------|-------|----------|---------|
| Female | 35.0% | 43.6%    | 21.5%   |
| Male   | 44.3% | 30.4%    | 25.3%   |

| Leadership  | Agree | Disagree | Neither |
|-------------|-------|----------|---------|
| Leaders     | 38.5% | 36.5%    | 25.0%   |
| Non-Leaders | 41.3% | 35.0%    | 23.7%   |

| Role      | Agree | Disagree | Neither |
|-----------|-------|----------|---------|
| Career    | 41.2% | 33.2%    | 25.6%   |
| Volunteer | 40.9% | 37.8%    | 21.3%   |
| Civilian  | 44.2% | 23.3%    | 32.6%   |
| Other     | 47.4% | 18.4%    | 34.2%   |

**9. I believe people of all cultures and backgrounds are valued and respected in MCFRS.**

| Race/<br>Ethnicity | Agree | Disagree | Neither |
|--------------------|-------|----------|---------|
| Persons of Color   | 50.8% | 34.1%    | 15.1%   |
| White              | 55.6% | 24.9%    | 19.5%   |

| Gender | Agree | Disagree | Neither |
|--------|-------|----------|---------|
| Female | 44.8% | 36.2%    | 19.0%   |
| Male   | 58.1% | 24.0%    | 17.9%   |

| Leadership  | Agree | Disagree | Neither |
|-------------|-------|----------|---------|
| Leaders     | 61.5% | 25.0%    | 13.5%   |
| Non-Leaders | 54.0% | 28.1%    | 17.9%   |

| Role      | Agree | Disagree | Neither |
|-----------|-------|----------|---------|
| Career    | 54.4% | 29.6%    | 16.1%   |
| Volunteer | 53.7% | 27.0%    | 19.3%   |
| Civilian  | 67.4% | 18.6%    | 14.0%   |
| Other     | 47.4% | 23.7%    | 29.0%   |

**10. I feel comfortable discussing my background, beliefs, and cultural experiences with my colleagues.**

| Race/<br>Ethnicity | Agree | Disagree | Neither |
|--------------------|-------|----------|---------|
| Persons of Color   | 50.8% | 31.8%    | 17.3%   |
| White              | 51.3% | 30.3%    | 18.4%   |

| Gender | Agree | Disagree | Neither |
|--------|-------|----------|---------|
| Female | 46.0% | 31.3%    | 22.7%   |
| Male   | 53.2% | 30.4%    | 16.4%   |

| Leadership  | Agree | Disagree | Neither |
|-------------|-------|----------|---------|
| Leaders     | 59.6% | 19.2%    | 21.2%   |
| Non-Leaders | 49.6% | 33.0%    | 17.4%   |

| Role      | Agree | Disagree | Neither |
|-----------|-------|----------|---------|
| Career    | 49.3% | 34.3%    | 16.4%   |
| Volunteer | 51.4% | 30.1%    | 18.6%   |
| Civilian  | 55.8% | 23.3%    | 20.9%   |
| Other     | 60.5% | 15.8%    | 23.7%   |

**11. I have witnessed incidents, issues or concerns related to interpersonal racism within MCFRS.**

| Race/<br>Ethnicity | Agree | Disagree | Neither |
|--------------------|-------|----------|---------|
| Persons of Color   | 47.5% | 39.7%    | 12.9%   |
| White              | 33.6% | 50.9%    | 15.6%   |

| Gender | Agree | Disagree | Neither |
|--------|-------|----------|---------|
| Female | 37.4% | 46.6%    | 16.0%   |
| Male   | 37.2% | 48.3%    | 14.5%   |

| Leadership  | Agree | Disagree | Neither |
|-------------|-------|----------|---------|
| Leaders     | 63.5% | 26.9%    | 9.6%    |
| Non-Leaders | 37.0% | 48.7%    | 14.3%   |

| Role      | Agree | Disagree | Neither |
|-----------|-------|----------|---------|
| Career    | 48.9% | 36.5%    | 14.6%   |
| Volunteer | 31.4% | 55.4%    | 13.2%   |
| Civilian  | 25.6% | 60.5%    | 14.0%   |
| Other     | 10.5% | 60.5%    | 29.0%   |

**12. I have witnessed incidents, issues or concerns of institutional racism directed at others in MCFRS.**

| Race/<br>Ethnicity | Agree | Disagree | Neither |
|--------------------|-------|----------|---------|
| Persons of Color   | 34.6% | 45.3%    | 20.1%   |
| White              | 22.7% | 59.5%    | 17.8%   |

| Gender | Agree | Disagree | Neither |
|--------|-------|----------|---------|
| Female | 26.4% | 53.4%    | 20.3%   |
| Male   | 25.7% | 56.4%    | 17.9%   |

| Leadership  | Agree | Disagree | Neither |
|-------------|-------|----------|---------|
| Leaders     | 28.9% | 55.8%    | 15.4%   |
| Non-Leaders | 26.3% | 55.3%    | 18.5%   |

| Role      | Agree | Disagree | Neither |
|-----------|-------|----------|---------|
| Career    | 33.2% | 49.3%    | 17.5%   |
| Volunteer | 21.3% | 60.5%    | 18.2%   |
| Civilian  | 14.0% | 65.1%    | 20.9%   |
| Other     | 21.1% | 57.9%    | 21.1%   |

**13. I believe that MCFRS provides an environment for the free and open expression of ideas, opinions, and beliefs.**

| Race/<br>Ethnicity | Agree | Disagree | Neither |
|--------------------|-------|----------|---------|
| Persons of Color   | 43.6% | 33.5%    | 22.9%   |
| White              | 38.1% | 34.2%    | 27.7%   |

| Gender | Agree | Disagree | Neither |
|--------|-------|----------|---------|
| Female | 36.2% | 35.6%    | 28.2%   |
| Male   | 41.1% | 33.2%    | 25.7%   |

| Leadership  | Agree | Disagree | Neither |
|-------------|-------|----------|---------|
| Leaders     | 50.0% | 28.9%    | 21.2%   |
| Non-Leaders | 39.3% | 35.3%    | 25.4%   |

| Role      | Agree | Disagree | Neither |
|-----------|-------|----------|---------|
| Career    | 35.8% | 43.4%    | 20.8%   |
| Volunteer | 42.2% | 29.4%    | 28.4%   |
| Civilian  | 55.8% | 16.3%    | 27.9%   |
| Other     | 31.6% | 21.1%    | 47.4%   |

**14. I have regular access to training opportunities and professional development.**

| Race/<br>Ethnicity | Agree | Disagree | Neither |
|--------------------|-------|----------|---------|
| Persons of Color   | 74.9% | 10.6%    | 14.5%   |
| White              | 72.7% | 13.2%    | 14.1%   |

| Gender | Agree | Disagree | Neither |
|--------|-------|----------|---------|
| Female | 73.6% | 14.1%    | 12.3%   |
| Male   | 73.2% | 12.1%    | 14.7%   |

| Leadership  | Agree | Disagree | Neither |
|-------------|-------|----------|---------|
| Leaders     | 82.7% | 9.6%     | 7.7%    |
| Non-Leaders | 73.0% | 13.0%    | 14.0%   |

| Role      | Agree | Disagree | Neither |
|-----------|-------|----------|---------|
| Career    | 71.5% | 13.5%    | 15.0%   |
| Volunteer | 74.3% | 12.8%    | 12.8%   |
| Civilian  | 88.4% | 4.7%     | 7.0%    |
| Other     | 65.8% | 7.9%     | 26.3%   |

**15. I believe there are career development opportunities for everyone in my organization regardless of my race/ethnicity, gender, or background.**

| Race/<br>Ethnicity | Agree | Disagree | Neither |
|--------------------|-------|----------|---------|
| Persons of Color   | 69.3% | 15.6%    | 15.1%   |
| White              | 74.0% | 14.1%    | 11.9%   |

| Gender | Agree | Disagree | Neither |
|--------|-------|----------|---------|
| Female | 64.4% | 22.1%    | 13.5%   |
| Male   | 75.7% | 11.7%    | 12.6%   |

| Leadership  | Agree | Disagree | Neither |
|-------------|-------|----------|---------|
| Leaders     | 82.7% | 5.8%     | 11.5%   |
| Non-Leaders | 73.2% | 15.6%    | 11.2%   |

| Role      | Agree | Disagree | Neither |
|-----------|-------|----------|---------|
| Career    | 77.0% | 14.6%    | 8.4%    |
| Volunteer | 70.3% | 15.5%    | 14.2%   |
| Civilian  | 79.1% | 11.6%    | 9.3%    |
| Other     | 52.6% | 10.5%    | 36.8%   |

**16. I believe I have equal access to advancement and promotional opportunities within my department regardless of my race/ethnicity, gender, or background.**

| Race/<br>Ethnicity | Agree | Disagree | Neither |
|--------------------|-------|----------|---------|
| Persons of Color   | 62.0% | 19.6%    | 18.4%   |
| White              | 65.8% | 18.2%    | 16.0%   |

| Gender | Agree | Disagree | Neither |
|--------|-------|----------|---------|
| Female | 54.6% | 29.5%    | 16.0%   |
| Male   | 68.7% | 14.5%    | 16.8%   |

| Leadership  | Agree | Disagree | Neither |
|-------------|-------|----------|---------|
| Leaders     | 67.3% | 15.4%    | 17.3%   |
| Non-Leaders | 66.9% | 19.2%    | 14.0%   |

| Role      | Agree | Disagree | Neither |
|-----------|-------|----------|---------|
| Career    | 71.9% | 16.4%    | 11.7%   |
| Volunteer | 60.8% | 21.3%    | 17.9%   |
| Civilian  | 76.7% | 18.6%    | 4.7%    |
| Other     | 31.6% | 13.2%    | 55.3%   |

**17. Decisions about promotions are made fairly at MCFRS regardless of my race/ethnicity, gender, or background.**

| Race/<br>Ethnicity | Agree | Disagree | Neither |
|--------------------|-------|----------|---------|
| Persons of Color   | 44.7% | 18.4%    | 36.9%   |
| White              | 50.4% | 18.4%    | 31.2%   |

| Gender | Agree | Disagree | Neither |
|--------|-------|----------|---------|
| Female | 39.3% | 20.3%    | 40.5%   |
| Male   | 52.6% | 17.7%    | 29.8%   |

| Leadership  | Agree | Disagree | Neither |
|-------------|-------|----------|---------|
| Leaders     | 57.7% | 21.2%    | 21.2%   |
| Non-Leaders | 49.8% | 18.7%    | 31.5%   |

| Role      | Agree | Disagree | Neither |
|-----------|-------|----------|---------|
| Career    | 59.1% | 21.2%    | 19.7%   |
| Volunteer | 42.9% | 17.2%    | 39.9%   |
| Civilian  | 51.2% | 16.3%    | 32.6%   |
| Other     | 21.1% | 10.5%    | 68.4%   |

**18. I believe that the Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) complaint process and policies to report instances of harassment or discrimination are clear and transparent.**

| Race/<br>Ethnicity | Agree | Disagree | Neither |
|--------------------|-------|----------|---------|
| Persons of Color   | 47.5% | 21.8%    | 30.7%   |
| White              | 48.3% | 25.3%    | 26.4%   |

| Gender | Agree | Disagree | Neither |
|--------|-------|----------|---------|
| Female | 47.2% | 26.4%    | 26.4%   |
| Male   | 48.7% | 23.4%    | 27.9%   |

| Leadership  | Agree | Disagree | Neither |
|-------------|-------|----------|---------|
| Leaders     | 53.9% | 26.9%    | 19.2%   |
| Non-Leaders | 47.8% | 24.8%    | 27.4%   |

| Role      | Agree | Disagree | Neither |
|-----------|-------|----------|---------|
| Career    | 47.1% | 29.6%    | 23.4%   |
| Volunteer | 50.0% | 22.0%    | 28.0%   |
| Civilian  | 46.5% | 14.0%    | 39.5%   |
| Other     | 44.7% | 13.2%    | 42.1%   |

**19. I believe everyone has equitable access to the Equal Employment Opportunities (EEO) Complaint Process regardless of their differences.**

| Race/<br>Ethnicity | Agree | Disagree | Neither |
|--------------------|-------|----------|---------|
| Persons of Color   | 68.2% | 12.3%    | 19.6%   |
| White              | 60.8% | 17.3%    | 21.9%   |

| Gender | Agree | Disagree | Neither |
|--------|-------|----------|---------|
| Female | 60.1% | 20.9%    | 19.0%   |
| Male   | 64.7% | 13.8%    | 21.5%   |

| Leadership  | Agree | Disagree | Neither |
|-------------|-------|----------|---------|
| Leaders     | 55.8% | 21.2%    | 23.1%   |
| Non-Leaders | 63.6% | 15.4%    | 21.0%   |

| Role      | Agree | Disagree | Neither |
|-----------|-------|----------|---------|
| Career    | 59.9% | 21.2%    | 19.0%   |
| Volunteer | 64.9% | 12.2%    | 23.0%   |
| Civilian  | 69.8% | 7.0%     | 23.3%   |
| Other     | 63.2% | 15.8%    | 21.1%   |

**20. I believe MCFRS would take appropriate action if an instance of harassment or discrimination was reported.**

| Race/<br>Ethnicity | Agree | Disagree | Neither |
|--------------------|-------|----------|---------|
| Persons of Color   | 53.1% | 29.6%    | 17.3%   |
| White              | 50.0% | 31.0%    | 19.1%   |

| Gender | Agree | Disagree | Neither |
|--------|-------|----------|---------|
| Female | 49.1% | 36.2%    | 14.7%   |
| Male   | 52.1% | 28.1%    | 19.8%   |

| Leadership  | Agree | Disagree | Neither |
|-------------|-------|----------|---------|
| Leaders     | 57.7% | 26.9%    | 15.4%   |
| Non-Leaders | 50.4% | 31.9%    | 17.8%   |

| Role      | Agree | Disagree | Neither |
|-----------|-------|----------|---------|
| Career    | 42.3% | 40.5%    | 17.2%   |
| Volunteer | 55.4% | 25.0%    | 19.6%   |
| Civilian  | 76.7% | 16.3%    | 7.0%    |
| Other     | 50.0% | 15.8%    | 34.2%   |



## Appendix E: References

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1600 K Street, NW  
Suite 400  
Washington, DC 20006

Phone: (202) 347-3190  
Website: [www.napawash.org](http://www.napawash.org)