

# RECOMMENDATIONS ADDRESSING AND PREVENTING WORKPLACE HARASSMENT AND DISCRIMINATION

The recommendations were designed to enable greater accountability, culture change, reframing, resourcing, and systemic change. We offer these recommendations as a necessary starting place. We encourage the City to commit ongoing funding, staffing, time, and accountability measures to sustain prevention efforts and address workplace discrimination and harassment with the goal of ensuring respectful and equitable treatment of all our employees. Creating a welcoming, inclusive, and safe work environment, where everyone can do their best work, is a minimum standard that we can hold ourselves to as a City.



# Overview

## ANTI-HARASSMENT INTERDEPARTMENTAL TEAM (IDT)

- 21 Person Team
  - Met for 3 Months (12 Weeks)
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### **10 ELEMENTS IN THE APPROACH OF CREATING AND IMPLEMENTING RECOMMENDATIONS:**

1. Anti- Racist and Anti-Racism Practices
  2. Restorative Practices
  3. Center and Empower Those Most Affected
  4. Work Beyond Legal Definitions of Discrimination and Harassment
  5. Accountability Measures
  6. Accessibility and Transparency
  7. Improve Workplace Culture
  8. Trauma Informed Care Strategies
  9. Survivor-Centered Approaches
  10. Center Humanity
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### **6 CATEGORIES OF RECOMMENDATIONS:**

1. Commitment & Accountability
  2. Transparency
  3. Policy
  4. Reporting
  5. Training & Development
  6. Continued Work
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- Collected Data via RSJI Employee Survey & Focus Groups
  - 35 Total Recommendations
    - 125 Strategies
  - Areas for Further Review & Consideration



# Recommendation Categories

## COMMITMENT & ACCOUNTABILITY

- A commitment to improving the work environment for our employees and creating accountability measures is required to transform our workplace culture into one that promotes a safe, harassment- and discrimination-free workplace for all. We believe that lasting change will require all levels of leadership to engage in these recommendations and model the behavior required to create a better workplace.

## TRANSPARENCY

- To develop and maintain trust of the workforce, the City must develop and support robust, effective, and transparent discrimination and harassment prevention policies, procedures and practices. Such a comprehensive approach must be accessible, easily understood and widely and publicly shared. We encourage support measures be taken to promote an environment of open communication where information is shared in a clear, accessible, and up-to-date manner and aids to foster intentional accountability, where leadership is authentic, self-aware, fosters trusting relationships, and shows genuine care for employees.

## POLICY

- Although the City's formal policy meets the minimum legal standards in identifying and prohibiting illegal discrimination and harassment, it is not transformational and should be updated and improved to better support an inclusive, collaborative, and positive work environment free of harassment and discrimination, including, but not limited to, expanding the definition of experienced and observed behavior that can be reported.

## REPORTING

- We recognize the importance of employee relationships with Human Resources in their departments as well as SDHR, and in many ways we have failed. We have failed to address complaints of sexual and racial harassment, bullying, discrimination, and workplace violence effectively, consistently, and equitably, by not having consistent policies, reporting mechanisms, or approaches to intake and investigation processes. In addition, we have failed our HR staff, by not providing adequate resources to conduct independent intake and investigation processes, by asking staff to perform employee relations, labor relations, employee development (training, performance management, performance improvement), and HR duties; often at the same time. This may create a conflict of interest or appearance of or actual bias, when a complaint or report of inappropriate conduct is raised.

## TRAINING & DEVELOPMENT

- Training and development opportunities are one fundamental piece of comprehensive efforts to address and prevent discrimination and harassment in the workplace. Training should be supported at all levels, repeated, and reinforced on a regular basis, and provided to all City employees. It should be interactive, delivered in person, and conducted by trainers versed in race and social justice principles, and it should be informed by employee and/or workplace discrimination and harassment data, routinely evaluated, and updated as necessary.

## CONTINUED WORK

- The June 2018 recommendations are intended to launch an iterative learning process for the City which has as its goal, ending discrimination and harassment. It is important to note that while these recommendations stem from the Anti-Harassment IDT's research and investigation over a period of three months, we know this work will evolve over time as City culture shifts and new or additional feedback is gathered. As a City, we must commit to continually prioritize the prevention of, and effective response to, workplace discrimination and harassment if we are to have a work environment in which every employee can thrive.

# Priorities

As the recommendations and strategies are substantial, four priority areas are highlighted for immediate implementation.

## Accountability & Values

- Creation of department accountability measures to set expectations for a workplace free of discrimination and harassment.
- Implement multiple strategies to communicate city values, vision, and expectations.

## Central Hub

- Establish an independent entity to support Citywide intakes, investigations, and review to replace existing system. Communicate and educate on multiple entry points and resources for support.
- Ensure options to be anonymous, confidential, rooted in RSJ, independent, and relational.

## Independent Advocate System

- Launch an advocate system to be a support for employees through intake, reporting, investigation, resolution, and aftercare processes.
- Advocates will be survivor-centered, competent, passionate, RSJI-trained, skilled in trauma-informed care practices and a not mandatory reporters.

## Comprehensive Training

- Provide and require comprehensive education on prevention and response of workplace discrimination and harassment at all levels.

# Race and Social Justice Data on Harassment and Discrimination

## 2018 RSJI Employee Survey

**4,231  
respondents**

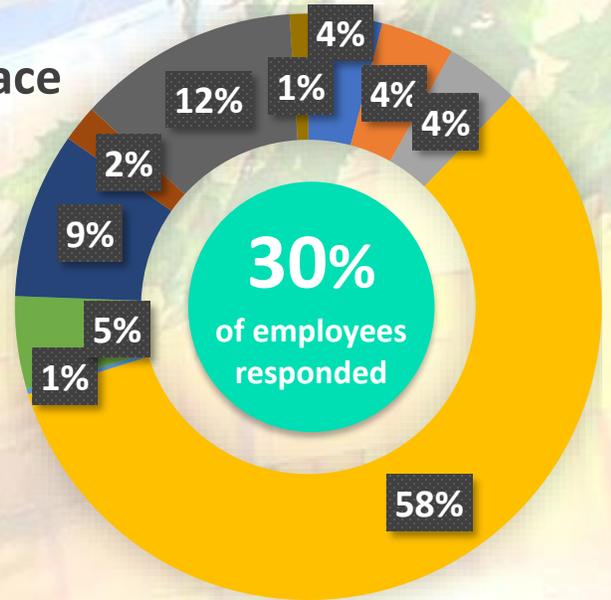
### Gender Identity

1% Other Response  
49% Female  
46% Male

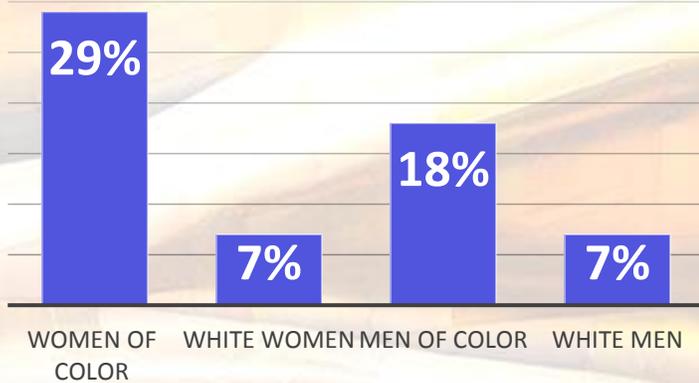
*(transgender, gender queer, non-binary, and additional identities not reflected)*

### Participation By Race

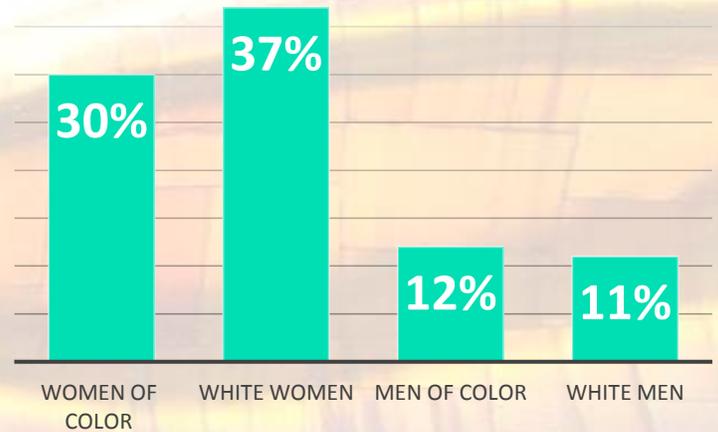
- Multi Racial Ident.
- Other Response
- Mutiracial
- White, Non-Hisp.
- Mid. Eastern
- Latinx/Hisp.
- Black/African Am.
- Pac. Is.
- Asian
- Am. Ind/Ak Nt.



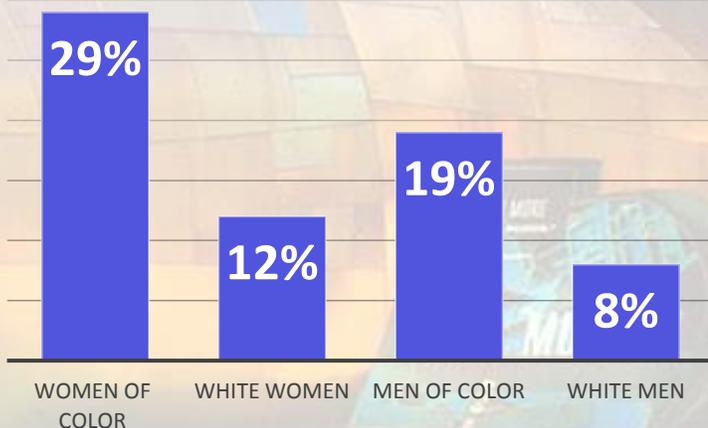
Percent of respondents that EXPERIENCED different treatment due to their race/ethnicity.



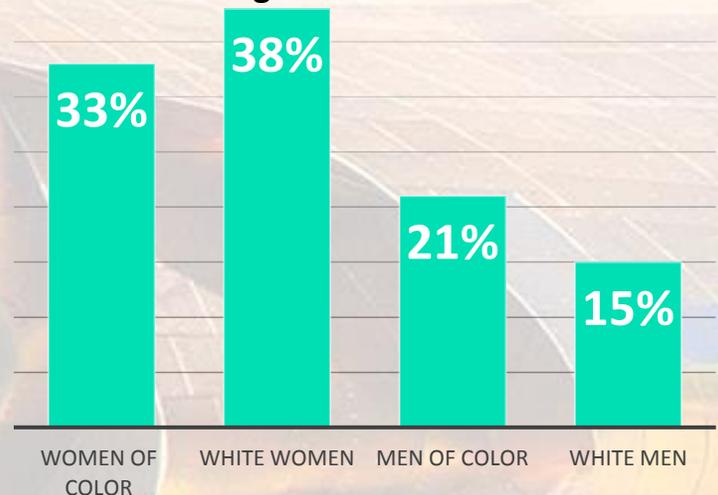
Percent of respondents that EXPERIENCED different treatment due to their gender.



Percent of respondents that OBSERVED different treatment due to race/ethnicity.



Percent of respondents that OBSERVED different treatment due to gender.



## Overall Themes from the Data

**Overarching RSJI Employee Survey themes related to reporting/underreporting of discrimination and harassment.**

- Mistrust of HR Process
- Mistrust of Management
- Fear of Retaliation
- Lack of transparency
- Lack of Awareness of Reportable Offenses
- Racial and Gender Bias in Hiring and Promotion
- Ageism

**Women of Color respondents experience compound forms of harassment, in which race and gender are targeted.**

*-RSJI Survey Findings*

**Focus group participants communicated many concerns related to experiencing and observing discrimination and harassment.**

- Lack of Trust
- Abuse of Power
- Lack of Accountability
- Lack of Support and Training for Managers
- Lack of Appropriate Response
- Lack of Consistency
- Differential Treatment of People of Color
- Lack of Confidentiality
- Lack of Resolution
- Lack of Urgency
- Need to Center Racial Equity

**There must be investment in funding, time, and resources to effectively address and change institutional policies, practices, and culture.**

*-RSJI Survey Findings*

**"I would rather quit than do a formal intervention."**

*-Focus Group Participant*

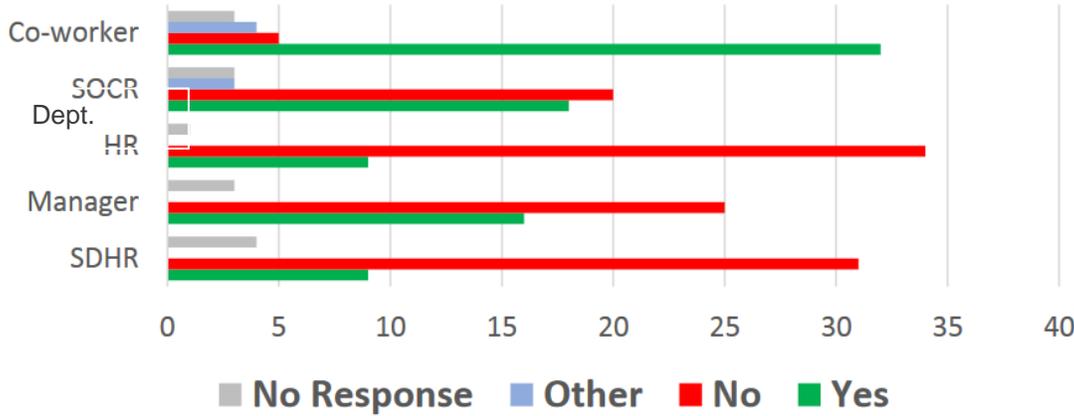
**"It's a cycle. They have a structure. They don't want to help us. It's a culture that is just festered against black men and women. HR is not here to help most people of color."**

*-Focus Group Participant*

# Race and Social Justice Data on Harassment and Discrimination

## Focus Groups

Q: "Would you be comfortable seeking support from the following places?"

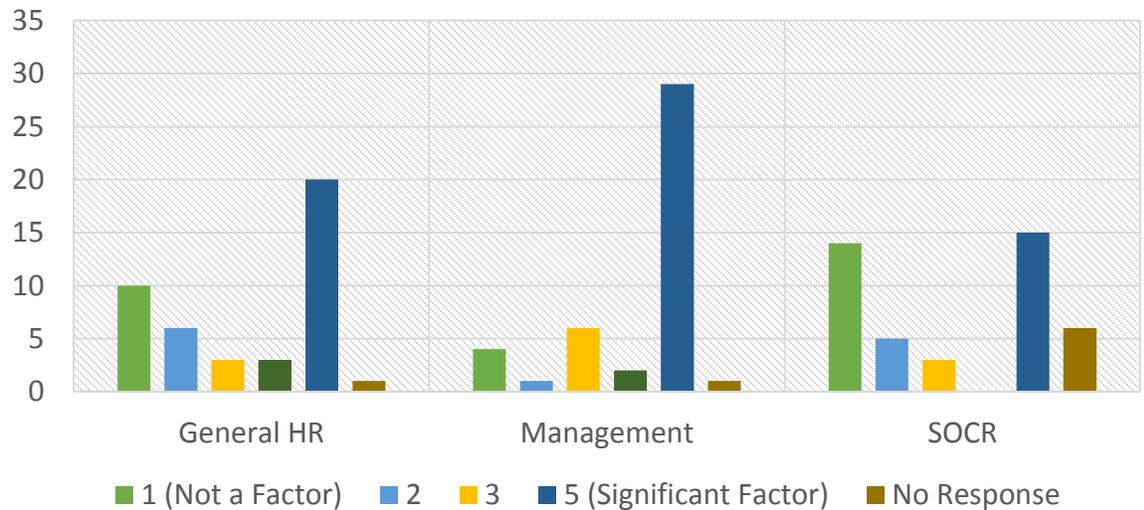


- May 2018
- 6 focus groups
- 45 participants

**"When your leadership is the issue you don't have anywhere else to go."**

-Focus Group Participant

Q: On a scale of 1-5 how much did fear of retaliation factor into your willingness to make a report?



**"The system corrects itself to racism."**

- Focus Group Participant

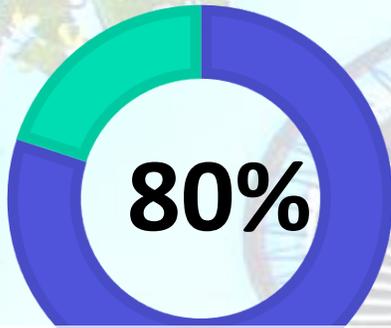
**"Institutional Racism can be imbedded into the very fabric of our trades or professions, so deeply that we may not be able to recognize the behaviors until they become "Over the Top"."**

-Focus Group Participant

### FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANTS:

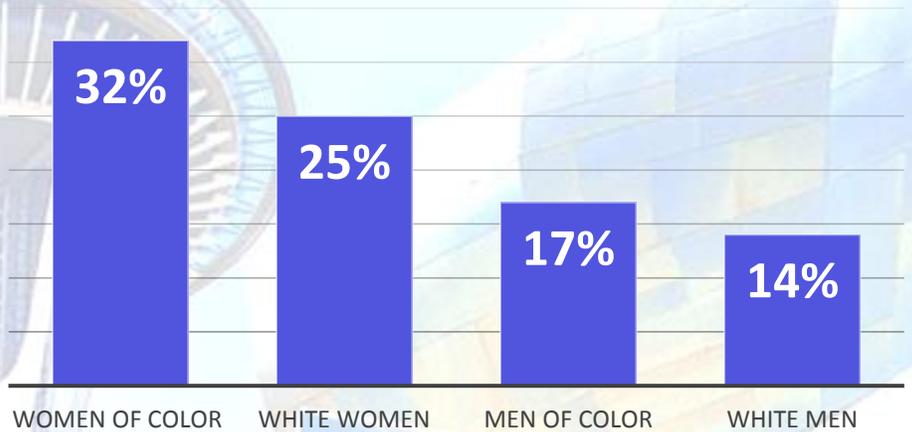
Selected groups included representatives from the Coalition of Affinity Groups Against Racial Harassment, the Seattle Silence Breakers, RSJI Change Team Leads, Seattle Fire Department, Seattle Police Department, Citywide Human Resources Representatives, and the RSJI Sub-Cabinet.

# 2018 RSJI Employee Survey

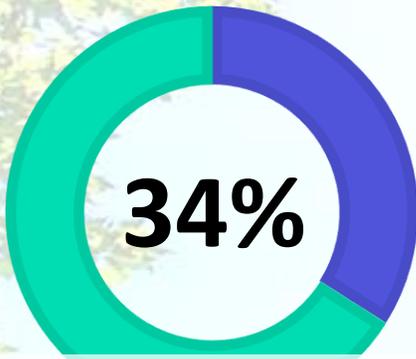


**DID NOT seek help after experiencing gender-based incidents of harassment in the workplace.**  
-RSJI Survey

Percent of respondents that **DO NOT** believe management consistently demonstrates support for a workplace free of harassment.



Percent of respondents that **AGREES** management gives fair and equal treatment to all employees, regardless of race.



**EXPERIENCED and/or OBSERVED acts of harassment and/or discrimination in the workplace.**  
-RSJI Survey



## WORKPLACE CULTURE

*"I've been in the same department for 5 years and the culture of my environment has been harassment on multiple levels and occasions. I've sought assistance through mediation, through my union stewards and rep and have spoken with my management on multiple occasions. It appears that nothing has ever happened as the behavior continues and happens primarily to people of color, primarily women of color."*

-RSJI Survey Respondent

## REPORTING

*"There was no investigation by HR. Witnesses who came forward independently were chastised. Union shop steward involved was reprimanded. The supervisor accused was defended and promoted. I was made out to be a "bad employee" deserving harassment and to be held back."*

-RSJI Survey Respondent