

# City of Madison Workplace Climate Survey

Prepared by the Multicultural Affairs Committee

A large, abstract geometric graphic at the bottom of the page consists of several overlapping, semi-transparent shapes in shades of yellow, orange, red, and grey. The shapes are arranged in a way that creates a sense of depth and movement, with some shapes appearing to be in front of others.

2015



# 2015 WORKPLACE CLIMATE SURVEY RESULTS

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In the summer of 2015, the Multicultural Affairs Committee (MAC) administered a survey to all City of Madison employees to evaluate the workplace culture and climate, particularly in areas of concern to employees of color. A total of 708 employees responded to the survey.

After thoroughly reviewing and analyzing the survey results, the Multicultural Affairs Committee has identified the following areas of concern and opportunities for growth:

### **Fear of retaliation:**

- Over half of black respondents and over a quarter of respondents who were white, multiracial, or Hispanic felt there were negative consequences for them if they reported unfair treatment at work.
- One out of every five black employees has observed a race-based incident and not spoken up. For the city workforce as a whole, that number is one in ten.

### **Exclusivity:**

- Three out of every five black respondents felt they were treated differently because of their race compared to 6% of white respondents.
- Employees of color feel more pressure to change and less acceptance than their white coworkers

### **Limited opportunities for growth/professional mobility:**

- Nearly half of black respondents and over a third of Hispanic respondents felt their supervisor or co-worker made assumptions about them that limited their opportunities for professional development, compared to 22% of white respondents.

In response to these results, the Multicultural Affairs Committee recommends immediate action. Our recommendations are to implement the following over the next year:

- 1. A comprehensive Workplace Diversity and Inclusivity plan that includes:**
  - a. Communication, cooperation, and synergy between all departments, initiatives, and committees.
  - b. Comprehensive training and education beginning with management and eventually including employees at all levels of the organization.
  - c. Accountability mechanisms.
  - d. Reviewing APM 3-5 process in order to better protect complainants from retaliation.
- 2. Improving opportunity and professional mobility for all employees.**
- 3. Individual actions to improve workplace culture and inclusivity.**



## INTRODUCTION

As established in the City of Madison General Ordinance sec. 33.27(2), the Multicultural Affairs Committee (MAC) is composed of employees of the City of Madison and charged with addressing issues of concern to racial and ethnic people of color employed by the City.

One of the Multicultural Affairs Committee’s key objectives is to develop goals for a workplace environment that assures recruitment, inclusion, fair treatment, and retention of diverse employees. In early 2015, the Multicultural Affairs Committee worked with key staff to create a survey that would help inform this work.

### Survey Distribution

This survey was open to all City employees and distributed via email on June 12, 2015. Some paper surveys were also distributed and collected from work sites where employees had limited computer access. A total of 708 employees responded to the survey.

### Demographics of Respondents

The racial identity demographics were as follows:

Racial/ethnic identity <sup>1</sup>	Number	Percentage of Total Respondents
Black, African American	42	6%
East Asian, Asian American	14	2%
South or Indian Asian	4	.63%
Middle Eastern, Arab, Arab Amer.	4	.63%
Hispanic, Latino, Chicano	35	5%
Native American, Alaskan	14	2%
White or Euro-American	581	82%
Multi-racial	28	4%
Not listed	14	2%

For the graphs and statistical analysis in this report, racial and ethnic identities were consolidated into five groups: white, black, Hispanic, Multiracial, and Other Race.<sup>2</sup>

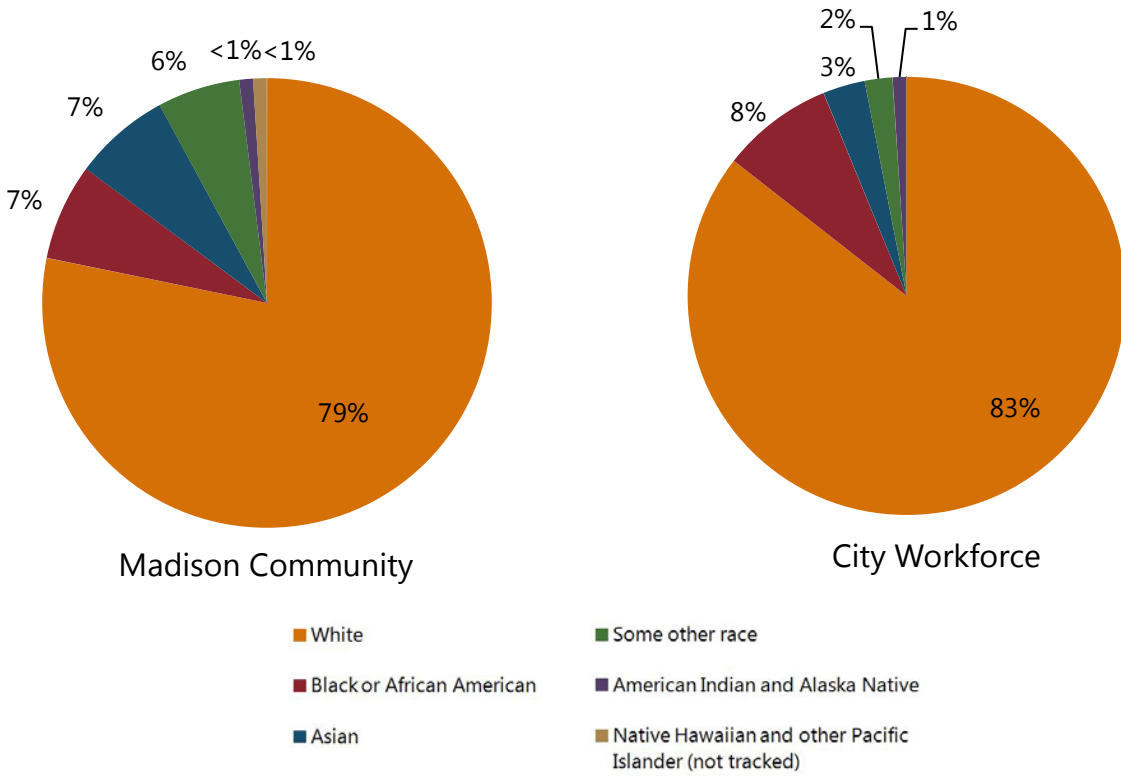
The demographic makeup of survey respondents fell largely in line with that of all City employees. There was slightly less representation by white, Asian, and Black employees (6% of respondents vs. 8% of all employees) and slightly more by Hispanic, Native American, and multiracial employees.

<sup>1</sup> Respondents could select more than one race.

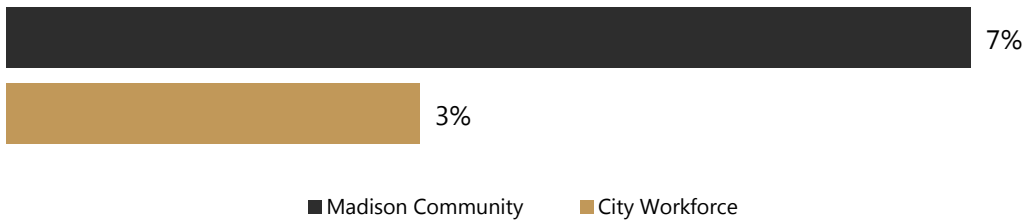
<sup>2</sup> All Asian, Arab, and Native American/Alaskan populations were grouped into the category “Other race.”

Madison Community and City of Madison Employee Demographics<sup>3</sup>

Population by Race



Population by Ethnicity: Hispanic/Latino (any race)



<sup>3</sup> The data used for this section includes DP-1-Geography-Madison city, Wisconsin: Profile of General Population and Housing Characteristics: 2010. It is limited to the City of Madison. City of Madison Employee data taken from Munis on 11/16/15. This Data is only a rough estimate and excludes pollworkers and hourly seasonal employees. "Some other race" includes "two or more races" and "some other race" categories.



## HIGHLIGHTS

### Top Rated Questions Overall

The following questions received the most favorable responses:

Personal Experiences:

- Co-workers typically listened respectfully to my views about work related issues (72% of all respondents agree or strongly agree)
- I was given adequate opportunity to demonstrate my skills (64% of all respondents agree or strongly agree)
- I have felt like I would recommend working here to others (64% of all respondents agree or strongly agree)

Current Supervisor/Manager:

- Values employees with diverse views (61% of all respondents agree or strongly agree)
- Values differences in the way people approach problems (60% of all respondents agree or strongly agree)

Current Department:

- Relationships between employees of different racial groups in my department are positive (66% of all respondents agree or strongly agree)

Overall effectiveness of City of Madison in:

- Developing policies to promote fair treatment of employees regardless of race (62% of all respondents selected "effective" or "somewhat effective")

### Lowest Rated Questions Overall

The following questions received the most unfavorable responses:

Personal experiences:

- I received mentoring to help me grow in my job (37% of all respondents disagree or strongly disagree)



- I thought about leaving for other employment because I felt my background and experience were not valued  
(37% of all respondents agree or strongly agree)
- I felt there were negative consequences for me if I reported unfair treatment at work  
(32% of all respondents agree or strongly agree)

#### Current Supervisor/Manager:

- Helps employees recognize biases that foster workplace discrimination and exclusion  
(27% of all respondents disagree or strongly disagree)
- Are held accountable for ensuring that employees are treated fairly  
(23% of all respondents disagree or strongly disagree)

#### Current Department:

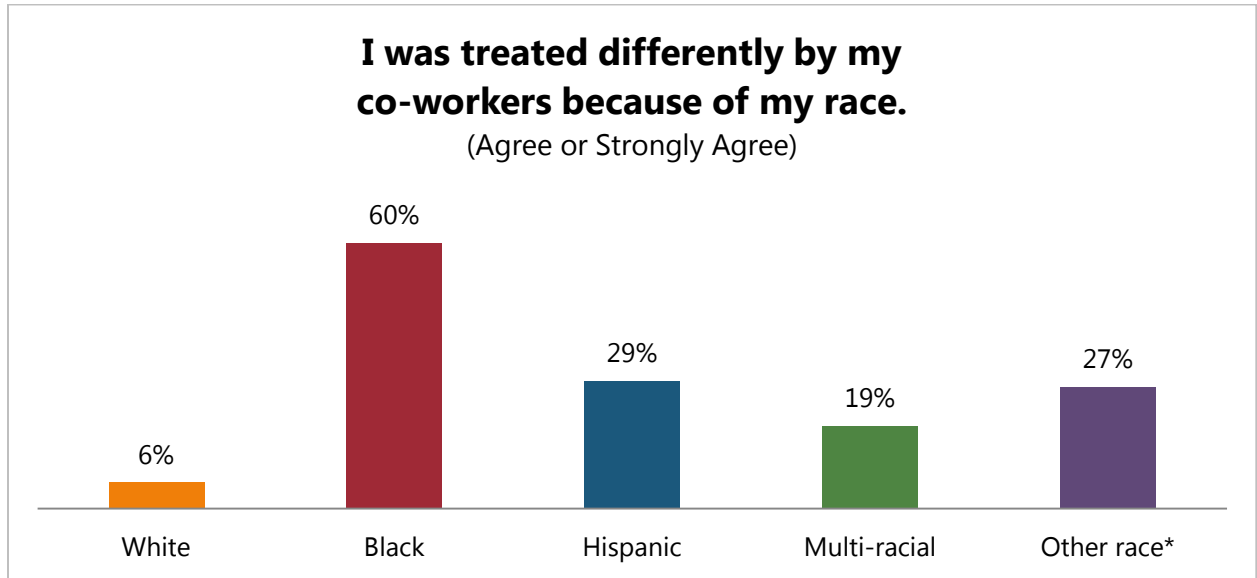
- In my department leadership holds all employees to the same workplace expectations and disciplinary standards  
(36% of all respondents disagree or strongly disagree)

#### Overall effectiveness of the City of Madison in:

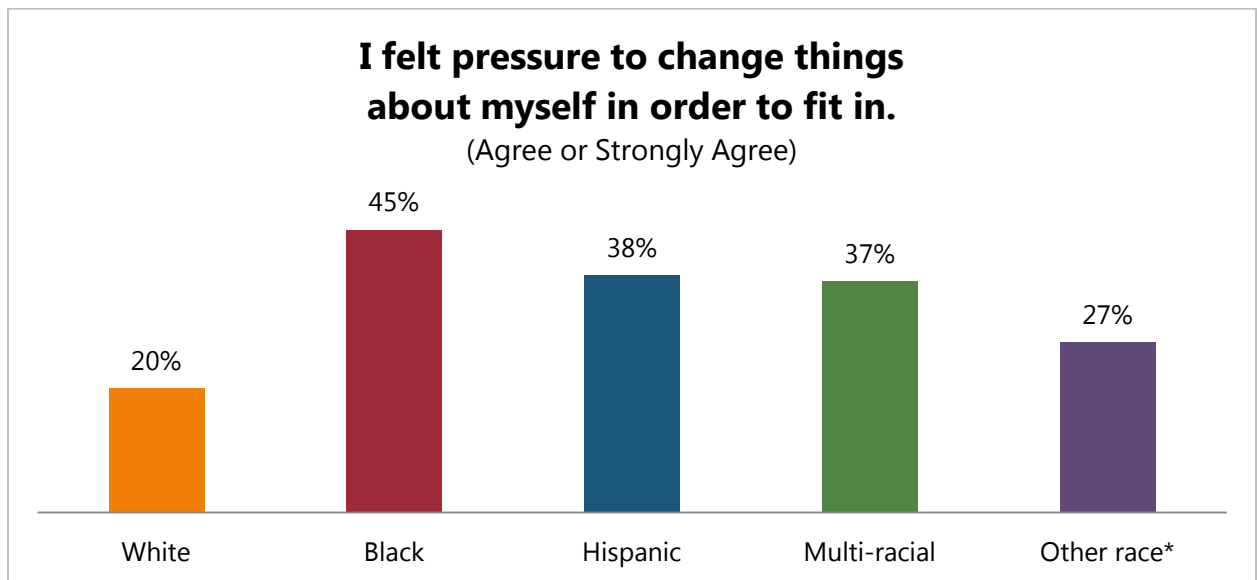
- Promoting professional growth of all employees  
(35% of all respondents selected "ineffective" or "somewhat ineffective")

**Workplace Inclusion**

According to survey results, there are different perceptions of workplace inclusivity across racial and ethnic groups. This is most apparent in responses to the first question of the survey (below).

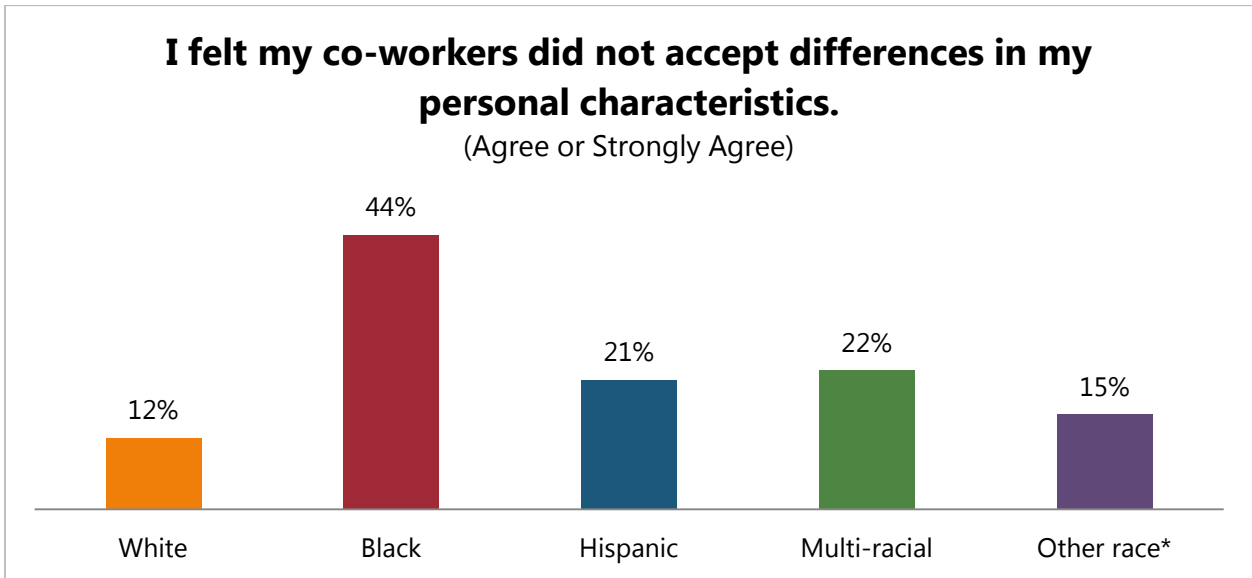


Three out of every five black respondents agree or strongly agree that they were “treated differently by my coworkers because of my race,” compared to 6% of white employees.

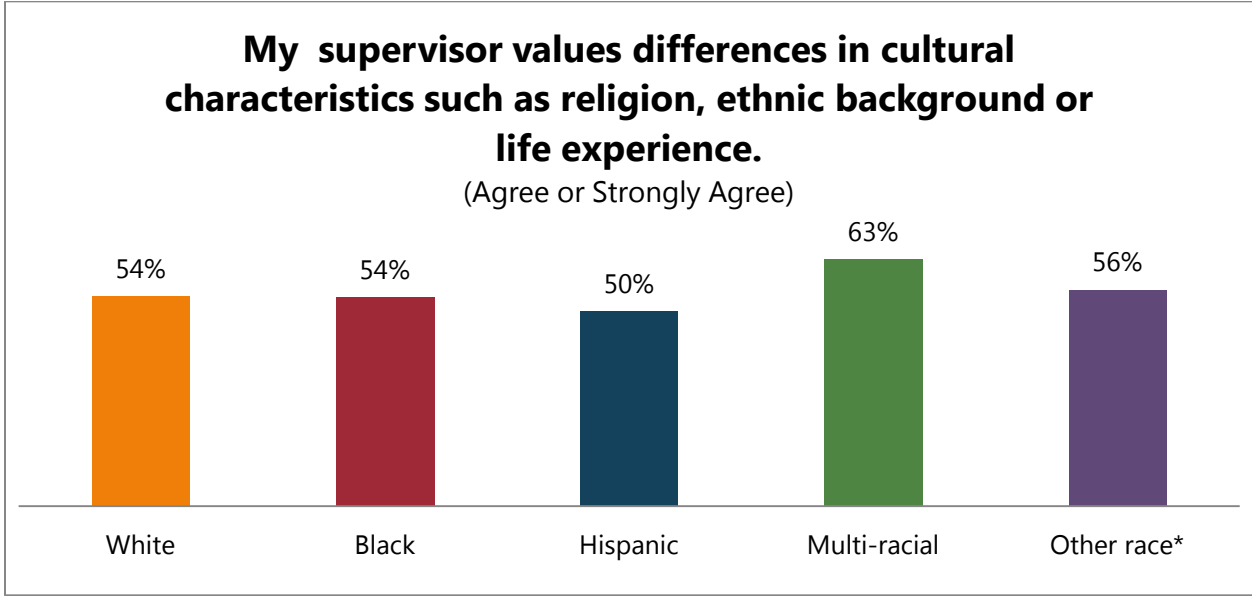


Nearly half of black respondents and over a third of Hispanic and multi-racial respondents have felt pressure to change things about themselves to fit in.

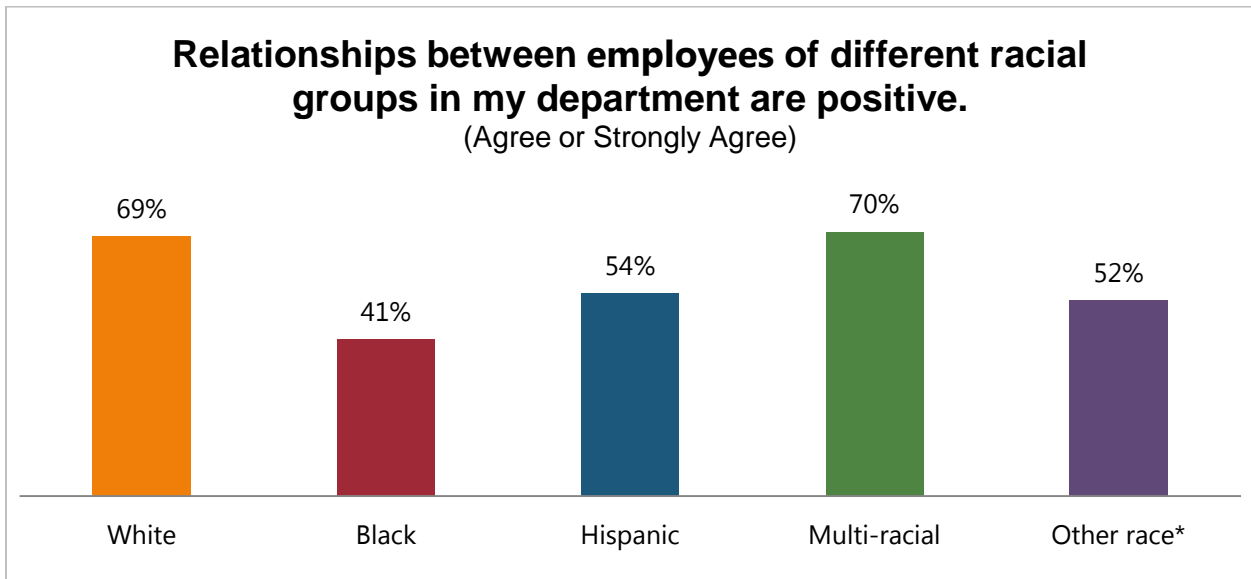




Nearly half of black respondents and over 20% of all Hispanic and multiracial respondents felt their coworkers did not accept differences in their personal characteristics, compared to only 12% of white respondents



Only half of the city workforce thinks their supervisor values differences in cultural characteristics.



About two-thirds of white and multi-racial respondents thought relationships between employees of different racial groups in their departments were positive. However, for other non-white respondents the percentage that agreed with the statement was significantly lower.

In every measure, black employees are more likely to report an exclusive culture than their white coworkers. Overall, employees of color find their workplace to be less inclusive, experience less acceptance, and feel more pressure to change themselves to fit in than white employees do.

Selected comments relating to workplace inclusion:

Many respondents commented that there was very little or no diversity in their departments:

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*"Since my department is extremely homogenous (white, liberal, middle class) it's hard to answer these questions."*

*"There isn't much diversity in my section or this building for that matter. The place is almost all white males."*

*"We've got two kinds of city employees: German and Scandinavian."*

*"We're predominantly white so we don't see much overt racism. And any talk about hiring people other than white is usually brushed aside with claims that we want to hire the best people for the job. We'd welcome people of color who wanted to fit into our "culture." we wouldn't want to adapt to their 'culture.'"*

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Comments also reflected different perceptions of inclusivity between racial and ethnic groups:

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*"The workplace is not perfect, but I have not experienced/observed any conscious bias."*

*"...just for the record I am a white male and I feel like this is to my advantage in my position."*

*"the negative relationships between employees of different racial backgrounds are in many cases created by those who believe they are perpetually victimized due to their own missed conceived [sic] perspective and bias."*

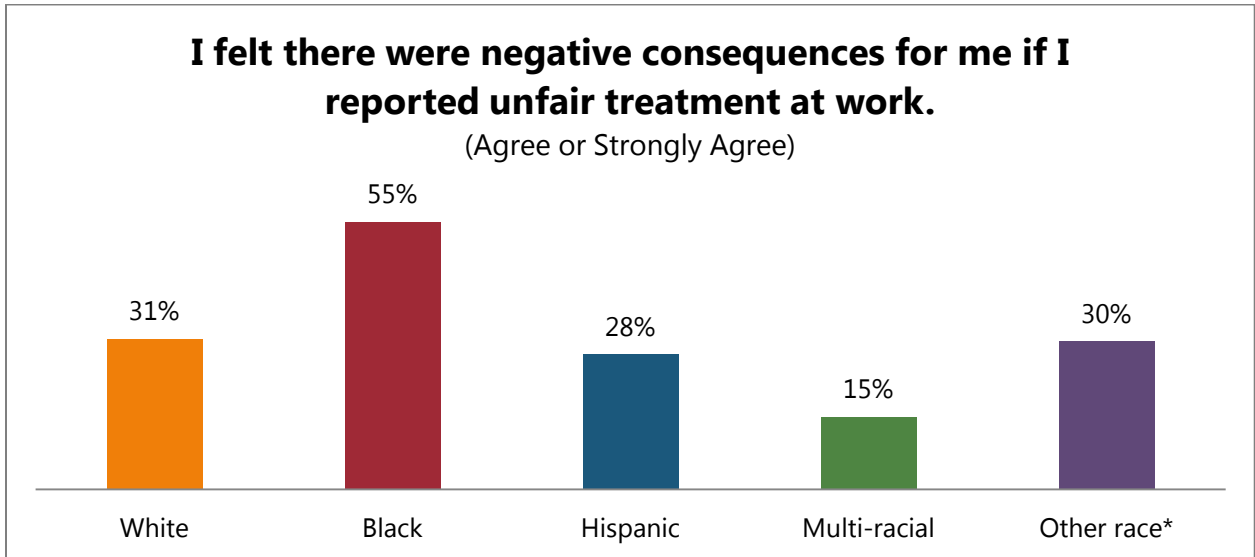
*"My new colleague is Hispanic, and numerous city employees have asked him about where "he's from" and if he speaks Spanish, while no one asks me those questions, as I am Caucasian."*

*"...I have certainly observed other staff of color being marginalized consistently in other departments and divisions."*

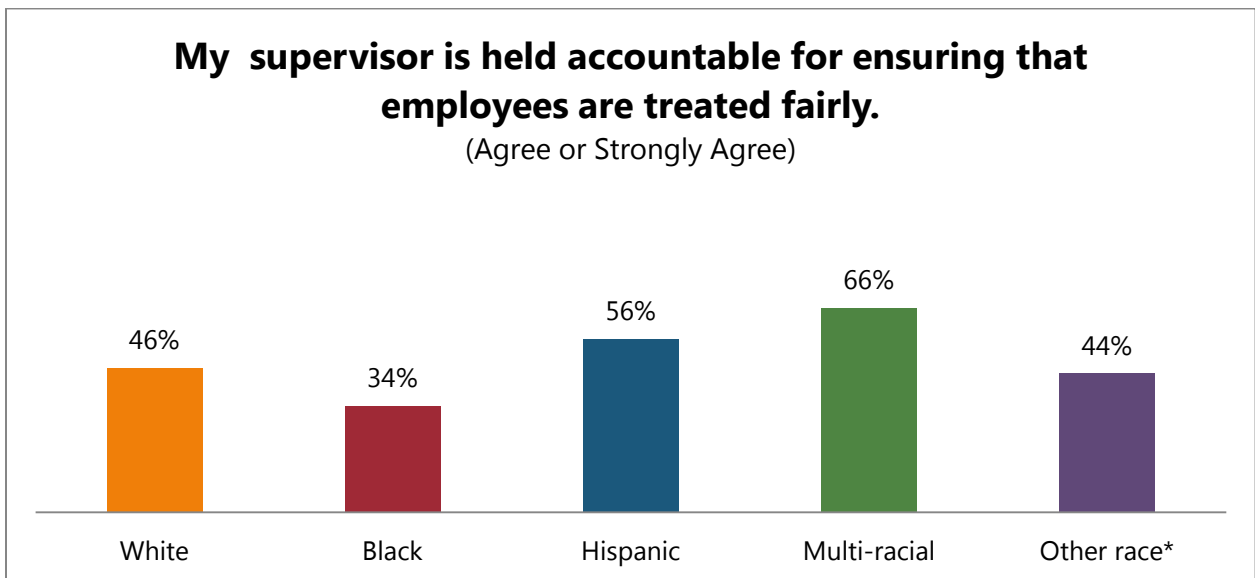
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**Harassment and Discrimination**

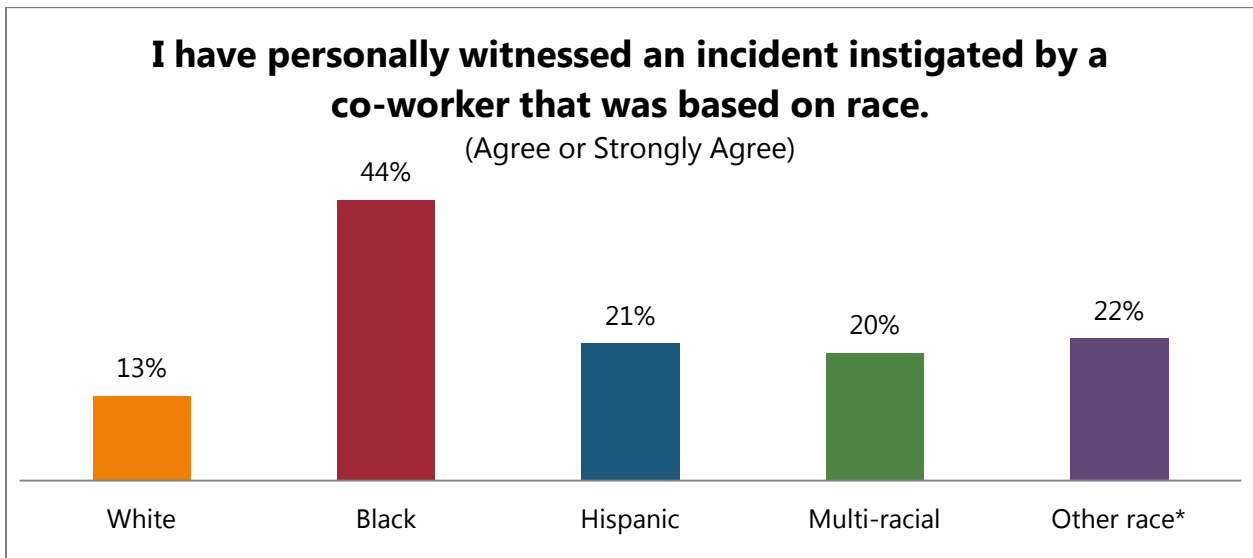
Survey results point toward a reluctance among city employees to report incidents of harassment and discrimination. Indicators of a general lack of trust were present among all employees, but were more pronounced among employees of color.



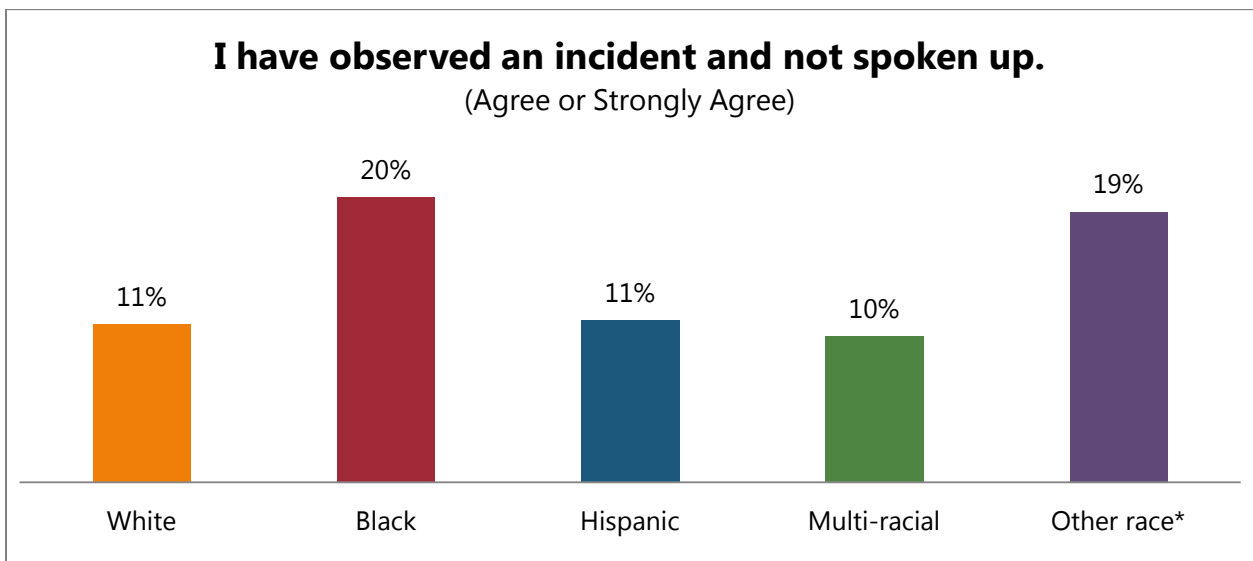
Over half of all black respondents felt there were negative consequences for them if they reported unfair treatment at work.



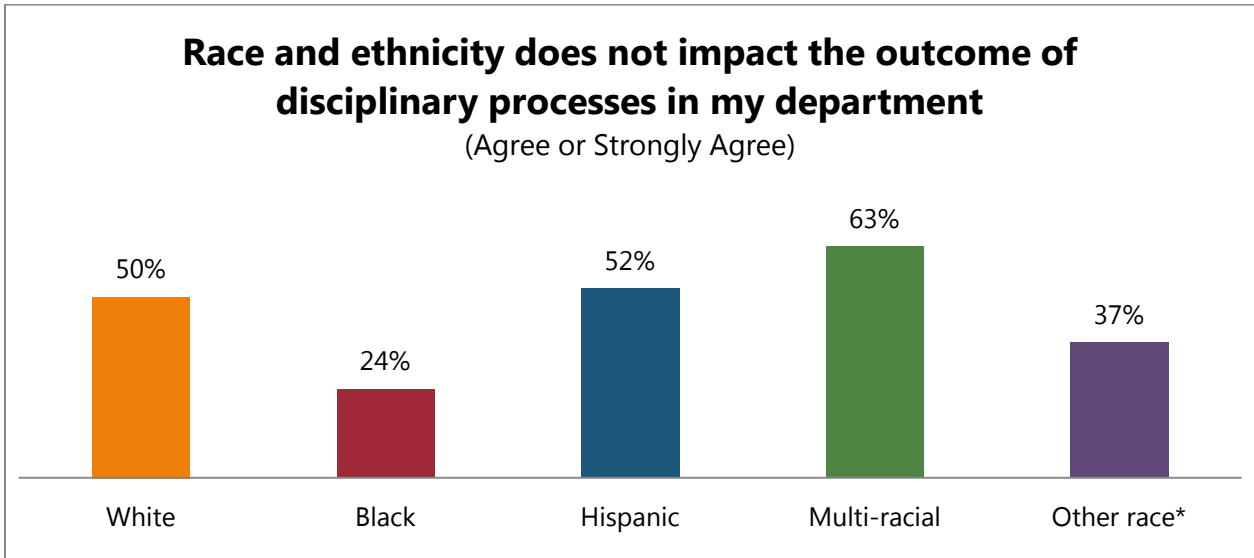
Less than a third of black respondents and less than half of white respondents thought their supervisor was held accountable for ensuring fair treatment of employees.



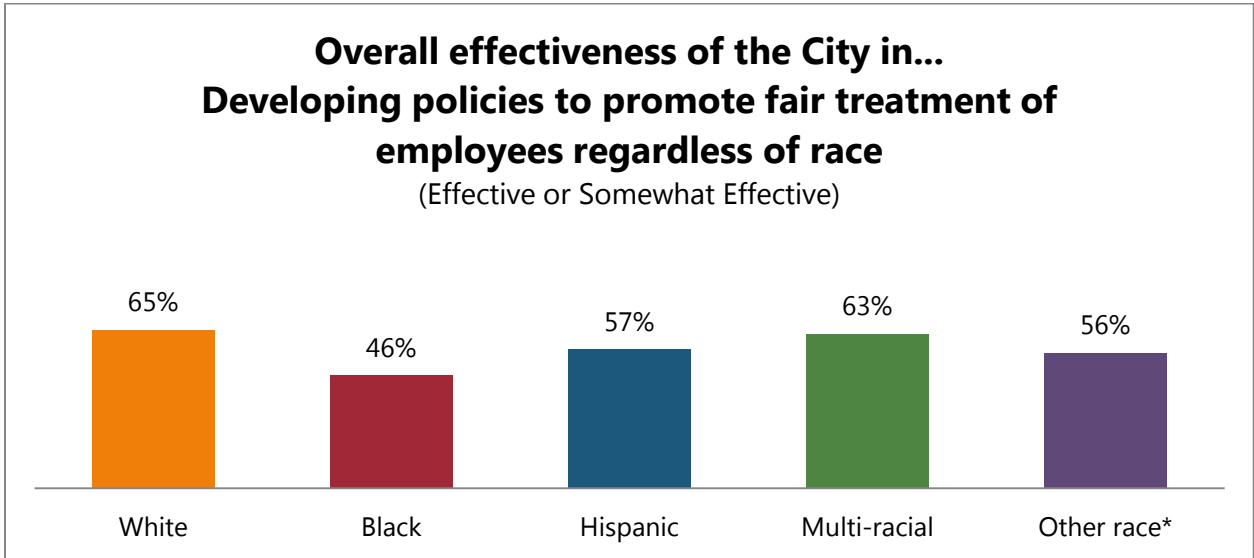
Almost half of all black employees report having witnessed race-based incidents at the workplace. One-fifth of other non-white employees have also witnessed incidents.



One out of every five black employees has observed an incident and not spoken up. For the workforce as a whole, that number is one in ten.



Less than a quarter of black employees believe that race and ethnicity does not factor into disciplinary processes in their department. Only half of Hispanic and white employees believe the same.



White and multi-racial employees show the most optimism about the effectiveness of non-discriminatory policies in the City. Less than half of black employees think the City is effective in developing non-discrimination policies.



Selected comments relating to harassment and discrimination:

Some respondents expressed fear of retaliation if they reported an incident:

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*"I would not feel safe to report problems because I have seen the reporting person suffer and even be terminated."*

*"I would tell any person who works for the City and values their career (and their quality of life) to keep quiet no matter what. The City is concerned about how it is perceived and will stomp complainants into submission."*

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Other respondents shared their experiences with reporting incidents:

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*"I observed an incident and did speak up. It didn't do any good..."*

*"My current supervisor makes no effort to investigate unfair treatment or wrongdoing whatsoever. He listens politely and then does nothing."*

*"It was toward me and when I spoke with my supervisor, I was told that I was too sensitive."*

*"People have found the Civil Rights department is simply an arm of HR and looks out for the City of Madison above all else."*

*"Since being in my current position for over four years, I have utilized management, DCR, HR and EAP to help with unfair treatment I have experienced and as of date nothing has been done."*

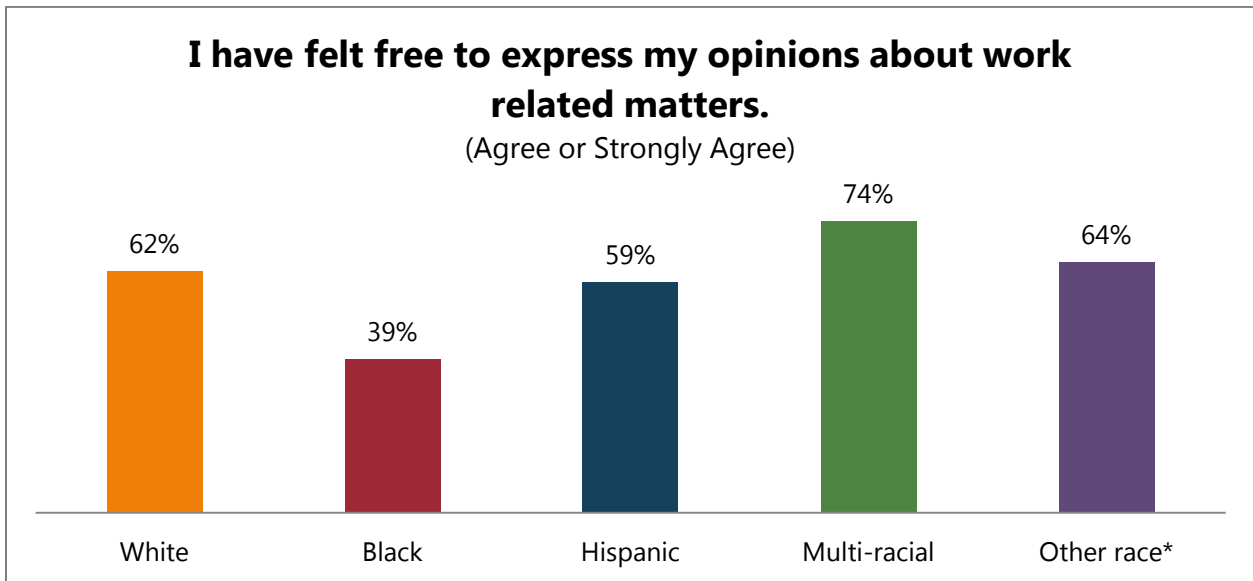
*"I witness harassment on a daily basis. People including myself have brought it to management's attention and it either falls on deaf ears or is swept under the rug. Eventually you just accept that this is how you're going to be treated daily."*

*"I did complain of harassment and retaliation... I have genuinely suffered horribly for speaking up."*

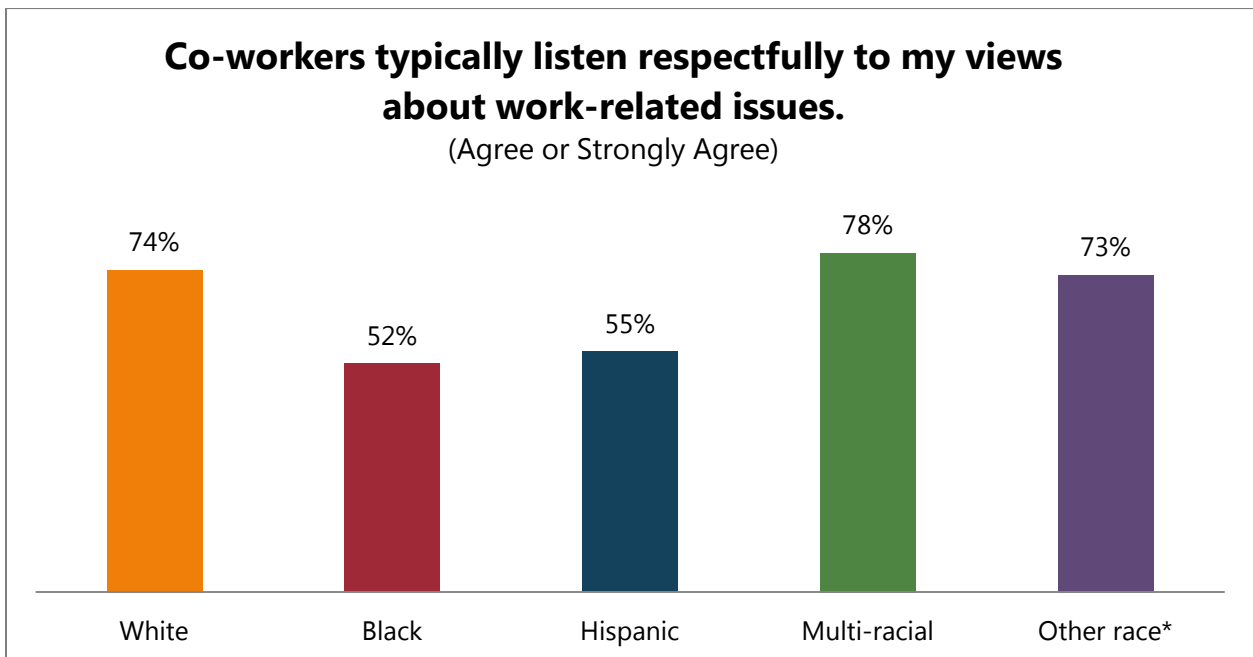
*"The problem is that supervisors, head administrative staff, not middle managers, have literally said to me, 'if you knew something was wrong, could you be quiet about it...'"*

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## Workplace Culture

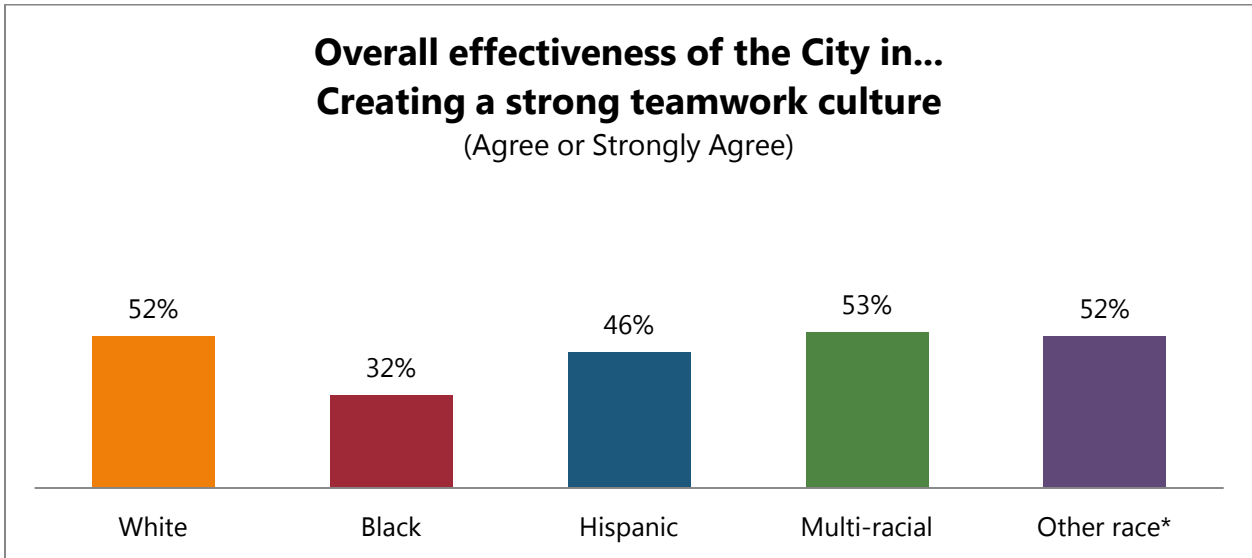


Less than 40% of black respondents reported feeling comfortable sharing their opinions about work related matters.

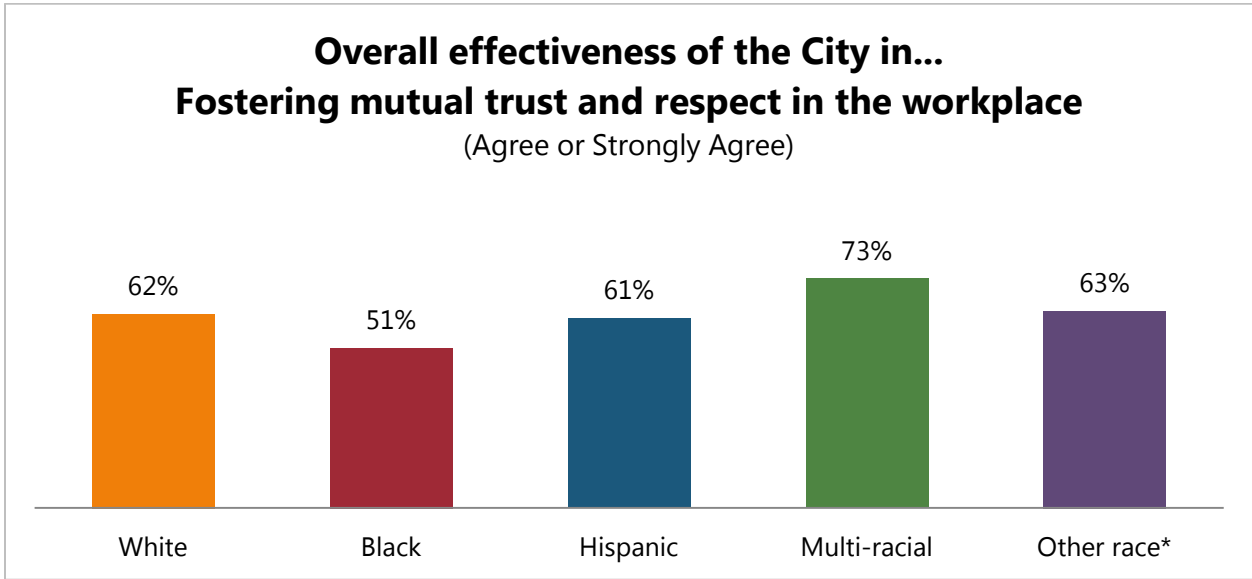


Employees' experiences of speaking up follow the same pattern as the previous question. Only a little over half of black and Hispanic respondents felt like their co-workers listen respectfully to their opinions on work-related.

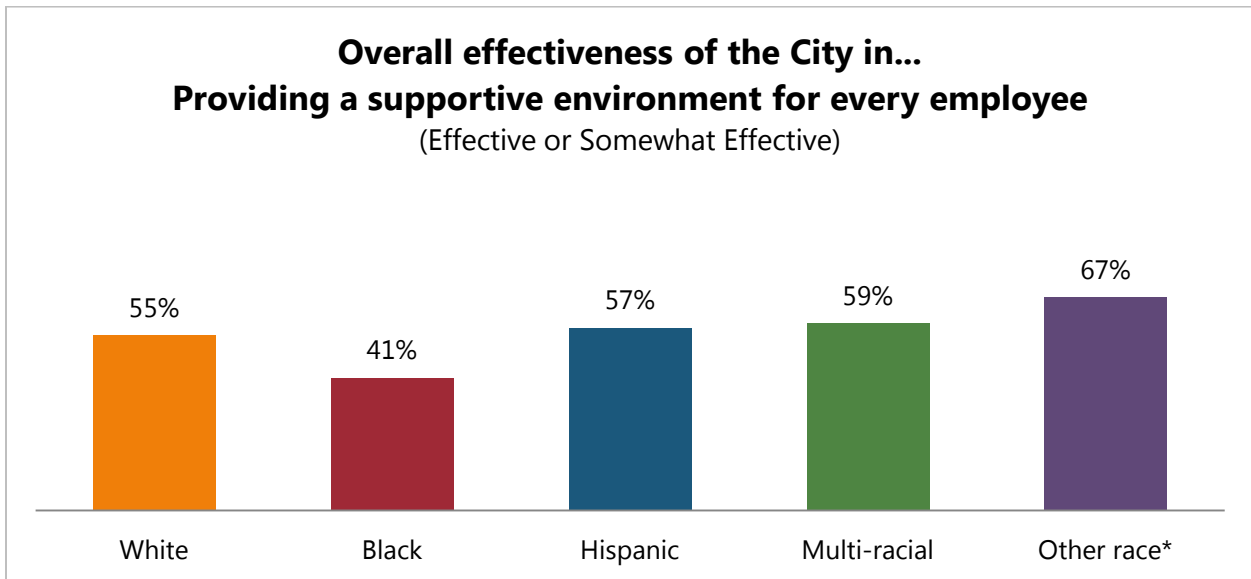




Employees across all races and ethnicities show little to moderate trust in the City's effectiveness to create a culture of teamwork.



Only half of black respondents felt the City is effective in fostering mutual trust and respect in the workplace. About 60% of respondents who were white, Hispanic or of other racial categories felt the city was effective in this area. Multi-racial employees show the highest approval of the City's ability to foster trust and respect.



Black respondents showed the lowest approval of the City's effectiveness in providing a supportive environment for every employee. Just over half of white, Hispanic, and multiracial respondents find the City's efforts effective.

Selected comments relating to workplace culture:

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*"I have always been encouraged to think about and implement better solutions."*

*"In my observations it is best not to rock the boat, especially if it goes against what your supervisor or manager thinks."*

*"Questions seem to be phrased solely for employees of color. I'm not a person of color, but these things (negatives) are part of the culture of my work environment for people of color and for whites as well."*

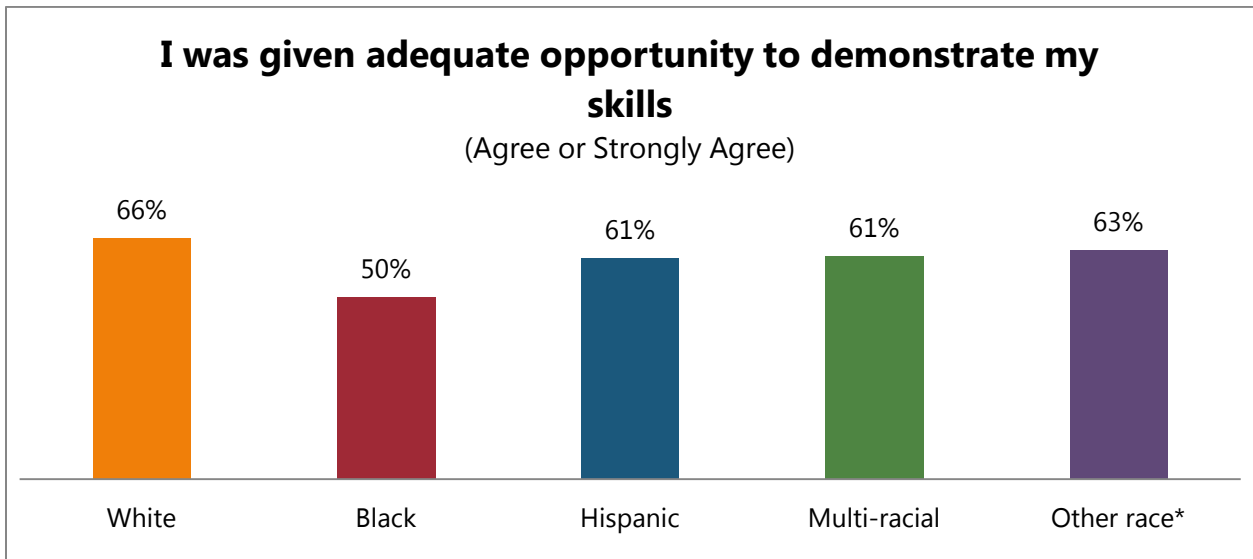
*"There is no team here just I for I, no brotherhood. Lots of backstabbers."*

*"Our 'Engagement Team' tried to make differences happen & voices heard, now they are just a propaganda machine. Sad, sad, sad."*

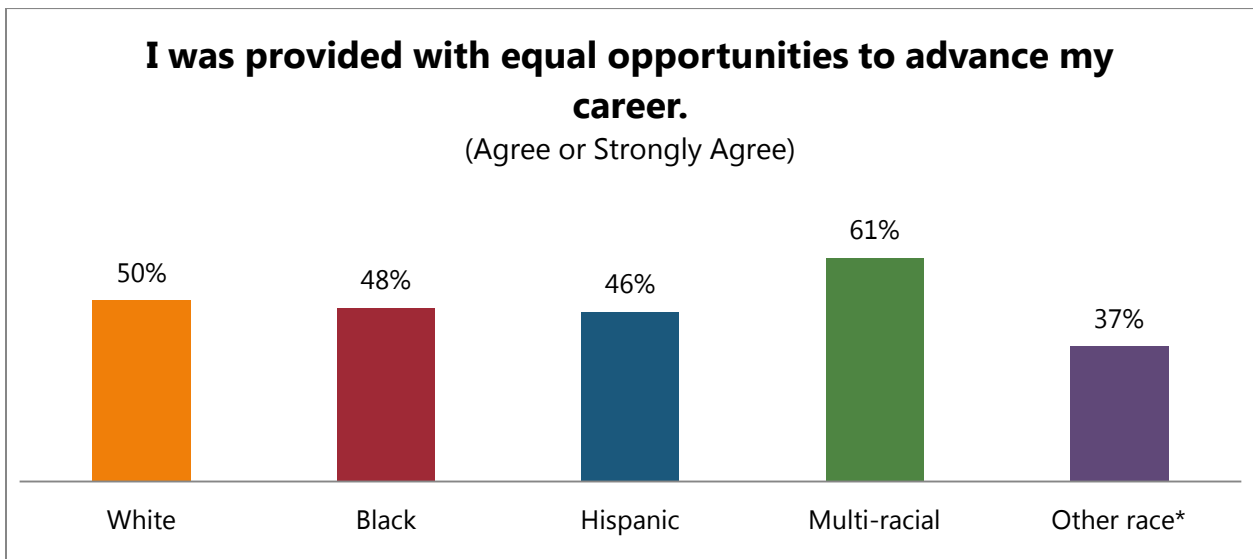
*"My department manager mostly values the people who share his specific skill set and believes what he believes."*

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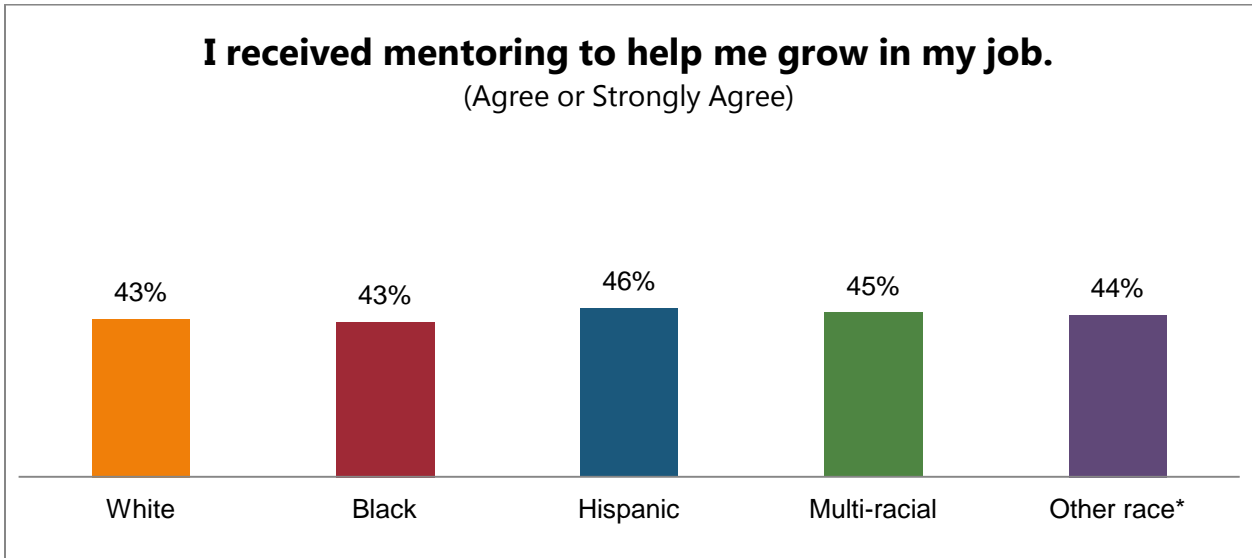
**Growth and Development**



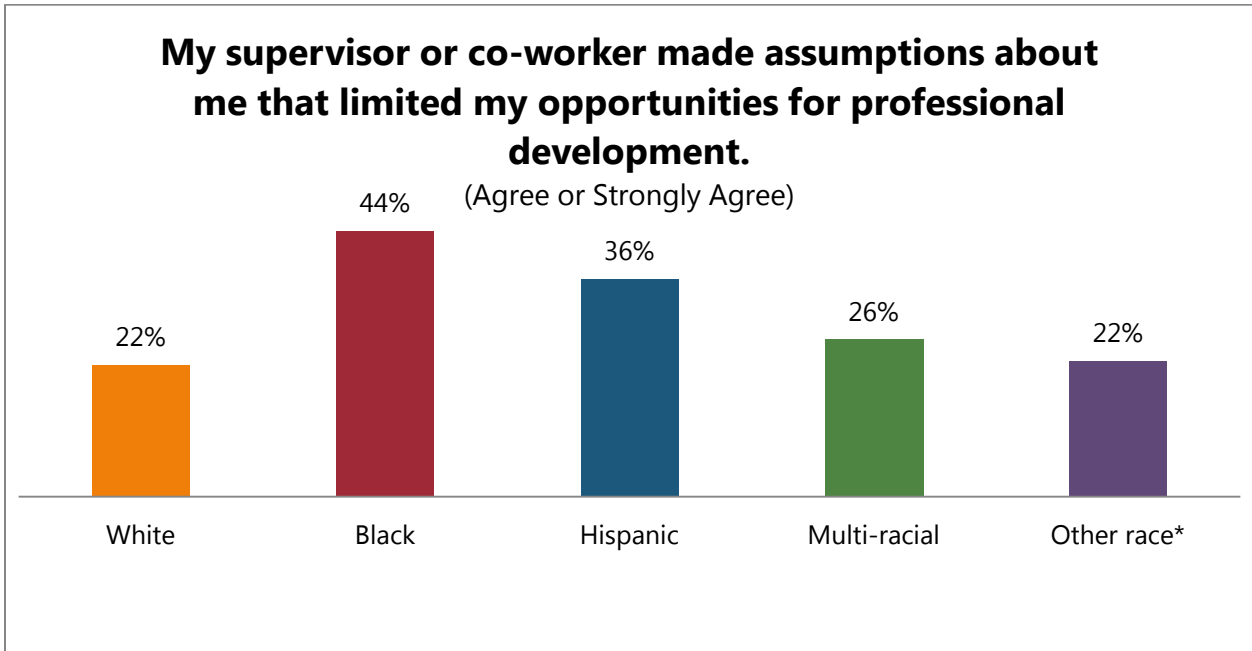
Across the board, fewer people of color report getting adequate opportunities to demonstrate their skills than their white counterparts.



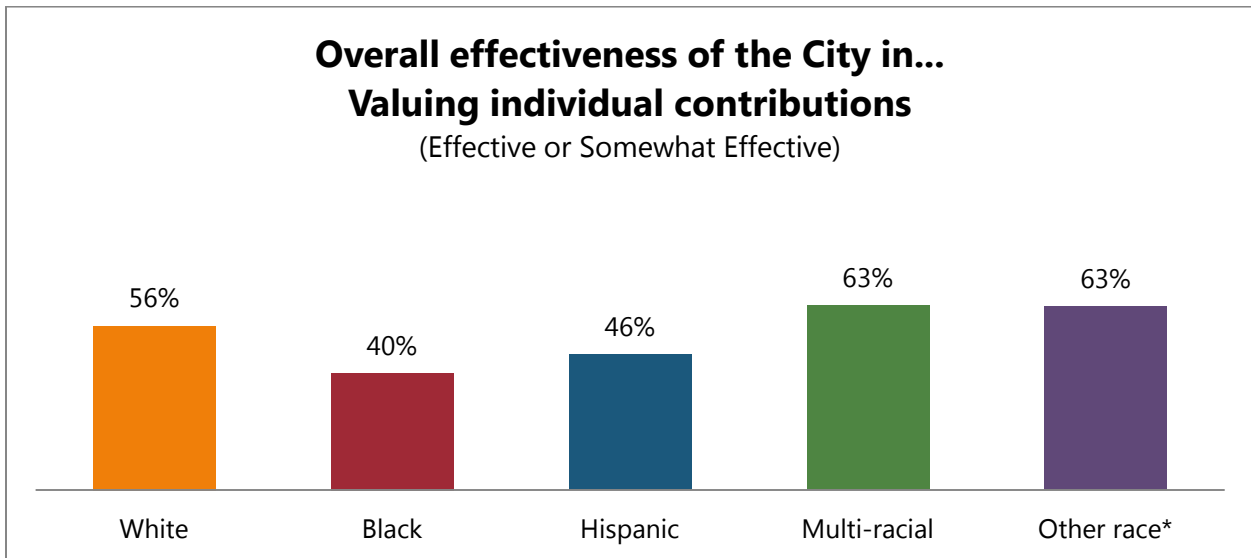
While two-thirds of multi-racial respondents report having equal opportunities to advance their career, all others, white and non-white alike, are less likely to agree.



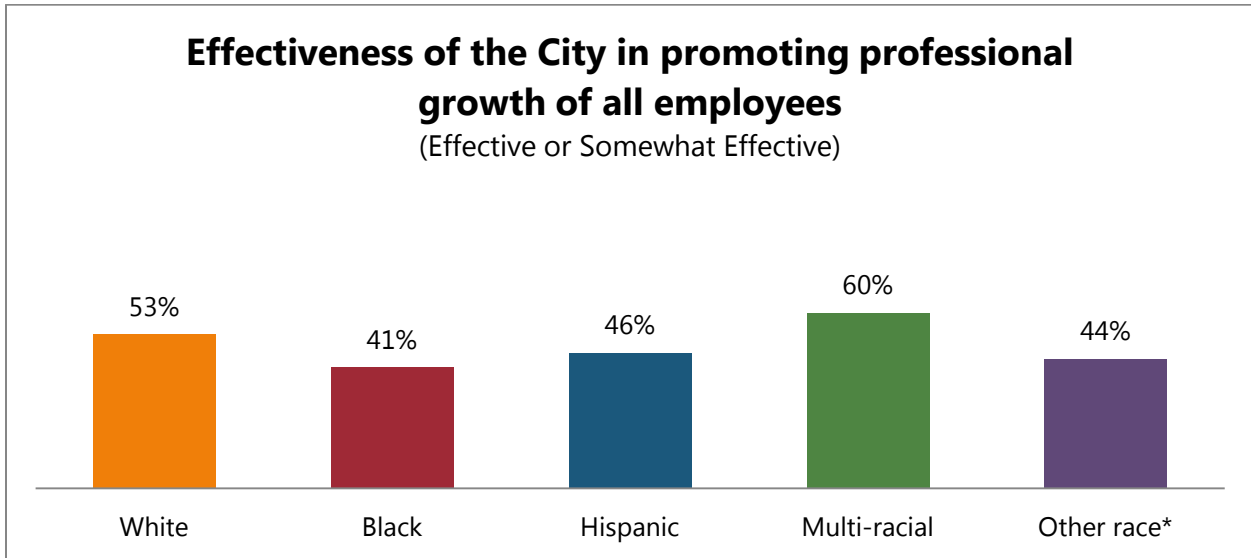
Less than half of all respondents report having mentors in the workplace. The question did not specify whether their department had a formal mentoring program or if mentorships were informal.



Black respondents were twice as likely as white respondents to report that their supervisor made assumptions about them that hindered their professional development. Hispanic and multi-racial respondents are also reported this in higher numbers than whites.



Less than half of all black and Hispanic respondents feel that the City is effective in valuing individual contributions. Multi-racial and other non-white respondents were more likely than white respondents to feel that the City is effective in this effort.



Less than half of all Black, Hispanic, and other non-white respondents feel that the City is effective in promoting professional growth of all employees. Again, multi-racial respondents were more likely than white respondents to feel that the City is effective in this effort.



Comments pertaining to growth and development:

On training:

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*"Budgeting decisions about training opportunities have not been clearly communicated in my agency. After repeatedly being told by my supervisor that "we have NO budget for training" coworkers in other work units have attended out-of-town conferences, events and training, etc. that were paid for by our agency..."*

*"Practically need an act of Congress, to getting training approved or when it is the class is over."*

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On promotion:

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*"I have a very high level of education and experience but stay away from promotion because change is not welcome."*

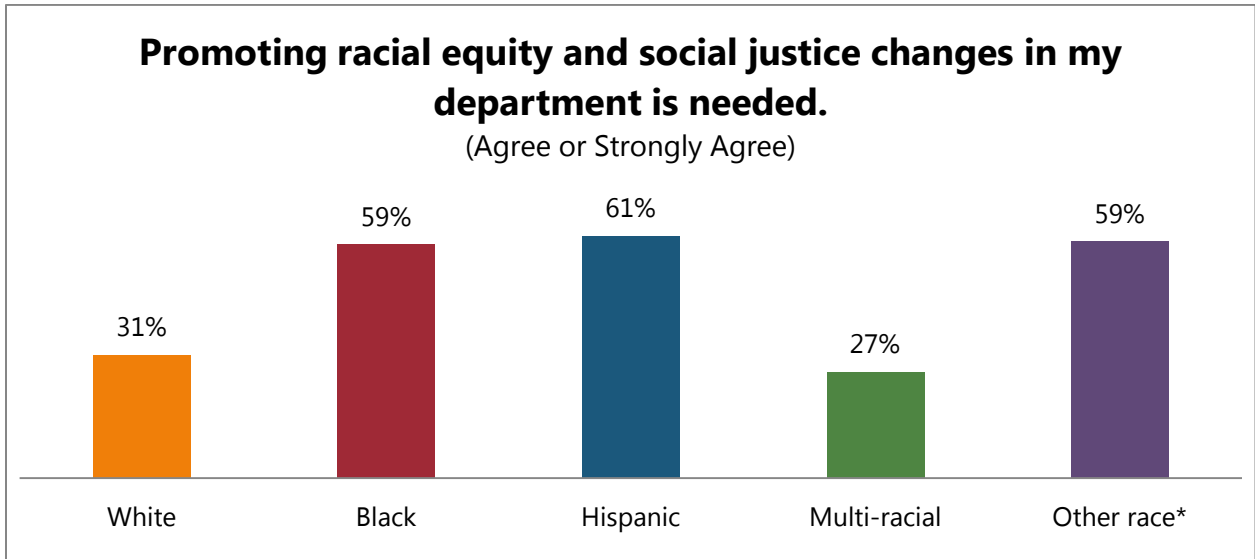
*"I have initiated jobs classification studies for myself. Management did not initiate them."*

*"Although I continue to rank high and interview for City promotions quite often it seems a department already has someone groomed for the job. It's almost to a point where I don't want to waste any more time with promotions. Nepotism is also alive and well in this city."*

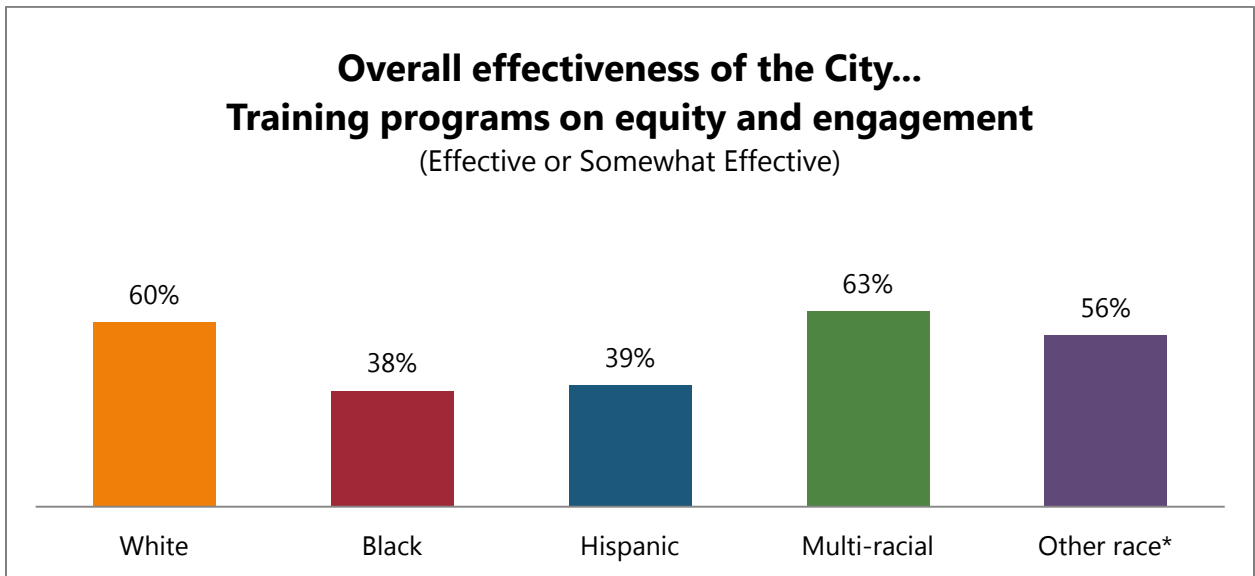
*"I have requested that my position be reviewed and reclassified at a more senior level. I completed the paperwork 2 years ago with no action so far."*

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**Perceptions of Current Equity Initiatives**



Less than a third of white and multi-racial employees think changes are needed, compared to over half of black, Hispanic, and other non-white employees.



The inverse of the previous question's results is seen here. Less than 40% of black and Hispanic respondents think the City's equity and engagement trainings are effective, while 60% of white (and 63% of multi-racial) think so.



Selected comments pertaining to equity initiatives:

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*"I think at this point, the issue of equity is on the table, which is the first step, however, many employees are able to just ignore the issue if they want. There is more work to do, more changes that need to be made to force some of those employees that are on the sidelines and who are not engaged in the issue."*

*"While RESJI is doing great work around starting training on bias and racial equity, overall we as a City are struggling. A lot of this comes down to supervisors, managers, and department and division heads not demonstrating that they understand or are committed to issues of discrimination and bias in the workplace. This is one of the issues with HRs engagement initiative: it looks to engage employees from the bottom up as opposed to top down. If folks are going to be engaged, valued, supported... this is going to be because of the higher ups creating an inclusive environment that actually does engage, value, and support all staff. There is no department within City gov't that is really doing a great job at this."*

*"The City employee culture doesn't always encourage cooperation. Trainings, policies etc. create a compliance mentality when it comes to race issues. Focusing on which words shouldn't be used, etc. and not on the root issues of owning our own biases. RESJI trainings are moving in the right direction but not every supervisor encourages staff to participate and many employees don't see the point or value of this training."*

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There were also several comments that expressed dissatisfaction with the City's diversity efforts:

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*"I am saddened by the way the 'System' works for hiring employees. We are pushed to hire people of other cultures, but yet we ignore the great people of the white culture."*

*"As a white male, I feel that I have to apologize at times for my white privilege and that it would be better if I were a woman or person of color."*

*"White males are overlooked in an attempt to force diversity. Promotions are made to create a rainbow of people vs. promoting those that are qualified and experienced."*

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## MAC RECOMMENDATIONS

City of Madison's vision is to be a safe and healthy place to live, work, learn and play. We should be modeling this within our organization and have a workplace that is diverse, consciously inclusive, and enables all employees to reach their full potential.

After thoroughly reviewing and analyzing the survey results, the Multicultural Affairs Committee has identified the following areas of concern:

- **Fear of reporting:** A significant percentage of employees from all racial and ethnic backgrounds are afraid to report incidents of harassment and discrimination. Many employees are even reluctant to share their opinion about work-related matters at work.
- **Exclusivity:** Many departments are not racially diverse. A significant percentage of employees of color, already marginalized due to this lack of diversity, also feel that they are treated differently because of their race. As is evidenced by many of the comments in the survey, there is also some resentment toward people of color by coworkers who believe they have been hired or promoted because of their race.
- **Limited opportunities for growth/professional mobility.** Many of the unfavorable responses related to questions about professional growth, such as mentoring. This affects all employees, but according to the survey results employees of color have fewer opportunities.
- **Accountability/fairness.** Employees across all cultures showed weak signs of faith in their direct supervisors or departments to address problems, effectively implement policies furthering racial equity, or foster a culture of inclusion.

### **Comprehensive Planning for Workplace Diversity and Inclusivity**

The City of Madison needs a comprehensive, strategy for promoting workplace diversity and inclusivity. Although there are many successful initiatives and plans taking place throughout the City of Madison, a coordinated approach would ensure greater success.

Diversity and inclusion cannot be isolated as a separate initiative, or even multiple initiatives. Instead, core values and principles must be incorporated into the day-to-day operations and all efforts citywide. This requires a true commitment to change from the Mayor, every Department/Division Head, and all employees. It also requires moving beyond a "compliance" mindset to proactive work, recognition, and appreciation of the benefits of a diverse workforce.

A comprehensive Workplace Diversity and Inclusivity Plan should include the following elements:

- **Communication, cooperation, and synergy between:**
  - Mayor's Office



- Department of Civil Rights
- Organizational Health and Development
- Racial Equity and Social Justice Initiative
- Multicultural Affairs Committee
- Equity Coordinator
- Women’s Initiatives Committee
- Employee Assistance Program
- **Training and Education:**  
Comprehensive inclusion, cultural competency, and diversity education for all top-level managers, and eventually employees at all levels of the organization.
- **Accountability**  
Clear expectations and standards regarding cultural competency and inclusivity should be included in all Department/Division Head Contracts, position descriptions, job announcements, etc. All employees should be held to the same standard and the City should be prepared to take action, including support, training, Performance Improvement Plans, and other available means, when these standards are not met.
- **Addressing harassment and discrimination**  
Fostering trust and respect in the workplace should be a top priority. The current process should be reviewed to assess ways we can all promote a sense of safety, protect victims of harassment from retaliation when they report an incident, improve follow-through, and promote positive changes when a complaint is investigated.

## **Opportunity and Professional Mobility**

Opportunities for growth and development benefit all employees and our organization as a whole by improving work quality and helping to attract and retain a diverse and engaged workforce. In recent years, the City of Madison has added new offerings to develop employees such as the Leadership Conference and the Women’s Leadership Series. Growing the city’s capacity to offer internal trainings and budgeting for external opportunities is essential.

In addition to making opportunities available, a conscious effort should be made to ensure that women and employees of color are not being disproportionately excluded. Keeping records that include demographic data for employees that participate in trainings would be a first step to determine if there are disparities in professional development.

Structured mentorship programs which give participants the option to choose a mentor who shares certain characteristics, such as race or gender, would also strengthen the city’s workforce and help employees develop professional networks.



## Modeling Inclusive Behaviors

Although city leadership has a responsibility to develop inclusive workplace practices, every individual within the City of Madison can improve the culture through their own behavior. Often exclusivity is deeply ingrained, even when it is not intentional, and it takes conscious effort to change established patterns and practices.

Inclusive behaviors include:

- Treating everyone as an individual, instead of treating everyone “the same” or expecting one individual to represent an entire group.
- Accepting and appreciating differences.
- Listening to understand, and welcoming multiple points of view
- Speaking up when someone is being excluded, demeaned, or disrespected.

## CONCLUSION

The Multicultural Affairs Committee would like to thank everyone who took the time to participate in the survey and to review the results.

As part of our work, we will be sharing the results of this survey with all employees and meeting with City of Madison leadership and key departments and committees to discuss the results and our recommendations.

Though we are concerned by the current issues, we are also optimistic about our future as both people of color and City of Madison employees. We hope the City of Madison can become a model of successful culture change and conscious inclusivity.

## MULTICULTURAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Chairperson: Amy Deming  
Vice-chairperson: Catherine Duarte  
Secretary: Glenn Clark

Active Members: Garfield Cunningham, Varinia del Moral, Colier McNair, Michael Miller, Lurlie Richardson, Nancy Saiz, Tariq Saqqaf, Karl Van Lith

Associate Members: Charlyn Cruz Nuñez, Melissa Gombar

The Multicultural Affairs Committee would also like to recognize Annie Weatherby-Flowers for her role in initiating the survey and for her service on our survey subcommittee.



## APPENDIX

[Multicultural Affairs Workplace Inclusion Survey Questions](#)

[Analysis of Survey Results for All Questions by Race/Ethnicity](#)