Portland State
Center for Public Service

Portland Fire and Rescue Workplace Culture Assessment

Submitted to Portland Fire and Rescue
November 2018

Submitted by:

Center for Public Service
Mark O. Hatfield School of Government
Portland State University

Masami Nishishiba PhD (Project Lead)
nishism@pdx.edu 503-725-5151

Paul Manson, MPA
Charles (Corky) McReynolds, PhD
Sara Spiers, MPA
Zoe Flanagan, MPP

This page is intentionally left blank.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY 7

PROJECT OVERVIEW 10

KEY FINDINGS 11

I. Highlights of PF&R Workplace Culture: What's important and valued at PF&R 11

1) Cohesive workplace: Like a "family" 11

2) High professional expectations and commitment 12

3) Being bold 14

4) Diversity in the workforce 15

5) Community oriented work 20

II. What Counters the Highlights of PF&R Culture 20

1) PF&R values a cohesive workplace like "family" . . . BUT 21

a. Family-like culture may allow some PF&R members to behave unprofessionally at work 21

b. Some PF&R members may need to develop better personal conflict resolution skills 22

c. Family-like cohesiveness can alienate some individuals and groups, or put pressure to conform 24

d. The sense of uniqueness can conflict with the City of Portland directives and policies 27

2) PF&R values high professional expectations and commitment . . . BUT 28

a. The high professional expectations can lead to high pressure and high stress in the work environment 28

b. High call volumes especially low acuity calls, affects the work morale 29

c. There are inconsistencies in enforcing policies and requirements and the decision-making process lacks transparency 29

d. People have general frustration with PF&R as an organizational whole. 31

e. Feel a lack of training in (1) interpersonal skills (e.g. communication, conflict

resolution) and (2) leadership and supervision skills 32
f. Feel a lack of formal mentoring opportunities 33
g. Feel a lack of clarity in pathways for advancement 34
h. Need better communication across individuals, units, shifts and ranks 39
3) PF&R values being bold . . . BUT 40
a. Those who speak up may experience negative reactions 40
b. Paramilitary structure (and the top-down mentality) may not be conducive to inclusive decision making and innovation....41
4) PF&R values diversity in the workforce . . . BUT....42
a. Emphasize that diversity should not compromise professional standards....42
b. Comprehension and commitment for PF&R's diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts are not shared at all levels....42
c. Definitions of diversity and equity are not consistent 43
d. Ideas conflict on recruitment, outreach, and hiring efforts that focus on a diverse workforce....44
e. Some sub-groups have differing ideas on diversity, equity, and inclusion; and have had different experiences in the workplace....45
f. Past diversity, equity, and inclusion trainings may not have been effective....51
5) PF&R values community oriented work. . . BUT 52
a. Not equipped with the necessary language skills to work with linguistically diverse community members....52
b. Workforce not diverse enough to relate to the culturally diverse communities 52
c. Limited engagement with the community 52
III. Changes in perceptions of workplace culture over time 53

RECOMMENDATIONS 57

1. Norm setting 57

2. Accountability 58

3. Recruitment, outreach and hiring 58

4. Promotion and professional development 59

5. Training 59

PROMISING PRACTICES AND PF&R POLICY REVIEW 61

1. Recruitment 62

2. Hiring 65

3. Career development and advancement 66

4. Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Related Policies 68

5. Diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) training 68

6. Leadership 69

7. Conflict management procedures 70

Conclusion 71

References 71

APPENDIX A: DESCRIPTION OF THE CENTER FOR PUBLIC SERVICE AND THE RESEARCH TEAM 76

Center for Public Service 76

Research Team 76

Masami Nishishiba, Ph.D. 76

Charles (Corky) McReynolds, Ph.D. 77

Paul Manson, MPA 77

Sara Spiers, MPA 78

Zoe Flanagan, MPP 78

APPENDIX B: DATA COLLECTION 79

I. Leadership Interviews 79

II. Focus Groups 81

III. Survey 83

APPENDIX C: SURVEY INSTRUMENT 87

This page is intentionally left blank.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Portland Fire and Rescue (PF&R) is committed to equity and inclusiveness. To reaffirm and strengthen its commitment to equity and inclusiveness, PF&R commissioned the Center for Public Service (CPS) at Portland State University (PSU) to conduct an assessment of its workplace culture. The study involved three types of data collection: (1) leadership interviews, (2) focus groups, and (3) a survey. Data collection occurred during January 2018 to July 2018.

The study identified five highlights of PF&R's workplace culture, and what people consider important and valued at PF&R:

1. **Cohesive workplace, like a "family"**
2. **High professional expectations and commitment**
3. **Being bold**
4. **Diversity in the workforce**
5. **Community-oriented work**

The study also uncovered issues that could counter the highlights of the PF&R culture, and possibly hinder PF&R's efforts in making the workplace more inclusive, cooperative, and productive. These issues took shape in dialogue with the positive workplace values as follows:

1. **PF&R values a cohesive workplace like "family," but:**
    - Family-like culture may allow some PF&R members to behave unprofessionally at work;
    - Some PF&R members may need to develop better personal conflict resolution skills;
    - Family-like cohesiveness can alienate some individuals and groups or put pressure on them to conform; and
    - The sense of uniqueness can conflict with the City of Portland's directives and policies.
2. **PF&R values high professional expectations and commitment, but:**
    - The high professional expectations can lead to high pressure and high stress in the

work environment;

- High call volumes, especially low acuity calls, affect work morale;
- There are inconsistencies in holding people accountable, and inconsistencies in enforcing policies and requirements;
- People have general frustration against PF&R as an organization as a whole;
- Feel a lack of training in (1) interpersonal skills, and (2) leadership and supervision skills;
- Feel a lack of formal mentoring opportunities;
- Feel a lack of clarity in pathways for advancement; and
- Need better communication across individuals, units, shifts, and ranks.

3. **PF&R values being bold, but:**
    - Those who speak up may experience negative reactions; and
    - Paramilitary structure (and the top-down mentality) may not be conducive to inclusive decision-making and innovation.
4. **PF&R values diversity in the workplace, but:**
    - Emphasize that diversity should not compromise professional standards;
    - Comprehension and commitment for PF&R's diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts are not shared at all levels;
    - Definitions of diversity and equity are not consistent;
    - Ideas conflict on recruitment, outreach, and hiring efforts that focus on a diverse workforce;
    - Some sub-groups have different ideas on diversity, equity, and inclusion; and have had different experiences in the workplace; and
    - Past diversity, equity, and inclusion trainings may not have been effective.
5. **PF&R values community oriented work, but:**
    - Not equipped with necessary language skills to work with linguistically diverse community members;
    - The workforce is not diverse enough to relate to the culturally diverse community; and
    - Some members have limited engagement with the community.

Based on the analysis of the data, this study provides recommendations in the following five areas.

1. **Norm setting**: PF&R should take steps to set norms to engage in difficult communications, such as speaking up when one's interests are affected, calling out unprofessional behavior, or engaging in open discussions about diversity, equity, and inclusion.

2. **Accountability**: PF&R should clarify policies and processes to hold people accountable, ensure consistency in how people are held accountable, and make the process transparent.

3. **Recruitment, outreach, and hiring**: PF&R should continue to make efforts to recruit, outreach, and hire employees with diverse backgrounds by incorporating new approaches and allocating appropriate budget and resources.

4. **Promotion and professional development**: PF&R should review the existing promotion and professional development processes and identify areas for improvement, and make the processes more transparent.

5. **Training**: PF&R should develop and implement trainings for interpersonal and personal development skills for communication, conflict resolution, team development, and stress management. Also review existing diversity, equity, and inclusion training content and delivery methods, and consider approaches that may be more relevant to PF&R members.

PROJECT OVERVIEW

Portland Fire and Rescue (PF&R) is committed to equity and inclusiveness. These values guide PF&R's services to the community and decision-making across the bureau. To further diversify the bureau's member composition, and promote an equitable and inclusive work environment, PF&R has been taking actions which include assessments of its workplace. The two most recent studies were conducted in 2002 and 2008. In an effort to continue learning from the previous studies, and to reaffirm and strengthen its commitment to equity and inclusiveness, PF&R commissioned the Center for Public Service (CPS) at Portland State University (PSU) to conduct an assessment of its workplace culture. See Appendix A for a description of CPS and list of team members.

This study also aims to provide information to guide the development of an equity plan for PF&R as required by the City of Portland's Office of Equity and Human Rights. The equity plan is a framework for Portland bureaus to use and are held accountable to the action items within the equity plan. PF&R's equity plan will focus on racial, ethnic, and gender diversity.

To obtain a comprehensive view of the PF&R workplace culture, this study involved three types of data collection: (1) leadership interviews, (2) focus groups, and (3) a survey. Data collection occurred during January to July 2018. Four members from PF&R's Chief's Office formed an executive committee, and worked closely with the CPS research team on data collection details. A larger working group was formed. Strategies on how to best deliver the survey and carryout focus groups was discussed with the working group before data collection was implemented.

The leadership interviews took place during January to February 2018, and focus groups during March to April 2018. The survey was taken by PF&R members during May to July 2018. A detailed review of the research methods and data collection process for each data type are provided in Appendix B.

The following sections describe key findings based on all three types of data collected. Accompanying recommendations address specific issues to strengthen and further improve PF&R workplace culture. The CPS research team also conducted a review of the literature and PF&R's existing policies relevant to diversity, equity and inclusion efforts. The review of the literature and policies are summarized at the end.

KEY FINDINGS

This section provides the key findings of the study by synthesizing the analysis of the data from (1) leadership interviews, (2) focus groups, and (3) the survey.[1,2] The findings are organized in two sections. Section I summarizes what PF&R employees shared as the highlights of PF&R workplace culture. Section II summarizes what PF&R employees described as the challenges and barriers for the PF&R workplace culture that counters the highlights of the workplace culture provided in Section I. Section III provides the comparisons among 2002, 2008 and 2018 survey to assess the change over time.

I. Highlights of PF&R Workplace Culture: What's important and valued at PF&R

PF&R participants shared how they view the workplace culture of PF&R. The highlights of the PF&R workplace culture and what people consider as important and valued at PF&R can be summarized in the following key themes.

1) Cohesive workplace: Like a "family"
2) High professional expectations and commitment
3) Being bold
4) Diversity in the workforce
5) Community oriented work

1) Cohesive workplace: Like a "family"

In all interviews and focus groups, PF&R employees used the word "family" to describe the overall workplace culture. They noted that they have strong camaraderie among themselves on and off the job. They support each other like family members and appreciate that they are there for each other.

The family-like culture stems from the nature of the work with "24-hour shifts" and the physical setting of the fire service. PF&R firefighters spend a long time together and also share in high-risk situation. As a consequence, they see their workplace culture as unique and different from the traditional workplace, where people work from "9 to 5", or a

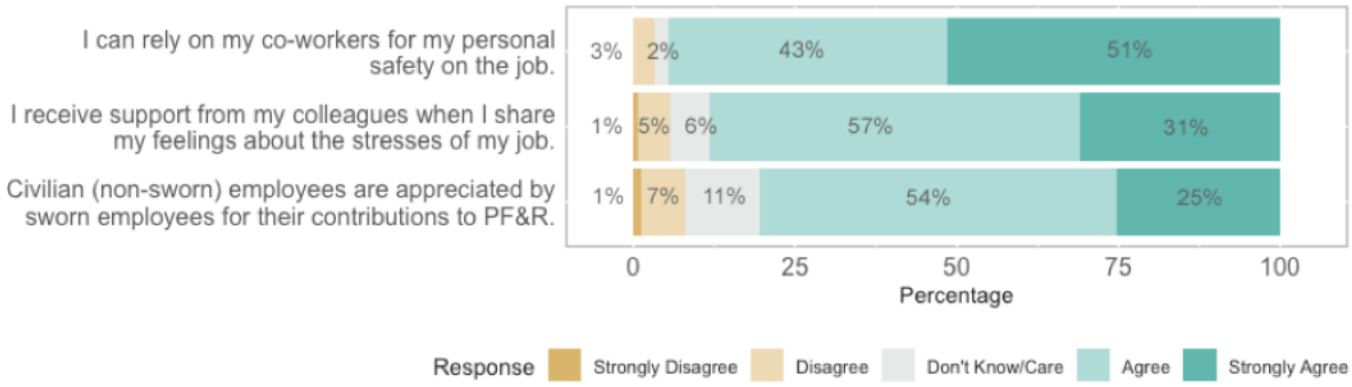
1 Phrases in the quotation marks in this report are direct quotes from the focus groups and interviews.
2 It is important to note that almost a quarter of the respondents did not report their gender in the survey.

standard daytime shift.

The non-sworn employees who have different types of work than firefighters, who typically follow the regular 9 to 5 work schedule, noted that their work environment has less of a feeling of the "family." As one of the non-sworn employee noted in the focus group "[firefighters] all have each other's back and that culture is what's missing in ours [non-sworn.]" They, however, still endorsed that the dominant theme of the PF&R workplace culture is "family-like."

In the survey, 94% of respondents Strongly Agreed/Agreed with the statement, I can rely on co-workers for my personal safety on the job. Also 88% of respondents Strongly Agreed/Agreed that they receive support from colleagues when they share their feelings about stresses of the job. This sense of support is also extended to the civilian (non-sworn) employees. When asked if the civilian (non-sworn) employees are appreciated by the sworn employees for their contribution to PF&R, 79% of respondents Strongly Agreed/Agreed with this statement.

CHART 1.



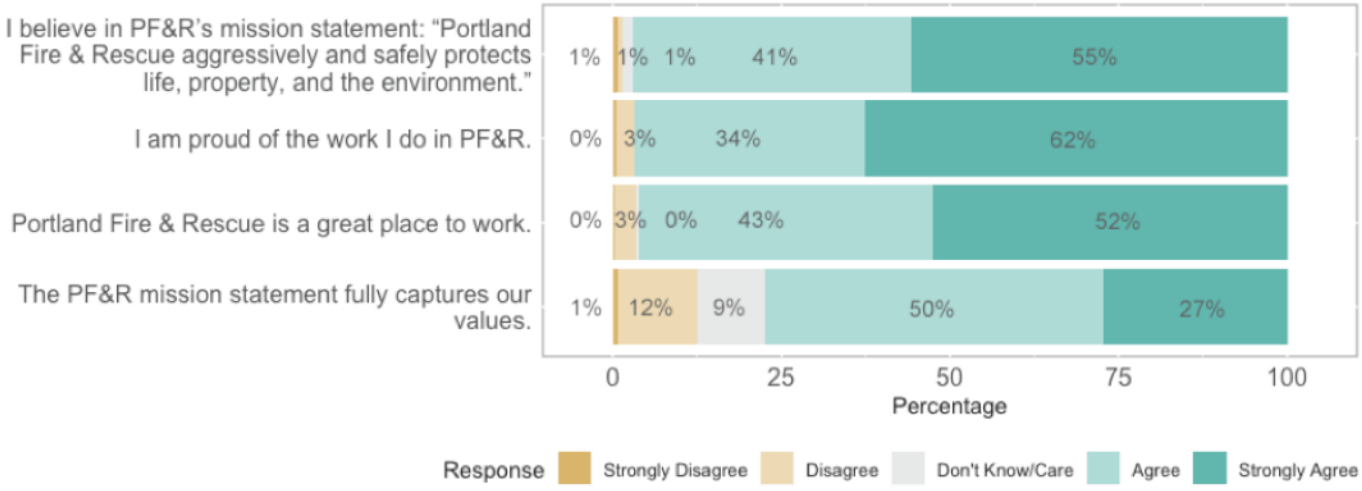
2) High professional expectations and commitment

The members of PF&R are very passionate about their jobs and services they deliver to the community. The focus group and interview respondents shared how much they "enjoy the passion" they have for the job. They described PF&R as a "professional organization" and noted that the employees are "very dedicated" and have "a

commitment to provide the best service" to the Bureau. They are proud of the high quality of work they provide and do not want to compromise the quality.

The survey responses supported this observation. Almost all (96%) of the respondents noted I believe in the PF&R mission statement that states 'Portland Fire and Rescue aggressively and safely protects life, property and the environment.' When asked if they are proud of their work at PF&R, 96% of respondents Strongly Agreed/Agreed. Also, 95% Strongly Agreed/Agreed with the statement that PF&R is a great place to work.[3]

CHART 2.



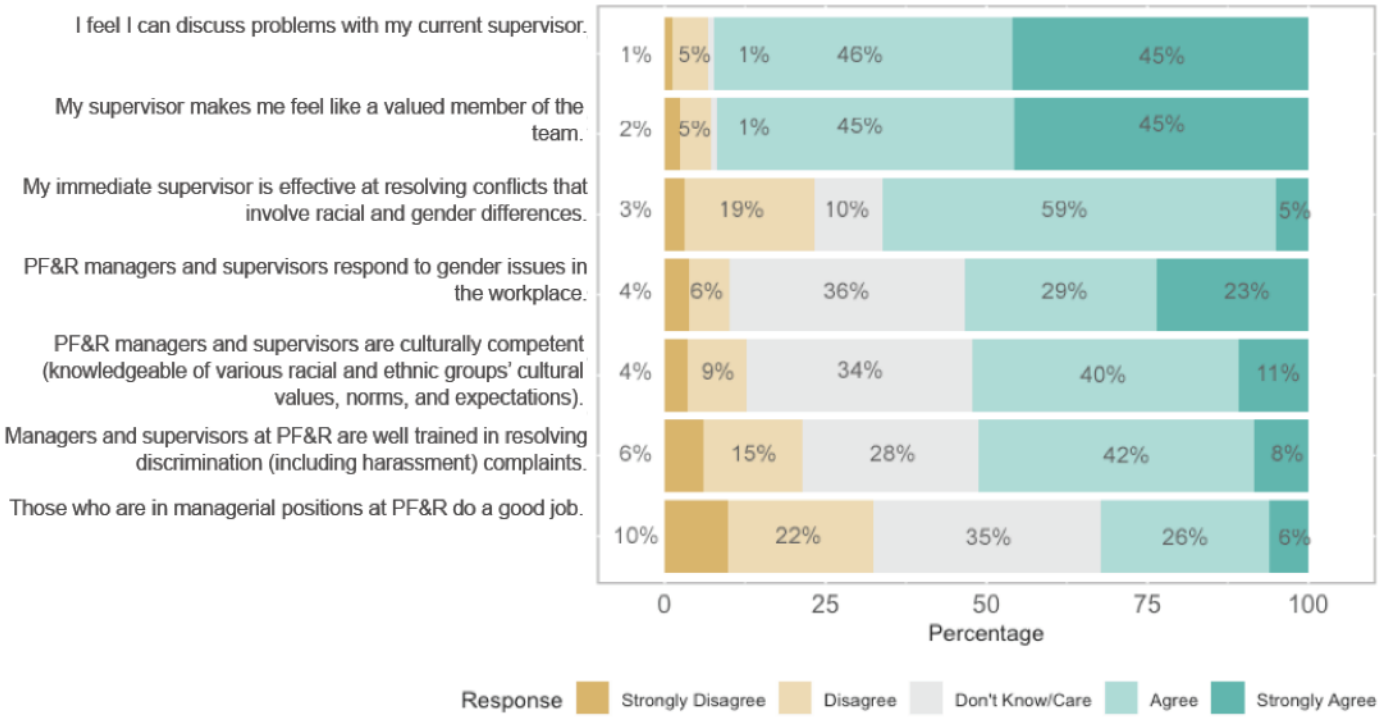
Supervisors and managers play an important role in setting the standard for professional expectations and provide support for the employees to grow. For example, referring to the role of the Battalion Chief, one of the focus group participants noted that Battalion Chiefs "play a significant role on how to first get a look, [and gauge] the temperature of the bureau and figure out how to change the trajectory." They need to "connect, make relationships, build trust" and be the ones to answer questions from the employees.

Survey findings indicate high levels of support and approval for direct supervisors and managers. Survey respondents indicated that my supervisor makes me feel like a valued member of the team (91% Strongly Agreed/Agreed), and reported that I feel I can discuss problems with my current supervisor (90% Strongly Agreed/Agreed). Those

3 Note: When reporting the different responses, rounding may prevent the total from matching the overall value in the bar charts.

who occupy a management position are generally regarded as doing a good job (64% Strongly Agreed/Agreed).

CHART 3.



3) Being bold

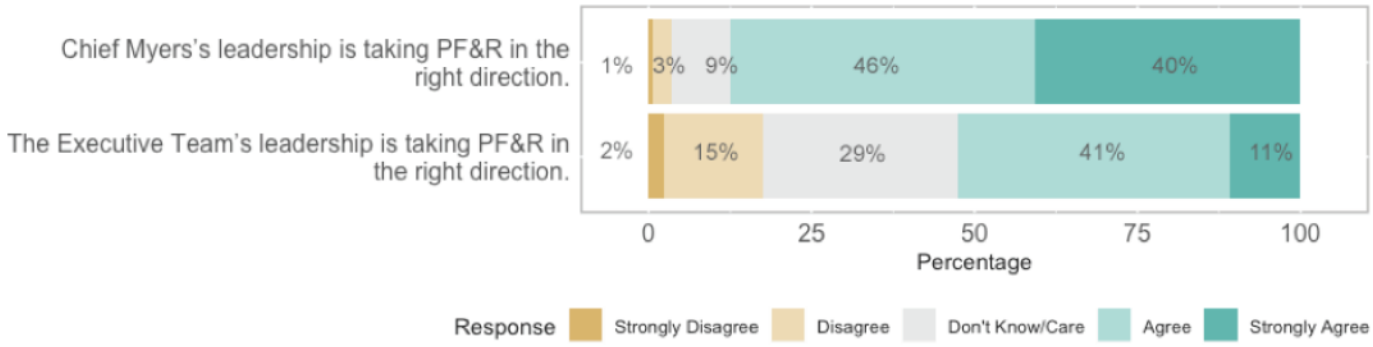
Being bold refers to creating and implementing innovative strategies in the workplace to facilitate problem solving. One of the members of the leadership team noted in the interview that it is important for the leadership to encourage the firefighters to "come up with the ideas in the station," and the role of the leadership is to "help them succeed." The employees also recognize the emphasis on being innovative. One survey respondent noted that the PF&R management team allows the firefighters to "think outside the box, and bring innovative and creative ideas" to the Bureau.

Being bold also describes employees who would speak-up or stand-up when witnessing

a situation that went against PF&R's goal of creating an equitable workplace. Many employees described situations where they had meaningful conversation with an individual after a situation in private, in which the "situation" made the employee uncomfortable. Other employees felt comfortable addressing the situation as it was unfolding. Whether done in front of the entire firehouse or privately, speaking up is seen as bold which is promoted and embraced as a desired attribute among PF&R members.

PF&R members are keenly aware that Chief Myers is the champion of being bold. One of the focus group participants noted, "Chief Myers wants us to be bold, that's one our biggest things, be bold." Survey response suggests that the PF&R employees are in agreement with Chief Myers' orientation. In the survey when asked if they believe Chief Myers's leadership is taking PF&R in the right direction, 86% Strongly Agreed/Agreed with the statement, only 4% Strongly disagreed/disagreed. When asked if the Executive Team's leadership is taking PF&R in the right direction, 52% Strongly Agreed/Agreed, while 29% responded Don't Know/Care.

CHART 4.



4) Diversity in the workforce

There is a general agreement that having a diverse workforce is a good thing. Focus group participants and interviewees recognized that "everybody has something of value to bring," and emphasized the importance of addressing diversity, equity and inclusion "at all levels." In particular, they emphasized the importance of not just becoming diverse but being inclusive to diverse voices. One focus group member said, "the bureau needs to strive to listen to the voice, the voices of minority members, the minority firefighters, women, firefighters of color. Because their numbers are small still, compared to the 700

firefighters we now have."

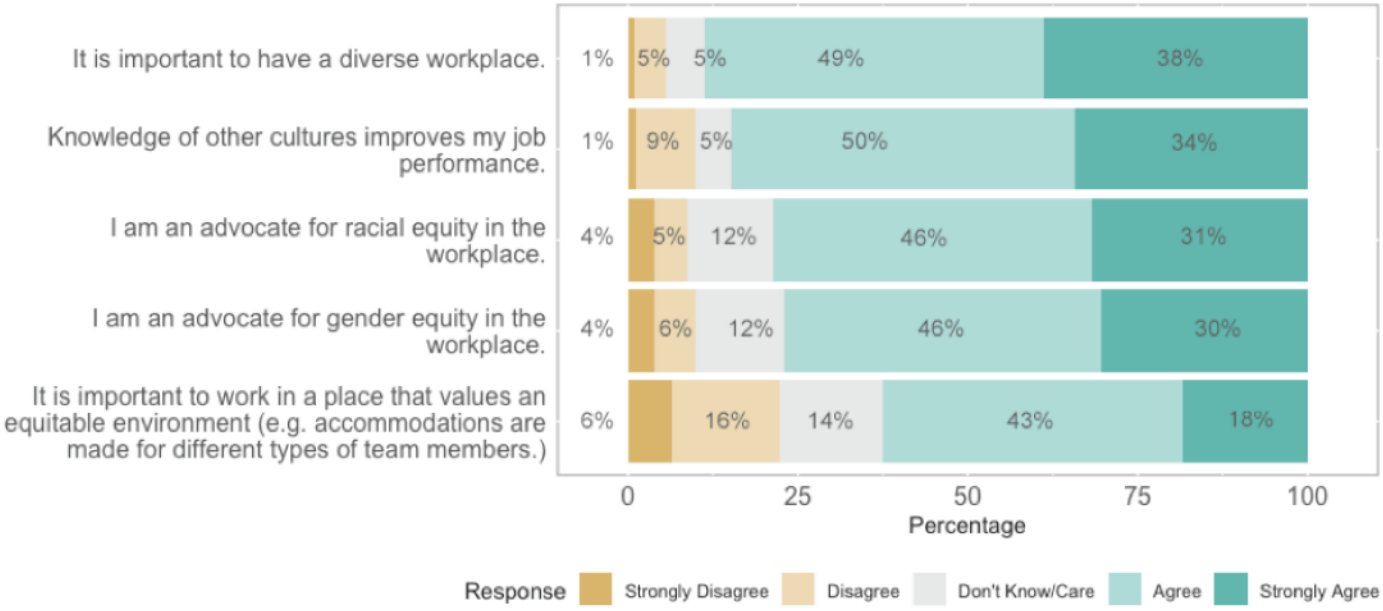
PF&R employees are also aware that promoting diversity, equity and inclusion is a priority for the organization. For example, one focus group participant noted, "Chief Myers has emphasized on equality and diversity. I think he [has] certainly set an expectation, [that] this is a high priority, not just talking. You need an action to show that."

PF&R workforce demographics and dynamics are changing; getting younger with different attitudes, more living outside of Portland, and are better at responding to each other appropriately, but still the workforce remains predominantly white male. There is a recognition that the community PF&R serves is changing. As one of the leadership members in the interview stated, "Our community's changing. We need to change our diversity".

The survey supported the findings from the interviews and focus groups. Support for diversity is very high among respondents. A majority of the respondents Strongly Agreed/Agreed that it is important to have a diverse workplace, (87%). Also, 84% of respondents Strongly Agreed/Agreed that knowledge of other cultures improves their job performance and 10% Strongly Disagreed/Disagreed.

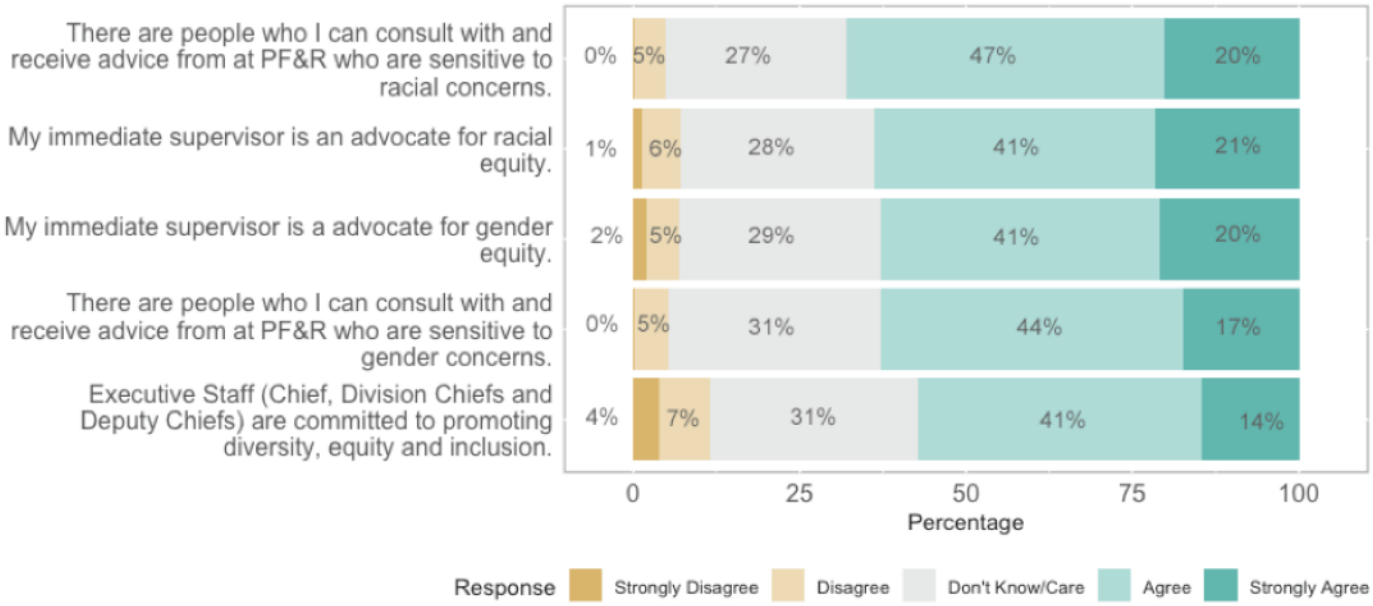
The survey also found that most employees at PF&R consider it is important to work in a place that values an equitable environment (61% Strongly Agreed/Agreed). A high percentage of employees considered as themselves as advocates for racial equity in the workplace (77% Strongly Agreed/Agreed). A high percentage of employees also considered themselves as advocated for gender equity in the workplace (76% Strongly Agreed/Agreed).

CHART 5.



In the survey, PF&R employees acknowledge that there are people who I can consult with and receive advice from at PF&R who are sensitive to racial concerns (67%). PF&R employees acknowledge that there are people who I can consult with and receive advice from at PF&R who are sensitive to gender concerns (61%). Employees also recognized that their immediate supervisors and the executive staff (Chiefs) are committed to promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion. Respondents noted that their immediate supervisors are advocates for racial equity (62%) and gender equity (61%). When asked if the executive staff are committed to promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion, 55% Strongly Agreed/Agreed, 11% Strongly Disagreed/Disagreed, and 31% reported Don't Know/Care.

CHART 6.



Recruitment and outreach are recognized by PF&R employees as an integral part of the PF&R strategy in increasing diversity in the workforce. It also contributes to enhance public awareness about the fire service profession and image of PF&R. Many focus group participants and interviewees refer to the "girls camp," and noted its impact. For example, one interviewee said,

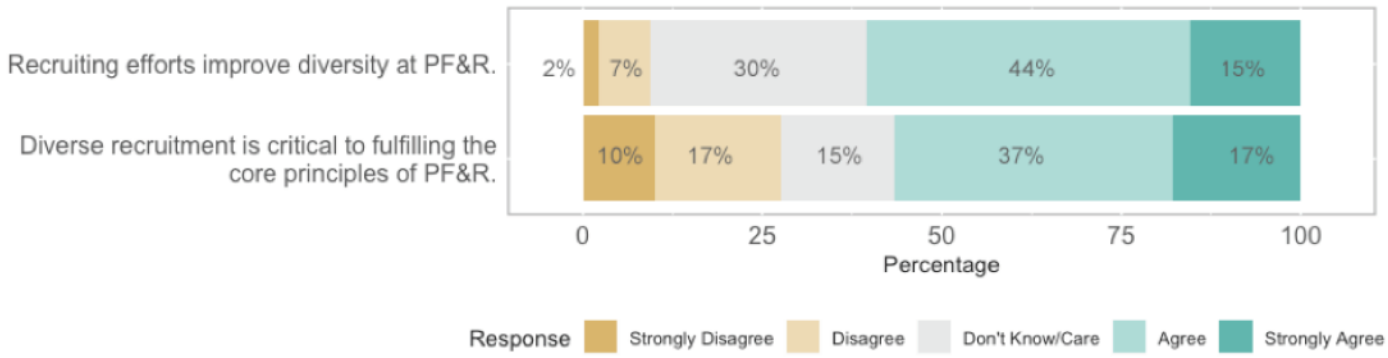
"[Girls camp] is a great recruiting tool in my opinion. It is growing and it is bringing in female firefighters all throughout the region. They train these young girls who are in high school. . . You are going to get quality employees probably in the front door if you give them a little exposure. And then we'll get 30 good years out of some of the individuals if they come through a program like that."

PF&R employees are aware of the work of recruitment and outreach staff who "go out and reach out to different parts of the community, introducing them to the fire service." They noted that these recruiters "at times went to different college, athletic programs, and recruit people who would be interested and can handle the job." The staff members dedicated to recruitment and outreach is valued and respected.

The survey supports the general recognition of the importance of recruiting efforts. A total of 59% of the survey respondents Strongly Agreed/Agreed with the statement that

recruiting efforts improve diversity at PF&R, while 9% Strongly Disagreed/Disagreed. A total of 54% of the survey respondents Strongly Agreed/Agreed that diverse recruitment is critical to fulfilling the core principles of PF&R and 27% Strongly Disagreed/ Disagreed with the statement.

CHART 7.

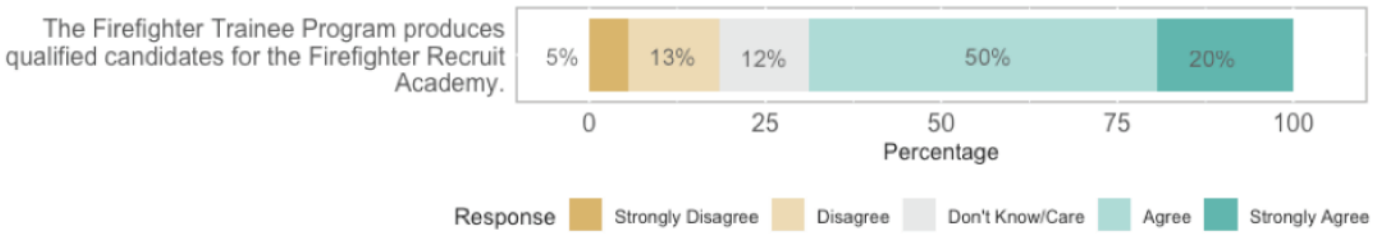


The PF&R employees are aware that in addition to the recruitment and outreach effort, the hiring process also affect the diversity of the workforce. Many focus group participants and interviewees mentioned the "two lists" approach for hiring that was adopted in 1996. In this approach, the applicants are classified into two different types, one with fire service experience (including community college training and other in-service training) and another with no fire service experience. It was an initiative to open the door to those who did not have fire service experience. Those who are hired with fire service experience, go through the Firefighter Recruit Academy upon being hired. Those who are hired with no fire service experience go through the Firefighter Trainee Program first before joining the Academy. Many acknowledged that allowing the pathways for those who did not have fire service experience contributed in furthering the diversity background of firefighters. For example, the interviewees noted, "[the list] has allowed more folks to get in the door who may not have considered this career in the past," and "without it, we would not have been able to bring in and get the numbers of women and minorities that we have now."

The survey data indicates employees see the Firefighter Trainees Program favorably; 70% Strongly Agreed/Agreed that the Firefighter Trainee Program produces qualified

candidate for the Firefighter Recruit Academy.

CHART 8.



5) Community oriented work

The vision of PF&R is that "the community we serve is safe from fires and other emergencies because of our leadership, preparedness, and responsiveness." As such, PF&R is engaged with and involved in protecting and serving people in Portland every day. PF&R employees are dedicated to helping all individuals and communities in Portland. As one of the focus group members stated, "Everyday, we get to go out and help our community, and I think doing the work out there makes us feel good as a group and individually." PF&R firefighters chose the fire service profession because they want to protect and serve Portlanders, and they truly enjoy their engagement with the community. One focus group participant noted, "It is fun to go out and be in the community and talk to people in the grocery store, in the coffee shop or whatever, and make those connections with the community."

As a survey respondent pointed out, "People in the community respect and look up to us. Everyone will need help at some point and it's an honor to be able to be in a position to provide assistance to people." Overall, PF&R is visible and generally recognized as a positive bureau in the community it serves.

II. What Counters the Highlights of PF&R Culture

PF&R study participants also expressed their observations of the PF&R workplace culture that counters what they value, and may be hindering PF&R's effort in making the workplace more inclusive, cooperative, and productive. The following section summarizes key issues noted by the study participants that counter each one of the five key highlights

of the PF&R workplace culture.

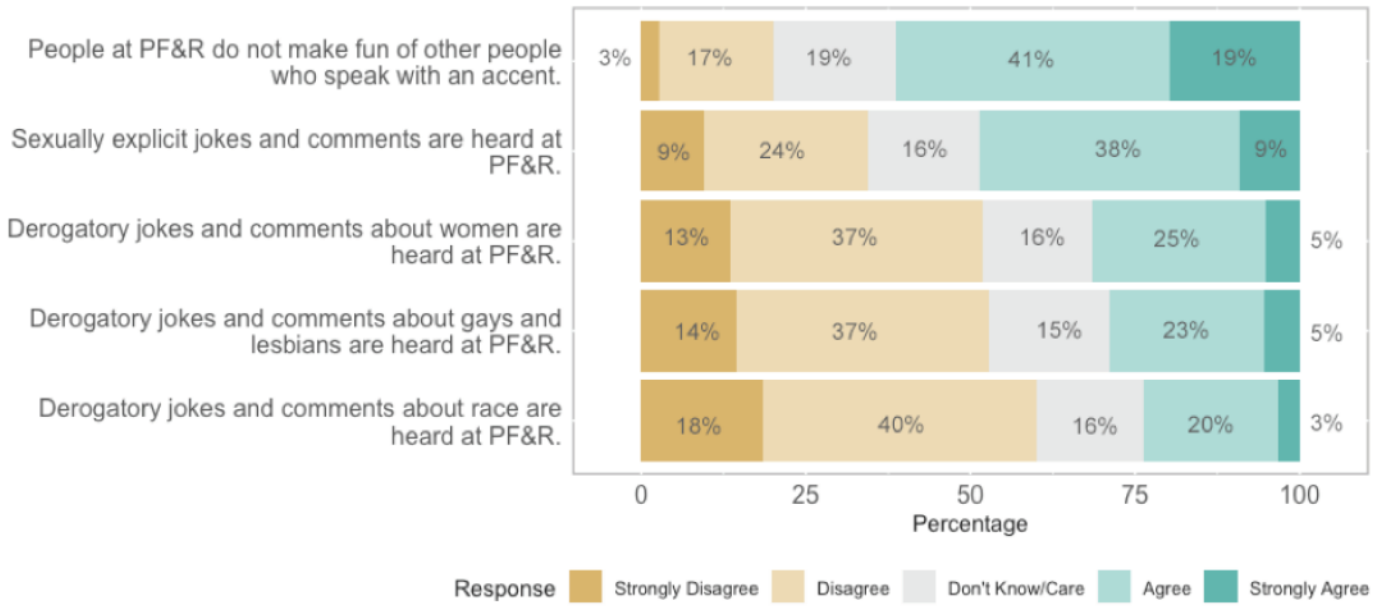
1) PF&R values a cohesive workplace like "family" . . . BUT

a. Family-like culture may allow some PF&R members to behave unprofessionally at work

While family-like culture is valued by PF&R employees, some noted that the station culture can foster norms and behaviors that may not be appropriate for a professional workplace. As the focus group participants observed, sometimes it is hard to know what are "off limits at the kitchen table." Also, sometimes people forget to "remember what the line is [whether it is appropriate or not] because you develop these [family-like] close-knit bonds." Also, the focus group participants and interviewees noted that firefighters exchange jokes and "banter" with each other to handle the stress of the work and de-stress. As one focus group participant said, "we kind of joke around about stuff maybe more than the average person. I think it is a coping mechanism." However, sometimes these exchanges can cross the line that is acceptable in the professional environment and become inappropriate.

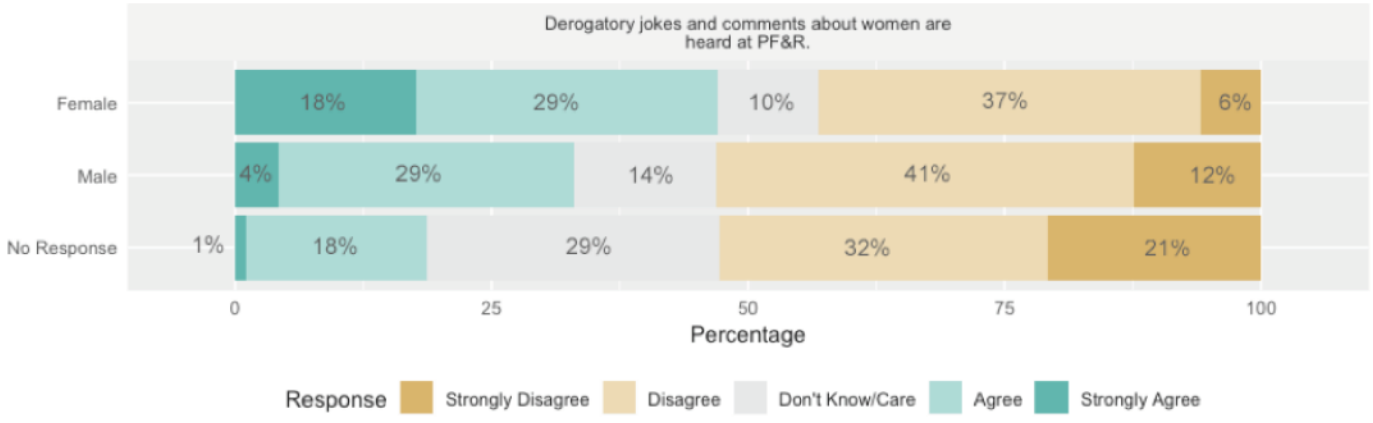
The survey asked a series of questions about derogatory jokes and comments. While 47% of the survey respondents reported that sexually explicit jokes and comments are heard at PF&R, 30% reported that derogatory jokes and comments about women are heard at PF&R, 28% reported that derogatory jokes and comments about gays and lesbians are heard at PF&R, and 23% reported that derogatory jokes and comments about race are heard at PF&R. A total of 20% of survey respondents reported hearing employees at PF&R making fun of other people who speak with an accents.

CHART 9.



When the responses were broken down by gender, women reported hearing derogatory jokes about women more compared to men, at 47% to 33%.

CHART 10.



b. Some PF&R members may need to develop better personal conflict resolution skills

Given the family-centric environment, conflict is inevitable. PF&R employees observed

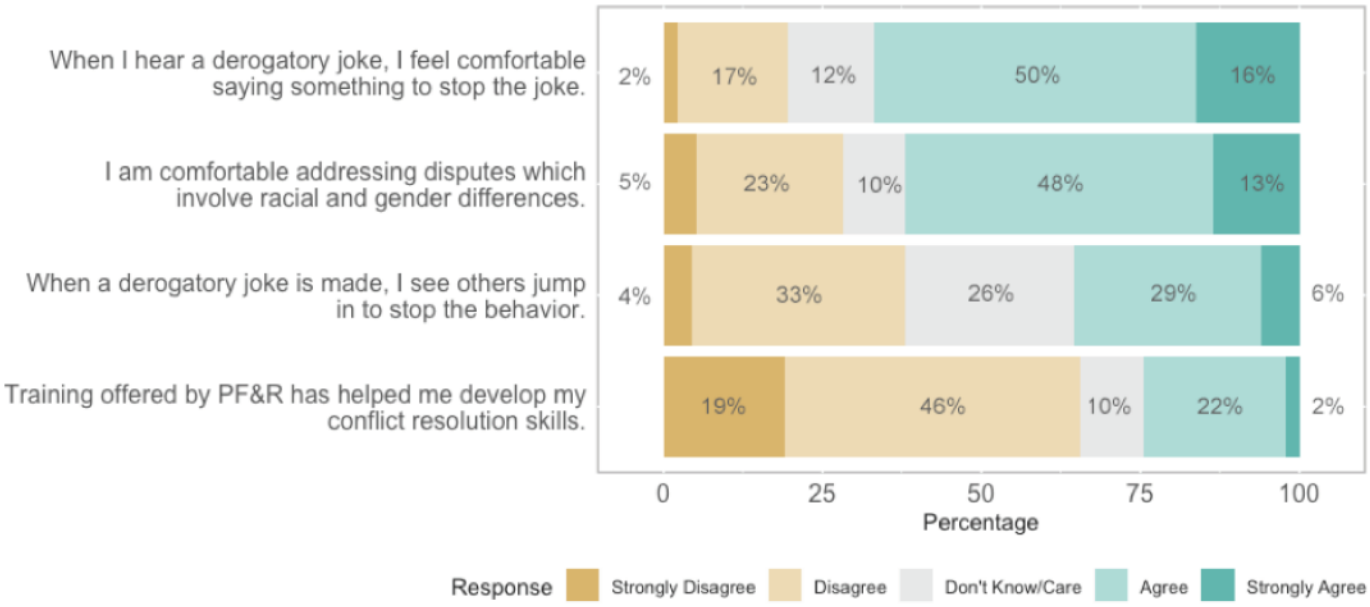
that occasionally a small number of people in the bureau exhibit unacceptable behavior that could develop into a conflict. One focus group member illustrated the situation and stated, "Think about you have a family member and you have a cousin that drives you crazy… Usually you tolerate it until it gets so bad." While there are official processes in place to reduce conflicts or help mediate tension, in the close, family-like relationships people have with each other, sometimes it is difficult to call out problematic behaviors and address the conflict. As one focus group participant explained and said, "feeling really close to folks makes it challenging, sometimes, on the accountability piece." Also, the physical proximity in the fire-station makes it harder to find a space to discuss interpersonal issues. For example, as the focus group participant illustrated, "fire stations aren't actually all that conducive for two people to have good conversation. There was no location to have a professional one-on-one conversation where you weren't going to get interrupted." Participants in the interviews and focus groups noted the importance of needing to develop better communication and personal conflict resolution skills.

In survey responses, a similar set of concerns were identified. When asked about hearing a derogatory joke, respondents report they interrupt the joking but do not see others interrupt joking as much. The survey asked a pair of questions about interrupting derogatory jokes. The first question asked if the respondent feels comfortable saying something to stop the joke; 66% responded they do. When asked if they see others jump in to stop the behavior, only 35% reported seeing this behavior.

When asked if they are comfortable addressing disputes which involve racial and gender differences, 61% of respondents indicated that they are comfortable. However, only 24% reported that training offered by PF&R has helped them develop conflict resolution skills. For both questions, 10% responded Don't Know/Care.[4]

4 In a survey, it is known that respondents typically show positive bias towards themselves and negative bias toward others. This may explain the discrepancies between the higher rates of reporting of their own behavior, taking actions to interrupt derogatory comments, and lower rate of reporting in observing others taking actions to interrupt derogatory comments.

CHART 11.



c. Family-like cohesiveness can alienate some individuals and groups, or put pressure to conform

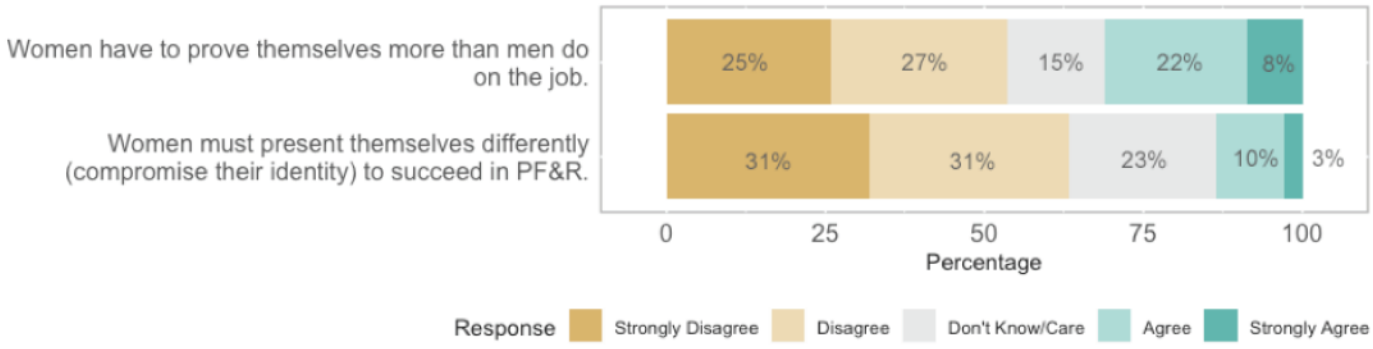
The interview and focus group participants point out that family-like culture and the cohesiveness among the members can sometimes make some individual and groups feel alienated. One participant described the feeling and said, "I was an outsider [because I was a female]. Not that they were treating me bad. But it felt like they didn't know how to interact with me." People can feel being alienated due to one's demographic background, one's personality, or their assignment as being a traveler. For example, one focus group member said, "I've been traveling for a year and I finally feel like people are starting to remember me as I come to the station. So, you feel a little, a lot more isolated."

The family-like environment sometimes puts pressures on minority firefighters to conform to the culture. One of the interviewees noted that, "There's enormous pressure on people, especially I think women and minorities, to fit in. And people, I think, sacrifice sometimes, or they lose who they are because of the pressure to fit in." Another interviewee pointed out that there is tremendous pressure "on people in the minority groups to acclimate, to fit in and sometimes seek approval."

The survey provided an interesting result on the observation that some minority firefighters have to prove themselves to fit in. For the statement, women have to prove themselves more than men do on the job, overall 52% of the respondents Strongly Disagreed/Disagreed. However, when broken down by gender, 76% of women Strongly Agreed/Agreed with women have to prove themselves more than men do on the job while 27% of men Strongly Agreed/Agreed. A total of 13% of the respondents who did not report their gender Strongly Agreed/Agreed with this statement.

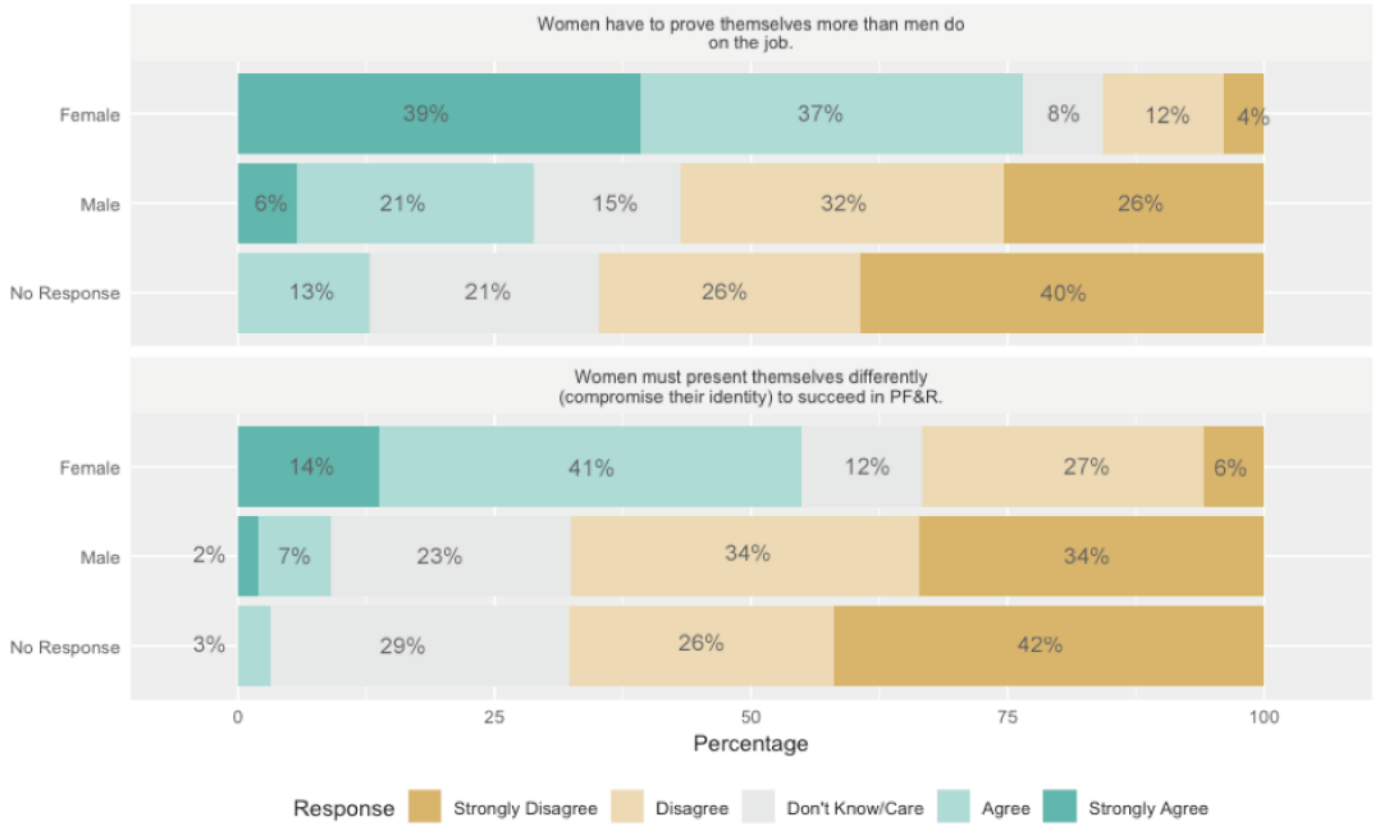
For the statement, women must present themselves differently (compromise their identity) to succeed in PF&R, overall 62% of the respondents Strongly Disagreed/Disagreed. However, when broken down by gender 55% of women Strongly Agreed/Agreed but only 9% of men Strongly Agreed/Agreed and 3% of those who did not report their gender Strongly Agreed/Agreed.[5]

CHART 12.



5 It should be noted, however, that only 12% of respondents in the survey identified as women, and therefore, it requires some caution in interpreting these results.

CHART 13.



For the statement, Persons of color have to prove themselves more than white coworkers do on the job, overall 75% of the respondents Strongly Disagreed/Disagreed. However, when broken down by white alone versus other races, 7% of whites Strongly Agreed/Agreed with this statement while 11% of non-whites Strongly Agreed/Agreed. Only 4% of the respondents who did not report their race Strongly Agreed/Agreed with this statement.

CHART 14.

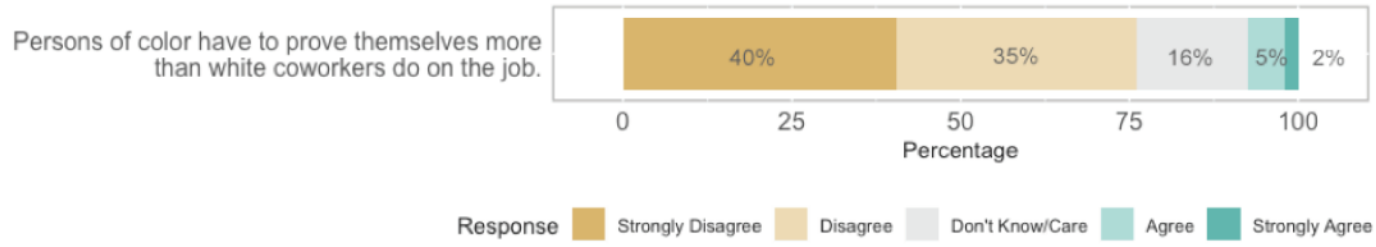
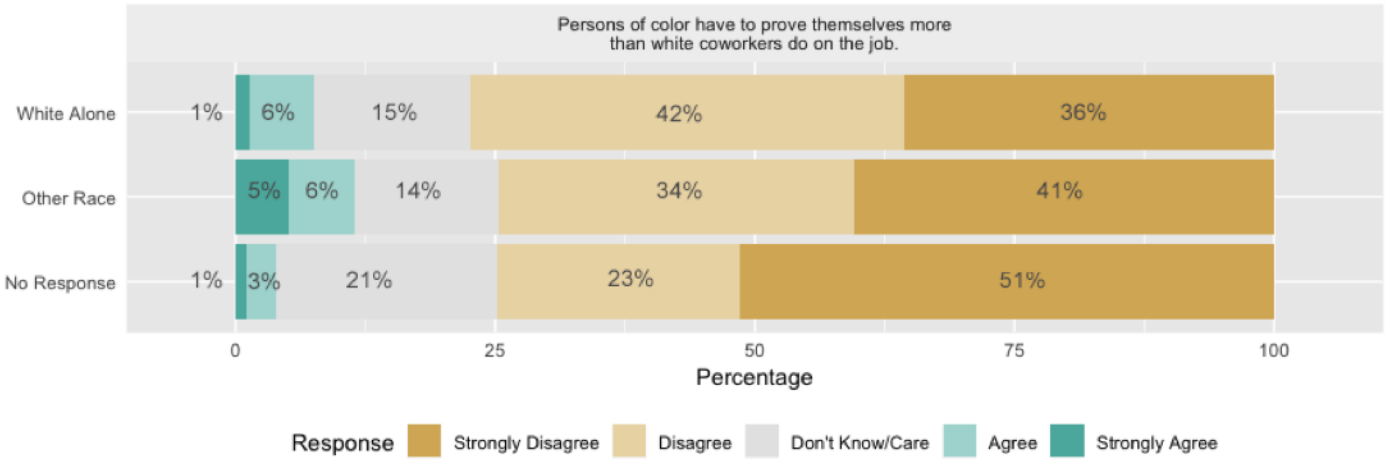


CHART 15.



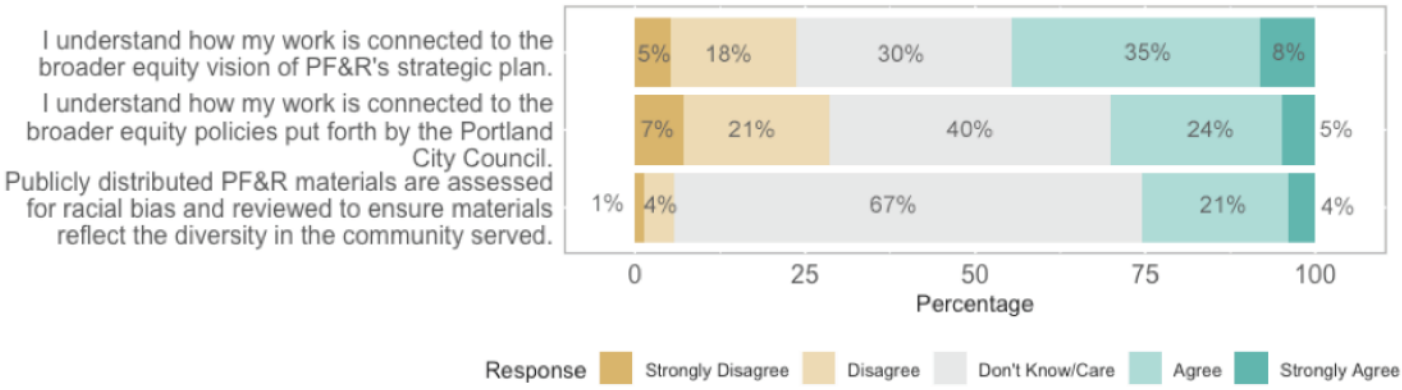
d. The sense of uniqueness can conflict with the City of Portland directives and policies

PF&R employees see their work culture as unique and significantly different from that of other City of Portland bureaus. The sense of uniqueness comes from the 24-hour shift work schedule, strong family-like interpersonal relationships, and the nature of the work itself. The sense of uniqueness harbors frustration among PF&R employees against other bureaus in the City of Portland. PF&R employees perceive some city-wide activities, directives, and policies do not fit well with the PF&R ways of operation and workplace culture. For example, the mandatory training for all City employees does not fit the needs and schedule for most firefighters. One of the focus group participants expressed the frustration saying, "We have made [City mandated] diversity training nothing but an annoyance to everybody that participates." They noted that because the trainers for the City-wide diversity training "had never worked our job, as soon as we got back on the rig, it was like, oh well, they don't have any idea what we do. [The training] really needs to come from a source that has been part of our job."

The survey asked questions if the respondents' understanding on how their work connects with the equity polices and visions of City of Portland and PF&R. For the statement, I understand how my work is connected to the broader equity policies put forth by the Portland City Council 40% responded Don't Know/Care, while 29% Strongly Agreed/Agreed and 28% Strongly Disagreed/Disagreed. On the other hand, for the

statement I understand how my work is connected to the broader equity vision of PF&R's strategic plan, 43% respondents Strongly Agreed/Agreed, 23% Strongly Disagreed/ Disagreed and 30% responded Don't Know/Care.

CHART 16.



2) PF&R values high professional expectations and commitment . . . BUT

a. The high professional expectations can lead to high pressure and high stress in the work environment

Acceptance into the PF&R workplace is primarily based on one's ability to do the job. The ability to do the job is measured not just by physical ability, but by mental, emotional, and motivational factors as well. PF&R members have a general expectation that to be a PF&R firefighter, one needs to be well trained and prove that one can do the job well. One of the focus group members pointed out that to be a firefighter at PF&R, "having the technical skills is really important. [He or she needs to be] trained right and being able to arrive and actually have a solution to the problem. I feel like equal to that is being able to show up with confidence in yourself and your crew."

New firefighters and firefighters with a non-traditional demographic background (e.g. women, ethnic minority) expressed that they feel a strong pressure to work twice as hard and go above and beyond the minimum to show their colleagues firefighters they are just as capable. One female interviewee noted, "You have to prove yourself, too. Every day you come to work, you have to prove yourself, and that was my goal, was to prove

myself every day." The pressure placed on themselves derives from a stigma that some firefighters believe women and minorities were only hired for their diversity, not physical or mental strength.

The stress caused by an attempt to combat the stigma by minority firefighters, and the stress caused by the nature of the type of work, can lead to burn out. As one focus group participants describe, "we rely on someone's passion and willingness to do the job, and go above and beyond. And I think it leads to burnout. If at the end it doesn't get the traction or support, you feel like 'well I just spun my wheels for a year' and you feel burned out."

PF&R employees shared health concerns caused by stress. One survey respondent noted, "High stress over time often leads to mental health degradation. This degradation works itself out in unpredictable ways such as hostility to co-workers." The health concerns include, but are not limited to PTSD, substance use, mental health, and cancer caused by the high-stress environment. PF&R employees raised the need to have a better understanding of health concerns and managing personal health. One focus group participant advocated to "take behavioral health seriously. Really make an effort as opposed to just having one video-based training episode and call it good. Take an effort to teach people the signs and symptoms of what someone who is going through a mental health crisis look like."

b. High call volumes especially low acuity calls, affects the work morale

High call volume for low acuity is a major cause of stress, compassion fatigue, health concerns, professional development, and behavior issues. Many focus group participants and interviewees highlighted that they are having increasingly high call volume. One focus group participant said, "I think you have a lot of people that are getting burned out on a lot of calls that seem unnecessary and has a negative consequence on their personal lives." Another survey respondent pointed out that "low acuity EMS runs burns out people and causes them to lose faith in the mission and purpose of EMS."

c. There are inconsistencies in enforcing policies and requirements and the decision-making process lacks transparency

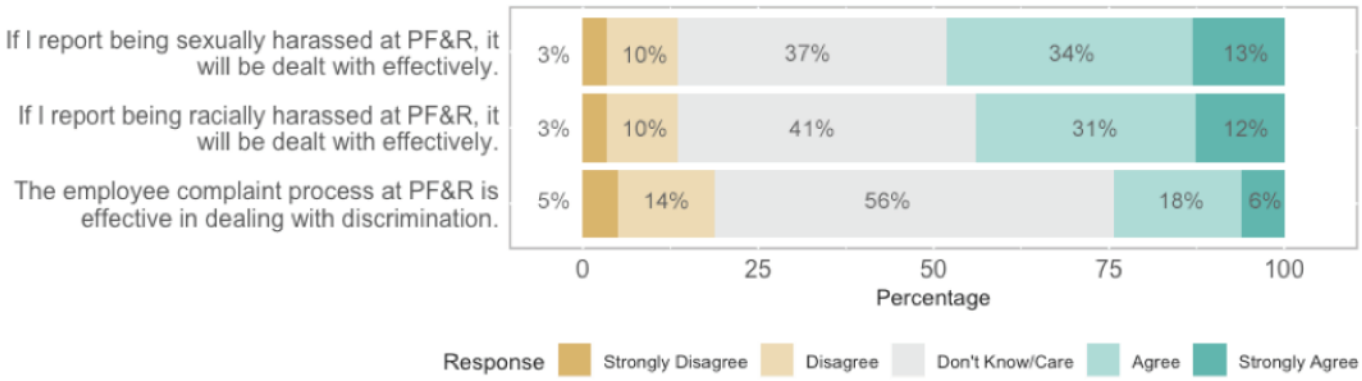
PF&R employees expressed concern about the inconsistency of the enforcement of

policies, discipline, performance evaluation, and training requirements. For example, one focus group participant pointed out that there is "inconsistency with different expectations or interpretation of bureau expectations amongst different districts and then some different houses within the bureau and shifts." Another focus group participant noted, "Some people enforce certain rules, where others turn a blind eye to it." They observed that each supervisor approaches his or her role differently and with a different style in applying enforcement. One interviewee said, "Each supervisor is doing their own performance evaluations of their employee." Consequently, there is often inconsistent disciplinary action taken and feedback subordinates receive may be informal.

PF&R members expressed the need to have more open information sharing and transparency across the bureau in the decision-making process. For example, as one interviewee pointed out, "There are all these different committees and groups, and it is not always clear how you get selected for them or get to participate in them." Another focus group participant said, "I think that there is a separation [between the leadership and others]. I'd like to see that separation go away because I want to understand what they do, and I want them to understand what we do. I guess [we need] transparency and there is none [right now at PF&R.]"

The sense that there are inconsistencies in enforcing policies and that the decision-making process lacks transparency, is reflected in the survey responses on three questions that asked about the effectiveness in handling discrimination and harassment complaints. When respondents were asked whether the employee complaint process at PF&R is effective in dealing with discrimination, 56% of the respondents answered Don't Know/Care while splitting those who Strongly Agreed/Agreed (24%) and those who Strongly Disagreed/Disagreed (19%). When asked if they think reporting being sexually harassed at PF&R will be dealt with effectively, 37% of the respondent answered Don't Know/Care, 47% Strongly Agreed/Agreed, and 13% Strongly Disagreed/Disagreed. When asked if they think reporting being racially harassed at PF&R will be dealt with effectively, 41% of the respondent answered Don't Know/Care, 43% responded Strongly Agreed/Agreed, and 13% Strongly Disagreed/Disagreed. Relatively high response in Don't Know/Care category may be an indication that the policies are not enforced consistently, and the process is not transparent. As a consequence, people do not have much information about the effectiveness of the policies.

CHART 17.



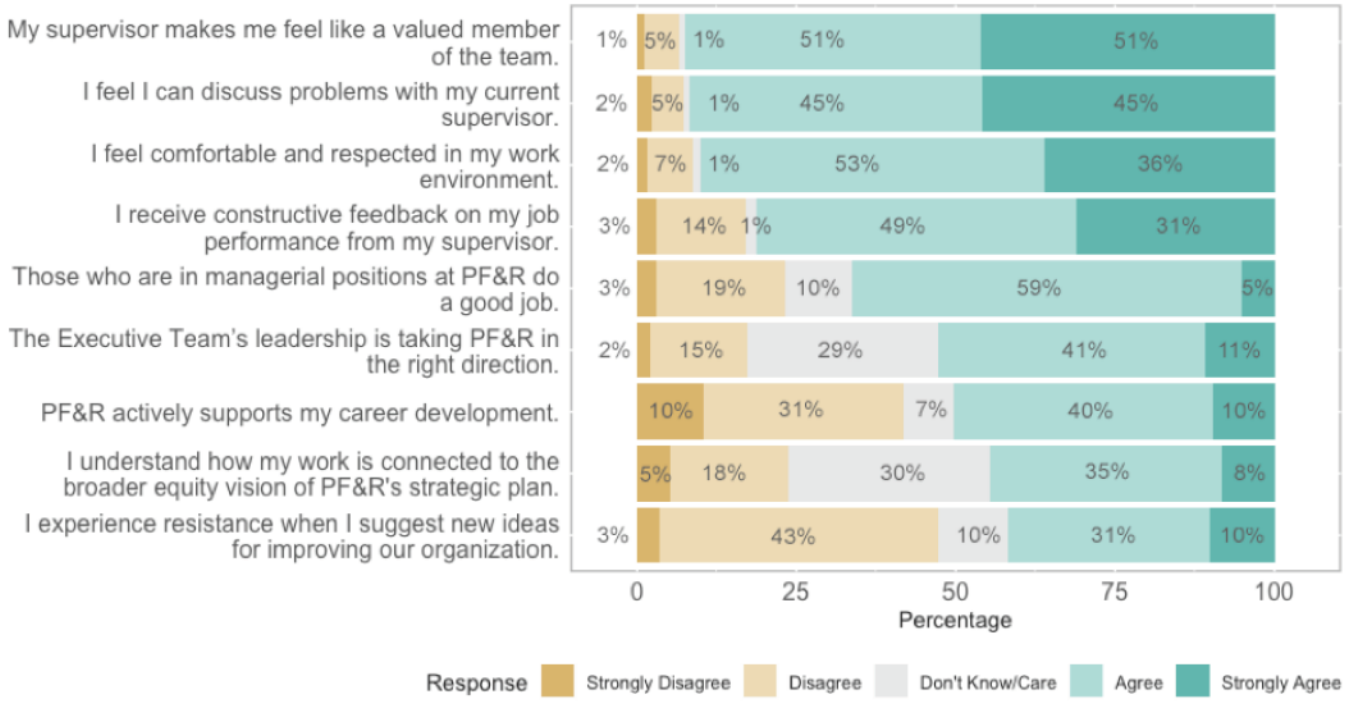
d. People have general frustration with PF&R as an organizational whole.

Responses from the survey suggest that respondents see their direct supervisors as supportive and capable, but they share a lower opinion of the organization as a whole. Comparing relationships with supervisors to previous surveys, there is improvement from 2008 to present. Responses agreeing with the statement my supervisor makes me feel like a valued member of the team grew from 87% to 91% since the 2008 survey.

In Chart 18, questions are sorted by agreement. Questions that directly reflected on supervisors are rated more favorably compared to questions that ask about the organization as a whole.[6] The questions asking about PF&R as a whole included questions asking about the managers and the Executive Team. Disagreement is strongest on the following two questions about the organization. First, PF&R actively supports my career development (41% Strongly Disagree/Disagree). Second, I experience resistance when I suggest new ideas for improving our organization (46% Strongly Disagree/ Disagree).

6 The Don't Know/Care category is large for some of these, but respondents are very certain about supervisors.

CHART 18.



e. Feel a lack of training in (1) interpersonal skills (e.g. communication, conflict resolution) and (2) leadership and supervision skills

PF&R employees expressed concern over the lack support and resources for continuing education and workforce development training, which leads to members feeling unprepared in new positions or roles. As one of the focus group members put it, "There's a big concern for workplace development. We're a very large professional organization, but the continued education and training is very lacking in the bureau."

People favor in-person training over videos through Target Solutions. They noted that Target Solutions is a great idea in concept, but not quite effective. As one focus group participant pointed out, in conducting the training, "the actual communicating with groups of people is far better in some instances. The hands-on training is far better than watching a video on a phone."

The training division is highly valued, and focus group participants and interviewees noted the need for more investment in training. One of the focus group participants said,

"one thing that is needed is more resources at training. I mean the investment that we can put in to providing the attention that the recruits need."

PF&R employees recognized the two areas where PF&R employees benefit from having more trainings are (1) interpersonal skills, such as communication skills and conflict resolution skills; and (2) leadership and supervision skills.

Interpersonal skills: Focus group participants and interviewees noted that while there are ample opportunities for PF&R employees to learn technical skills, there are not many trainings offered focusing on communication techniques to navigate a difficult and sensitive situation. There are no trainings on how to resolve interpersonal conflicts constructively. As one of the focus group participants pointed out, "What we don't do out at training is personnel stuff. We do the strategies and tactics all day long, but there's nothing for conflict resolution." Focus group participants and interviewees emphasized that equipping the PF&R members with interpersonal skills is particularly important in developing an inclusive work environment.

Leadership and supervision skills: Focus group and interview participants also noted that there are very limited training opportunities for firefighters to learn leadership and supervision skills. One focus group participant in a supervisory position noted, "I never had one single class in how to be a leader, or a manager. I think it is a big piece as an organization we are missing." The participants feel it is important to prepare those who are moving into a leadership and supervisory position, since it requires a very different skill-set from being a firefighter. As one focus group participant stated, "I'm taking the lieutenant's test, and I want to be in that role. But at the same time I'm scared to death. I haven't been given the tools I feel I need."

f. Feel a lack of formal mentoring opportunities

Mentoring is currently practiced informally and is primarily self-initiated. PF&R members noted, however, that there is a strong demand for a more formal mentorship program. Mentoring was reported to provide a support system for helping firefighters prepare for promotion. Mentoring also helps new firefighters establish themselves in the profession. As one of the focus group participants noted, "[formal] mentorship is definitely a plus for getting that inclusiveness and getting people to the next level." Those with mentors defined a good mentor as someone with experience, someone who can share their

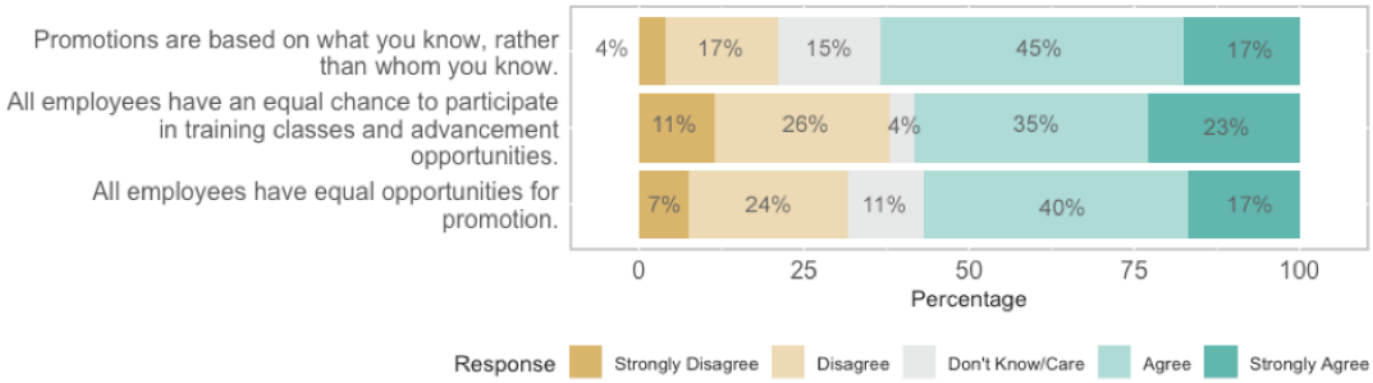
stories, listen to the challenges of the new firefighters, and help them through the process. Many see mentorship with older firefighters as a way to record the history of PF&R and pass down institutional memory of the fire bureau. Mentoring helps facilitate relationship building which may help some firefighters be more equipped with the needed information to advance quicker. Without a formalized mentoring process, some members were concerned stories and institutional knowledge would be lost. For example, one interviewee shared the concern that once the seasoned firefighters retire, "all that knowledge would be gone. One thing we don't do a very good job at is collecting that knowledge and experience before people walk out the door."

g. Feel a lack of clarity in pathways for advancement

There is an equal opportunity to promote within PF&R, but opportunities for advancement are limited or the necessary steps are not clear. As one of the focus group participants pointed out, "PF&R does not do a very good job of [informing] how we take the next step, how we go from a firefighter to a lieutenant, how we go from lieutenant to captain, so on and so on." Firefighters expressed that they do not have a clear idea on their path for advancement. Responsibility lies in the individual to advocate for themselves and "be a self-starter" to find a way to take action for their promotion. They see that much of the decision and expectation for promotion is left to the individual supervisors. One interviewee commented on the promotion process and noted, that "There's a standard form [for non-representative employees], but in terms of expectations or determining who gets a merit increase or how much of a merit increase, it's pretty much left at the discretion of the individual supervisor."

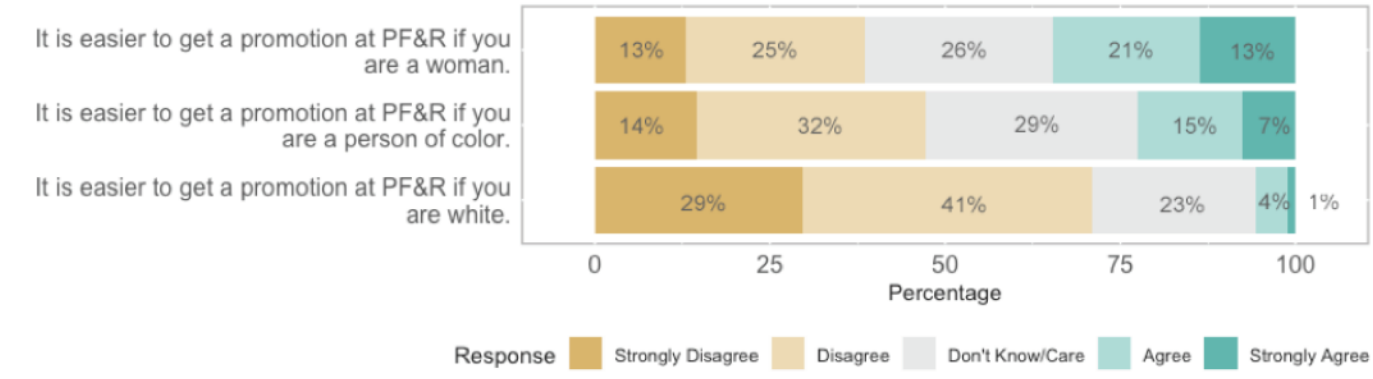
The survey explored several aspects of promotion at PF&R. When asked if promotions are based on what people know, rather than whom they know, 62% Strongly Agreed/Agreed, and 21% Strongly Disagreed/Disagreed. For the question, all employees have an equal chance to participate in training classes and advancement opportunities, 58% Strongly Agreed/Agreed and 37% Strongly Disagreed/Disagreed. When respondents were asked if all employees have equal opportunities for promotion, 57% Strongly Agreed/Agreed and 31% Strongly Disagreed/Disagreed. It is important to note, that a quarter to a third of survey respondents view access to promotion opportunities as not equal for all PF&R employees.

CHART 19.



When asked if specific groups have advantages being promoted, responses were also divide with some respondents sharing concerns that specific groups may receive differential treatment. The survey included a set of three questions about whether women, people of color, or white employees experience an easier time receiving promotions. Of the respondents, 34% Strongly Agreed/Agreed that it is easier to get a promotion at PF&R if you are a woman, 22% Strongly Agreed/Agreed that it is easier to get a promotion at PF&R if you are a person of color, and 6% Strongly Agreed/Agreed that it is easier to get a promotion at PF&R if you are white.

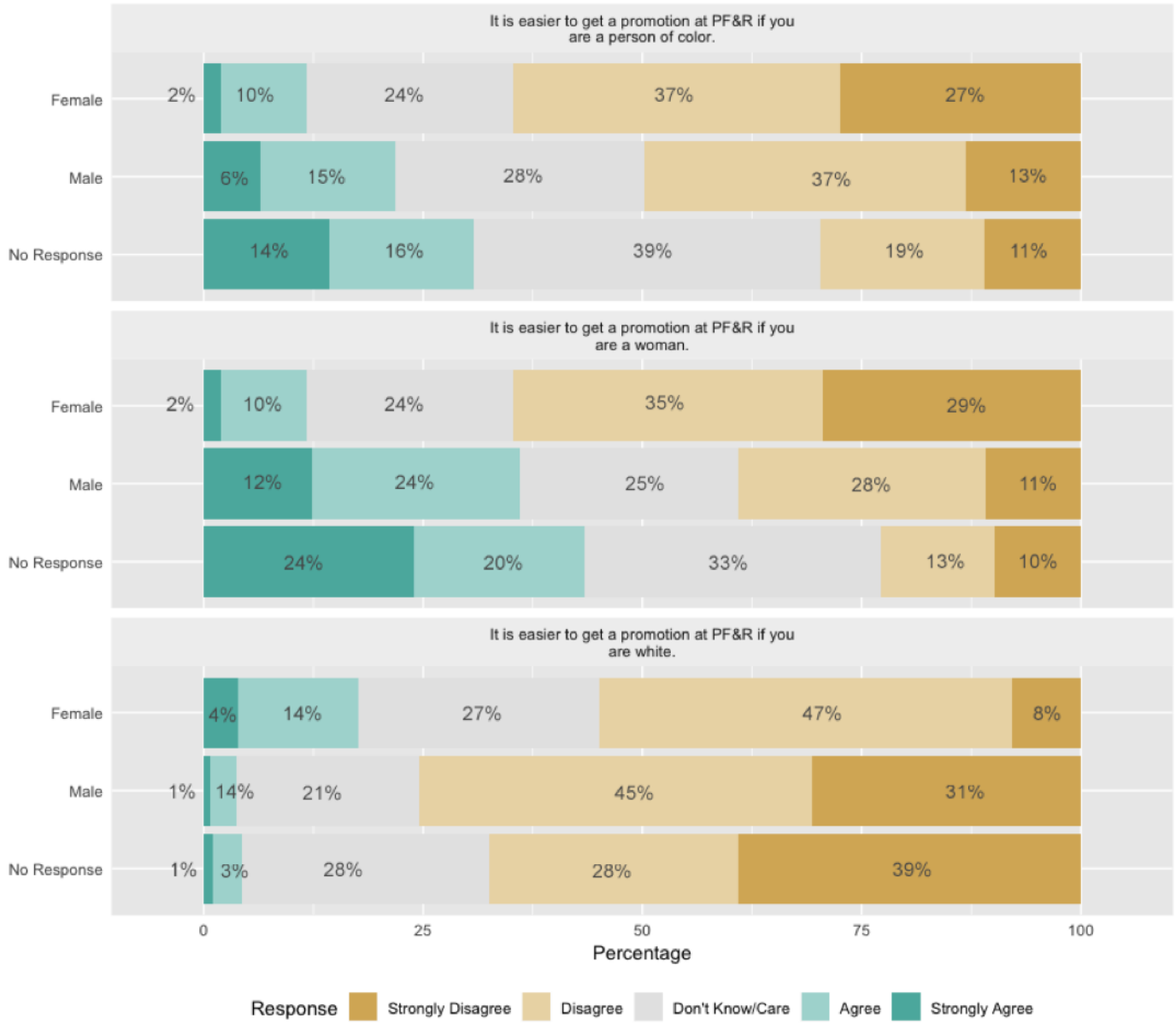
CHART 20.



Responses to these questions varied among respondents' demographics. For the it is easier to get a promotion at PF&R if you are a woman, 12% of female respondents Strongly Agreed/Agreed, while 36% of male respondents Strongly Agreed/Agreed. A

total of 44% of those that did not report their gender Strongly Agreed/Agreed.[7]

CHART 21.

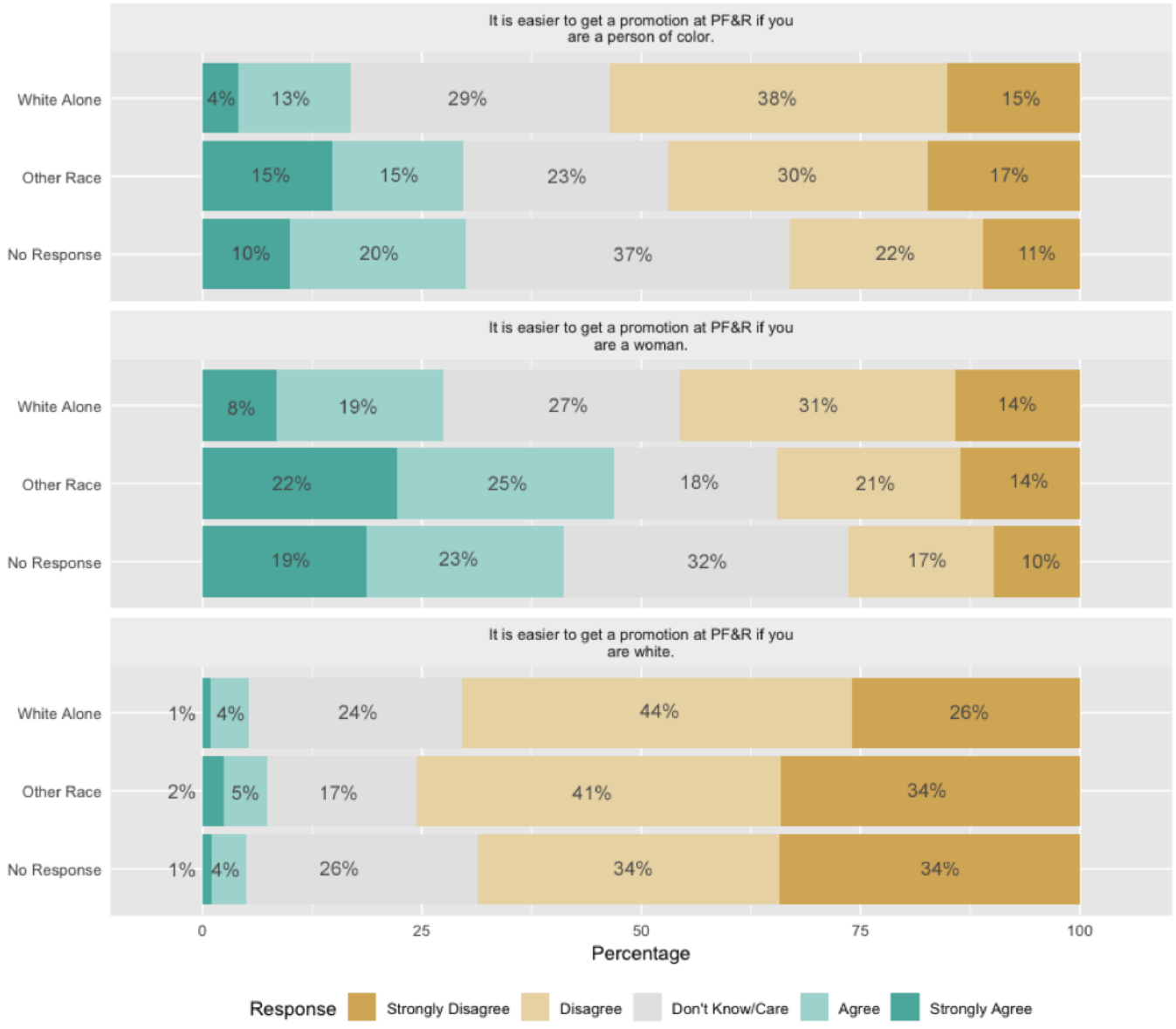


With respect to the question about perception of promotion of people of color, it is easier to get a promotion at PF&R if you are a person of color, the responses are less varied across the respondents' self-identified racial category. White alone Strongly

7 As a reminder, almost a quarter of the respondents did not report their gender in the survey.

Agreed/Agreed at 17%. Respondents identifying as some other race Strongly Agreed/ Agreed at 30%.[8]

CHART 22.



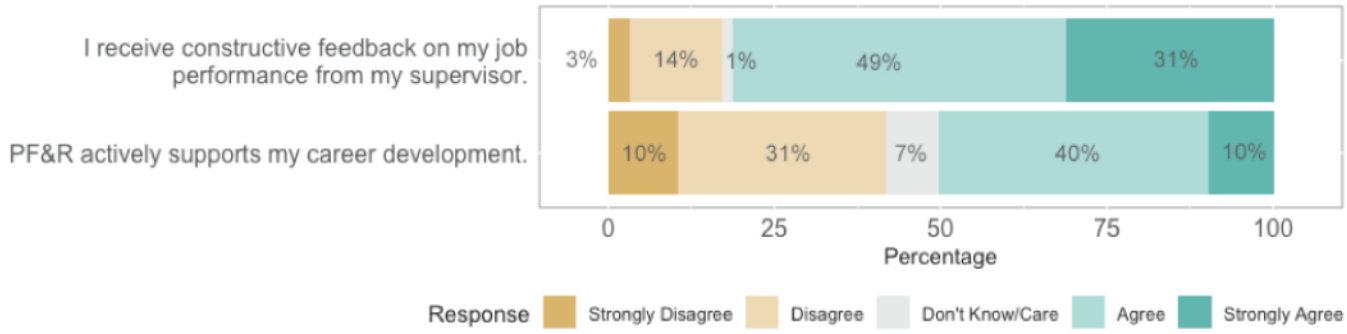
Perspectives on ease of promotion for white employees was consistent across groups and was consistent across race and gender. The result suggests that while there are perceived challenges for certain groups, white employees are not broadly perceived as having an

8 Please note, over a quarter of respondents did not share their racial identity in the survey. It is also important to note that 22% to 27% did not answer promotion questions.

advantage due to their race.

The survey included two questions about job performance feedback and career development. Overall, employees feel they receive good feedback on their job performance. When asked if they receive constructive feedback on their job performance from their supervisor, a majority of the respondents (80%) Strongly Agreed/Agreed. However, when asked if they think PF&R actively supports their career development, responses were split with 50% Strongly Agreed/Agreed and 41% Strongly Disagreed/Disagreed. This echoes patterns from some other survey questions that reports PF&R employees getting strong support from individual supervisors and managers, but not perceiving organization level support.[9]

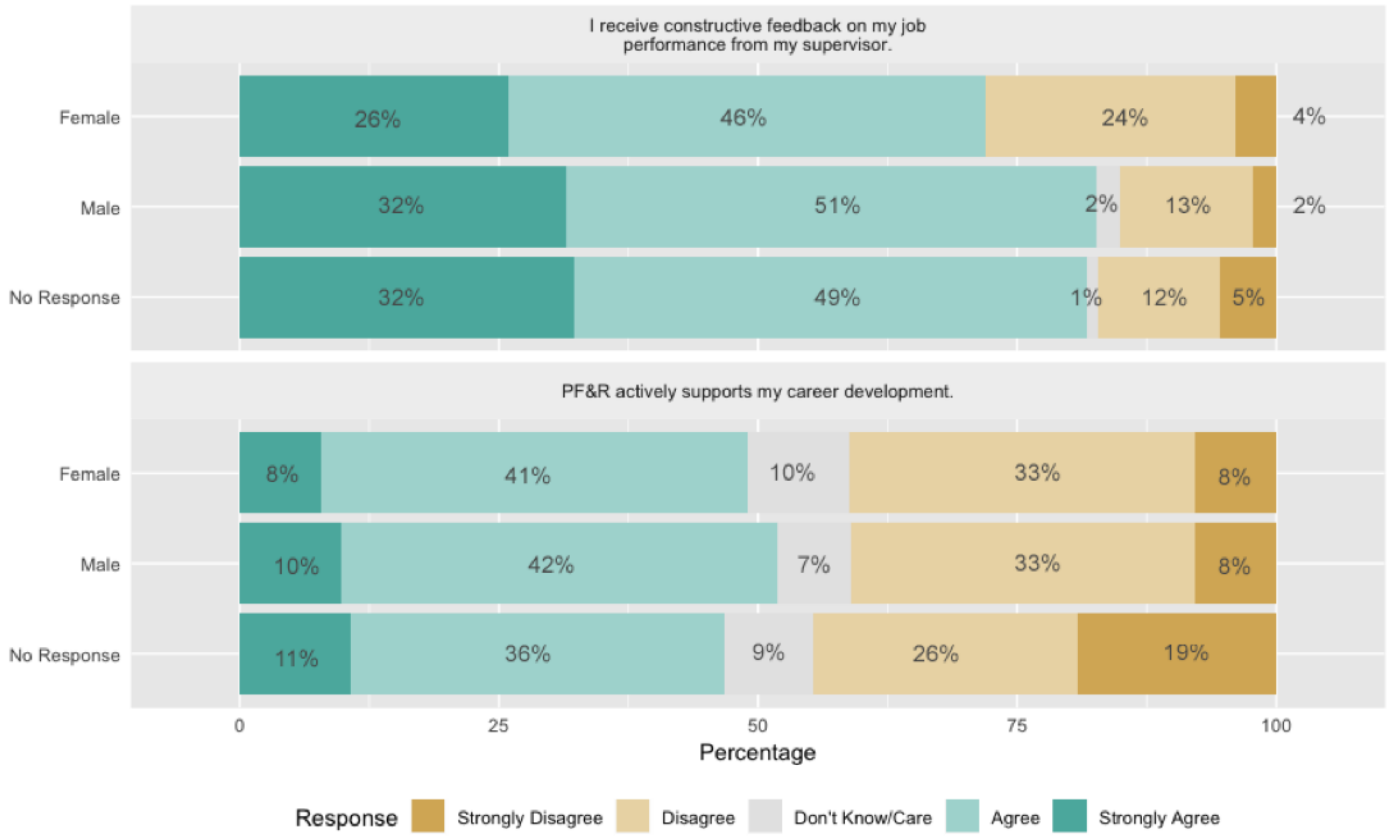
CHART 23.



When the responses to statements in Chart 21 are broken down by gender, women Strongly Agreed/Agreed less on receiving constructive feedback on their job performance from the supervisor (72% women, 83% men). As to perceiving whether PF&R actively supports their career development, men and women respond equally (49% women, 52% men).

9 See Chart 18.

CHART 24.



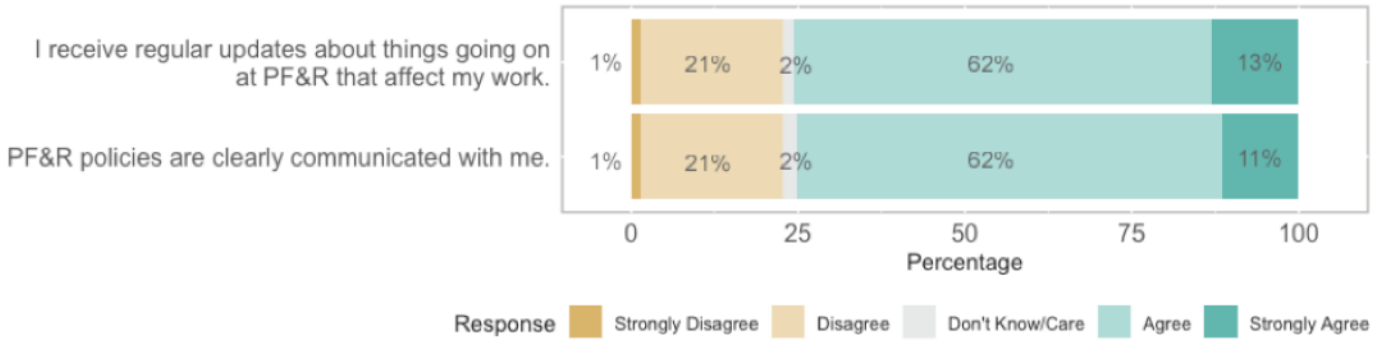
h. Need better communication across individuals, units, shifts and ranks

Some focus group and interview participants pointed out issues in sharing information and communicating across different individuals, units, shifts, and ranks. Sometimes the information got distorted in the process of dissemination or the information did not reach others. For example, one of the interviewees noted, "C shift might communicate with their C shift peers, but that message, again, gets distorted when it's B shift, and even more distorted when they talk to A shift about it."

The survey results, however, contradicted the observations shared in the focus groups and interviews. In two questions asked about the communication process, respondents rated communication and the sharing of PF&R policies as generally good. When asked I receive regular updates about things going on at PF&R that affect my work, 75% Strongly Agreed/Agreed. When asked if PF&R policies are clearly communicated with them, 73% Strongly Agreed/Agreed. The results suggest that overall communication process may be

good, yet there are areas for improvement.

CHART 25.



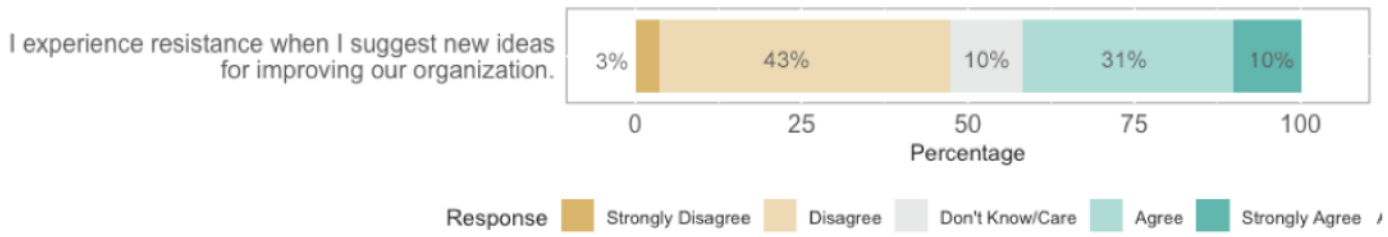
3) PF&R values being bold . . . BUT

a. Those who speak up may experience negative reactions

Being bold is promoted as a desired attribute. Although the concept is valued, some PF&R members observed that there can be backlash and retribution, depending on what and how the persons express their opinion and act in different situations. One focus group participant shared the observation that frequently the person who took an initiative to report some concerns, "ends up taking the grief, and the heat, and it's not looked upon favorably" and noted, "although you weren't the one that maybe made the decision or created the offense, you're going to take the heat and the backlash for it, for bringing it forward or that bringing up something that sheds a negative light upon the bureau." Consequently, there is a certain level of hesitancy to speak up or report.

The survey asked if employees experience resistance when they suggest new ideas for improving PF&R. Of respondents, 41% Strongly Agreed/Agreed, and 46% Strongly Disagreed/Disagreed and 10% responded Don't Know/Care.

CHART 26.

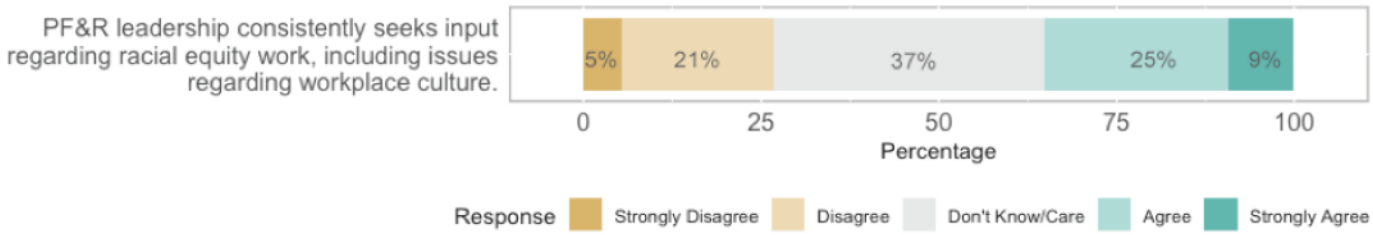


b. Paramilitary structure (and the top-down mentality) may not be conducive to inclusive decision making and innovation

There is a concern that the paramilitary structure, and the hierarchical top-down mentality that works well for fire and emergency situations, may not be the best for managing and leading diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives. As one of the focus group participants pointed out, "it is hard to maintain diversity and equity when the management style holds everyone down." The top-down approach hinders the willingness among those in the lower rank to speak up and be "bold." Another focus group participant commented that "the paramilitary [approach] applied in the day to day management and the running of the organization, I don't think, is the best way to do it." They recognized that the paramilitary approach hinders the organization's desire to be innovative and prevents employees from feeling ownership of the changes. They emphasized that "we need to have a way to tap into people's experiences when they are passionate about things or new process and techniques." In other words, the hierarchical and top down mentality can counter the organization's desire to promote equity and inclusion.

In the survey, when asked if PF&R leadership consistently seeks input regarding racial equity work, including issues regarding workplace culture, the responses were split with 34% Strongly Agreed/Agreed and 26% Strongly Disagreed/Disagreed. It should be noted that 37% of respondents responded Don't Know/Care.

CHART 27.



4) PF&R values diversity in the workforce . . . BUT

a. Emphasize that diversity should not compromise professional standards

While PF&R values diversity, equity, and inclusion, people emphasized the importance of not compromising professional standards in order to diversify the workforce. As one focus group participant noted, "I just don't think we should ever lower standards to meet equality, which I may have seen in the past." It is important that all employees, regardless of their background, meet the minimum professional standards, and emphasis should be placed on hiring the best regardless of the person's demographic background. One of the interviewees reiterated this point and said, "Everybody is trained to the same standard, and has to meet the same minimum standards. There's no dual standard for everybody. Everybody, when they finish training, they are equals. That's critical."

While agreeing to the importance of maintaining the high professional standards, some also expressed that it may be worthwhile examining the existing standards to see if they are necessary, appropriate, and exclusionary. For example, one interviewee noted, "I don't think you should ever lower the standards of the actual job. But for extreme example, are you required to lift 600 pounds when it only takes 60 pounds to do the job? We need to review, that type of existing standard."

b. Comprehension and commitment for PF&R's diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts are not shared at all levels

While there is a general agreement that it is important for PF&R to promote diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI), not everyone seems to recognize the significance of DEI at PF&R at the same degree. The interviewee shared the observation and noted, "There's probably people that do feel like there are issues. But there's also a big group that,

everything is great." For example, one focus group participant said, "I'm a white male. Maybe I have my blinders on or something, but I don't know what's inequitable about it [at PF&R]. I'm not seeing it." People have different levels of understanding, interest, and commitment to DEI.

The focus group and leadership interview participants shared their observations that the level of commitment to DEI among the PF&R leadership and management is mixed. They noted that some members of the leadership convey strong commitment to promote DEI, but some seem to be hesitant to change. For example, in the focus group, participants discussed the leadership's commitment to DEI and said, "I know we have a lot of work to do and I know we have an open-minded upper management now who has changed things," and ""I think we have a couple of Battalion Chiefs who are interested in equity." But they have also observed that there are some members of the leadership "who can't even say the word 'equity' or 'diversity' without rolling their eyes."

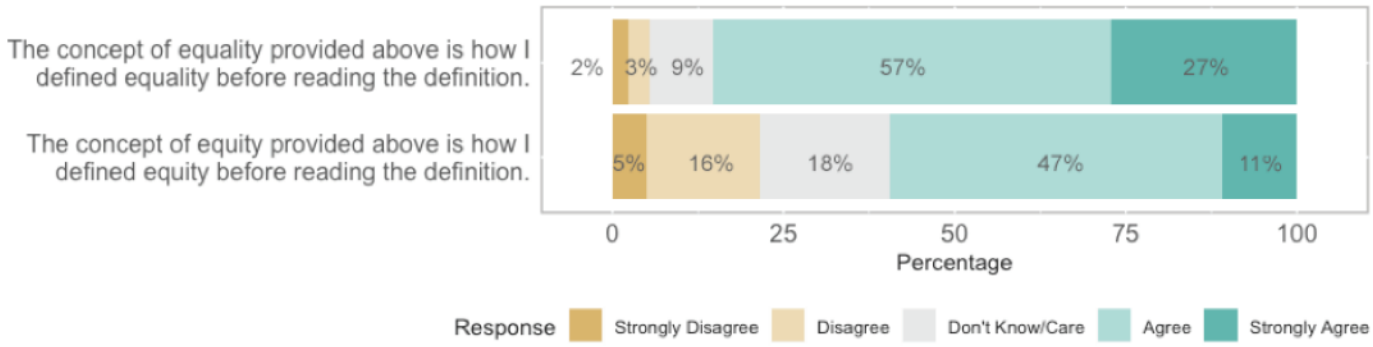
c. Definitions of diversity and equity are not consistent

PF&R members expressed that while diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) efforts are developing at PF&R, there is a sense that the goals, definitions of DEI related terms, and action steps are not well shared and understood among PF&R employees. For example, one of the focus group participants noted, "I don't have great assurance that the concepts of [diversity, equity and equality] are understood and accepted as valuable, across the PF&R membership." Consequently, they are at times, confused. They expressed the need to provide some education and training that addresses "what equity and diversity inclusion mean to me. And then how can I apply it to my job." Without consistency and clarity, DEI efforts remain a mystery to some and may lead to hesitation to accepted bureau wide efforts.

In order to examine PF&R employees' understanding of the concepts of "equality" and "equity", the survey provided definitions of each and asked respondents if the provided definitions matched their understanding of equality and equity. The definition of equality provided in the survey was: equal treatment of individuals regardless of their identity or background. A total of 84% of the respondents Strongly Agreed/Agreed that the provided definition of equality matched their understanding of equality. Only 5% Strongly Disagreed/Disagreed and 9% responded Don't Know/Care.

The definition for equity provided in the survey was: the treatment of individuals recognizing past or present barriers created for groups that unfairly target them based on their identity. The goal of equity is to create a workplace where one's identity cannot predict career or personal outcomes. Of the respondents, 58% Strongly Agreed/Agreed that the provided definition of equity matched their understanding of equity. Of the respondents, 21% Strongly Disagreed/Disagreed and 18% responded Don't Know/Care. Compared with the concept of equality, a lesser percentage of respondent noted that the definition of equity matched their understanding of the equity, and a higher percentage of the respondents Strongly Disagreed/Disagreed or responded Don't Know/Care.

CHART 28.



d. Ideas conflict on recruitment, outreach, and hiring efforts that focus on a diverse workforce

With outreach and recruitment efforts to hire firefighters with non-traditional demographic backgrounds, PF&R has seen some success in diversifying its workforce. There are, however, some members of PF&R who have conflicting ideas over how much PF&R should invest in its recruitment, outreach, and hiring of those with non-traditional backgrounds. For example, the focus group participants and interviewees shared the observation that "there is a lot of people who don't understand why we do Girls Camp." The same participant also noticed some pushbacks with the argument "why do we have an individual camp just for women? Are we going to have another camp for different race or any other categories?"

Some focus group participants and interviewees observed the difficulties in trying to

diversify the ethnicity of PF&R employees when the surrounding environment is not seen as diverse. For example, one interviewee noted "I can say we want to be diverse, but we live in a city that's white. So to have your city that's white, and your department that's white, plus in a male-dominated profession, I just think that the challenge is tremendous."

e. Some sub-groups have differing ideas on diversity, equity, and inclusion; and have had different experiences in the workplace

Members of different sub-groups shared different ideas and views of the state of diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) at PF&R. Sub-groups can be constituted not only based on gender, race, ethnicity, and sexual orientation, but also location of work (e.g. station), status within the bureau (e.g. sworn vs. non-sworn), and years of service (e.g. generation). The differences in the ideas and experiences across these different sub-cultures within PF&R affect the overall effort to improve DEI in PF&R.

There is a tension between those who have traditionally been considered the majority demographic of PF&R and those who are the minority. On one hand, the minority members of PF&R are still being subjected to biased behavior, to the extent that one of the participants who heard about their experience reacted with surprise, and noted "There is no way that is happening in the fire station." Some minority PF&R employees express frustration that DEI efforts are not moving fast enough or being taken seriously enough by all employees at PF&R.

On the other hand, some of the firefighters who are part of the majority, express concerns with diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives at PF&R, noting that they do not see any issues with current bureau practice. Individuals who report not seeing issues subsequently feel threatened by the changes DEI efforts may bring, and thus, show resistance or hesitation to support such efforts. One participant shared the observation and noted, there are "a substantial amount of white Caucasians going, 'I think I am the minority' because [they think the bureau will start] giving preferential treatments on promotional exams [to non-whites]."

i. Different cultures across stations, shifts, sworn vs. non-sworn, trainee vs. non-trainee

PF&R members recognized that there are differences in the workplace culture across different stations and shifts. One participant described, "Our station cultures are so different, based on the people that work there and based on the tradition, and sometimes history, of those stations. People's experiences are very different." Another participant described the sub-cultures across different shifts and said, "[there are] three shifts, and each of them are like their own worlds. As hard as we try to keep everybody together, A shift, B shift, and C shift all operate a tiny bit differently."

They also recognized that there's a divide between sworn versus non-sworn employees. In the focus group, people noted "there isn't much interaction between the non-sworn and the sworn."

Some employees acknowledged that there are differences between those who came into PF&R through the trainee program versus those who were hired in the traditional process. One of the participants who came through the trainee program described that they always felt "a difference between the people coming on the regular list."

ii. Generational differences

Focus group and interview participants noted there are differences across different generations in ideas and attitudes about the workplace norms. For example, the focus group participants and interviewees noted that the younger generation are "less paramilitaristic" and have "different values, different mindsets, and different experiences." Some members of the older generation are somewhat critical of the younger generation noting that they do not seem to share the similar level of pride and work ethic with the older generation. The way the generations perceive each other impacts employees' ability to work together and address diversity, equity, and inclusion. There are also some generational differences with regards to people's attitudes related to DEI. For example, one of the interviewees noted that some members of the older generation "did not think that women should be in fire services."

iii. Female experience

Female PF&R employees are aware they entered a traditionally male dominant field. One of the female study participants reflected on her experience and noted that "there was always a lot of apprehension [from the dominant culture] working with women."

Focus group and interview participants observed that barriers for female firefighters still exist. They include unintentional, but discriminatory practices and policies; trust and acceptance issues; perceptions that females cannot do the job; females are expected to accommodate a male dominated culture; and that females change firehouse dynamics. Some female study participants noted that female firefighters are under higher pressure to prove themselves. One female interviewee noted, "women firefighters are expected to perform at a higher level all the time. . . If a guy makes a mistake, he is trying something new, he is learning. If a woman firefighter makes a mistake, it is because she is a woman, [and being judged as] she should not be doing the job."

Focus group and interview participants did report that the degree of challenge is contextualized. The degree and types of challenge each female member faces may vary depending on their personality, the situation, and the people around them. One female focus group participant described, "I don't have as much issues as some of the other people, so I think a lot of it is also your personality and your history and how you perform."

The survey asked if practices exist to retain women at PF&R, to address some challenges that emerged during the interviews and focus groups. Of the respondents, 48% noted that practices do exist. A large portion of the respondents (41%) responded Don't Know/ Care.

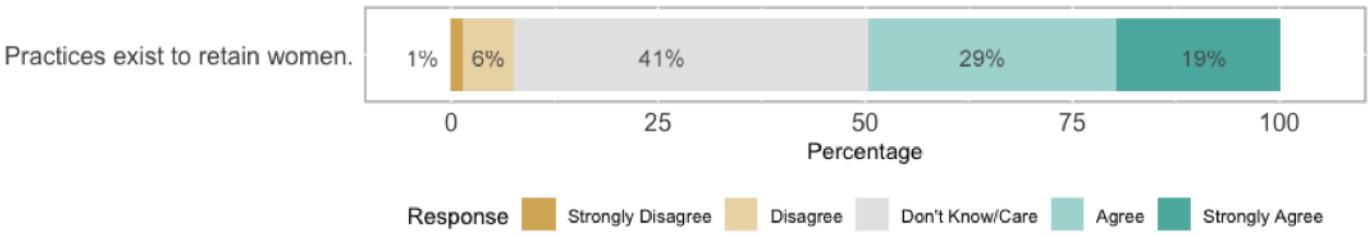
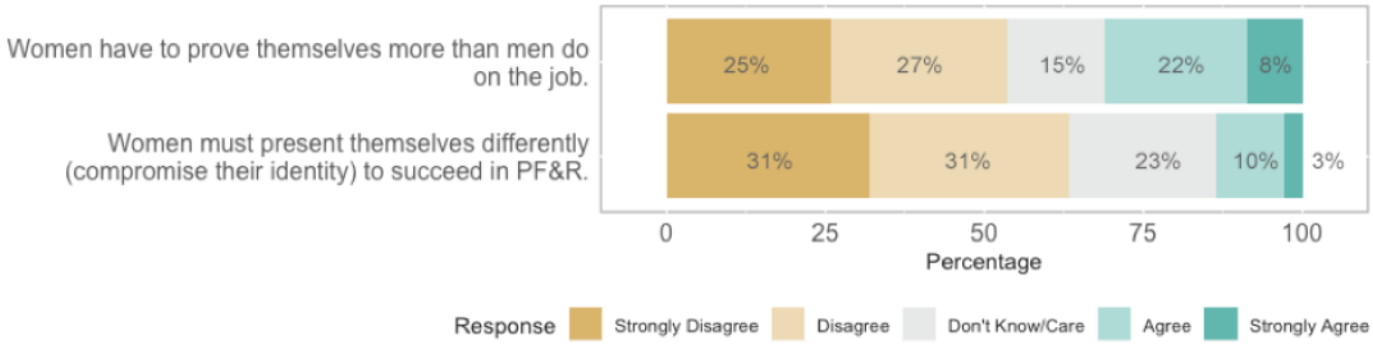


CHART 29.

The survey also included two questions that examine the women's experience at PF&R. As discussed in the earlier section (Section II 1)-c) When asked whether women have to prove themselves more than men do on the job, 30% of respondents Strongly Agreed/ Agreed and 52% of respondents Strongly Disagreed/Disagreed.

CHART 30.



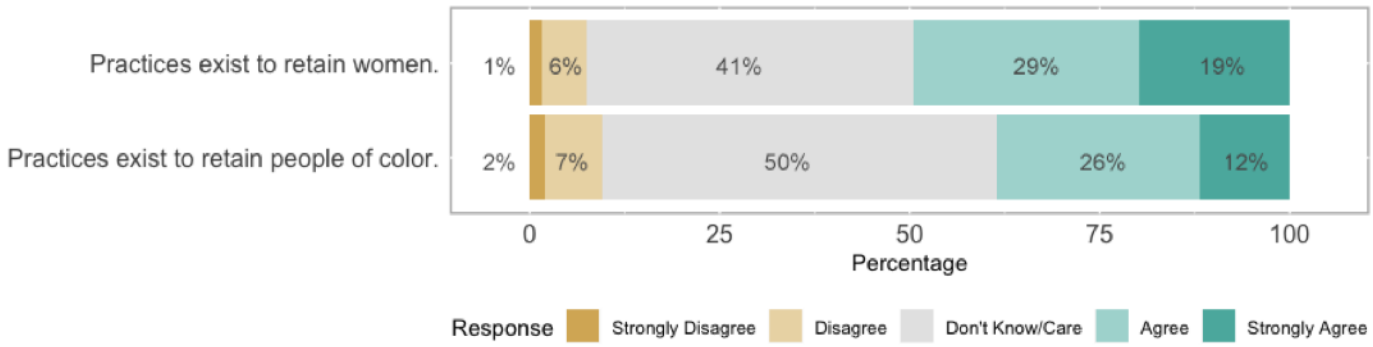
iv. Ethnic/Racial Minority Experience

Focus group and interview participants shared their observations of seeing how racial minorities are treated at PF&R. Racial and ethnic minority firefighters noted the importance of having someone who shares the same ethnic/racial background at work because this helps them voice their shared concerns at the workplace and makes the workplace more comfortable. For example, one of the African-American focus group participants shared that "it's a lot different coming to work, when you got another African-American firefighter at work on your shift daily. . . Because, for us, we rely on each other a lot, throughout the day."

It was noted that there is a cohort of African-American firefighters who were all hired around the same time and are nearing retirement. This situation has caused concern since there are not as many African-American firefighters in the workforce today who will remain after this cohort retires. As one of the African-American participants of the focus group described, "in the next ten years, most of us are going to be gone. So that's going to be a drastic drop in the minorities that have been hired…Who is stepping up to take our place?"

The survey asked if practices exist to retain people of color at PF&R, 38% of the respondent noted that practices do exist to retain people of color, and 9% disagreed. Large portion of the respondents (50%) responded Don't Know/Care.

CHART 31.



v. Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual employee experience

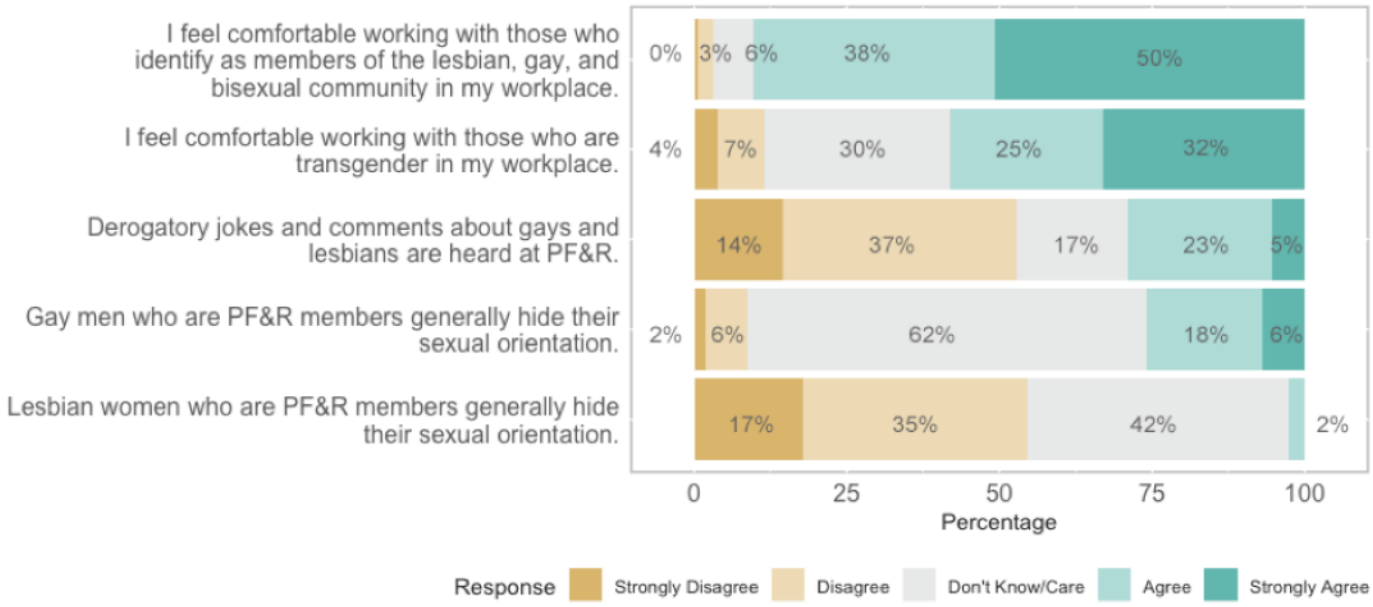
Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual employees are a minority in PF&R. Currently, it appears that there are some self-identifying lesbians who feel comfortable sharing their sexual identity and feel accepted by other PF&R members. One of the interviewees commented "I would say, if you're a lesbian, that's pretty accepted at this point in the fire service…it's no big deal." No other known minority group identifying as part of the LGBTQ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer) community reports the same level of comfort in being open about their sexual orientation. Some study participants shared their observation noting that in some cases, "a straight woman" and "a gay man" may be having a harder time at the station than a lesbian person. Some employees noted that they have heard discriminatory comments aimed at the LGBTQ community.

The survey asked five questions related to working with or the experience of LGBTQ colleagues in PF&R. When asked if I feel comfortable working with those who identify as members of the lesbian, gay, and bisexual community at PF&R, 88% of the respondent reported being comfortable. When asked if they feel comfortable working with those who are transgender at PF&R, a high percentage of the respondents (57%) reported being comfortable, the percentage of the response in Don't Know/Care increased to 30% and those who reported being uncomfortable increased to 11%.

Differences emerged between perceptions of how gay and lesbian co-workers must present themselves in the workplace. The focus groups and interviewee participants noted gay men may possibly be perceived as having a more difficult time at PF&R. The survey included a pair of questions about whether gay men or lesbian women must

hide their sexual orientation. While 24% of the respondents Strongly Agreed/Agreed that gay men who are PF&R members generally hide their sexual orientation, only 2% of survey respondent Strongly Agreed/Agreed that lesbian women who are PF&R members generally hide their sexual orientation.

CHART 32.



vi. Non-sworn experience

Non-sworn members do not feel engaged with the sworn members, report feeling isolated, uninvited, and not recognized. Some expressed concerns that their voices are not heard, particularly by the sworn officers. The non-sworn members of the focus group described that "there is a real huge division between the sworn and the non-sworn. The barrier makes the non-sworn people not really be able to work at our potential, or ability to help, or make improvements." They also noted that because majority of the decision-makers at PF&R are the sworn officers, they have limited influence in the organization-wide, decision-making process.

They also expressed their frustration that they face limitations in their career path because they cannot advance past a certain level. The focus group participants noted that their career path "stops at the top of the non-sworn ladder," and once they get to

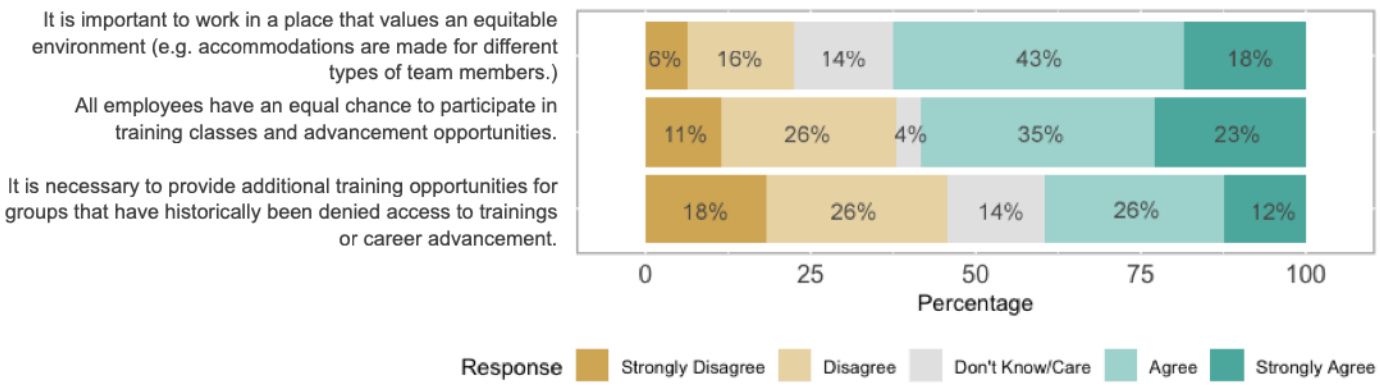
a certain level they "feel ineffectual" at their work. Additionally, non-sworn members expressed concerns and frustration with inconsistent performance evaluations, ineffective communication channels, and not being recognized appropriately.

f. Past diversity, equity, and inclusion trainings may not have been effective

PF&R members observed that the mandatory diversity, equity, and inclusion trainings given by the Office of Equity and Human Rights may not have been effective. Some PF&R employees felt the mandatory requirement made the training seem like just another "box to check," and people attend the training "because they were told to be there." Also, the content of some trainings came across as negative and not matching or fitting in well with the fire service. They noted that the trainers who had not been in the fire service do not have any idea what the firefighters do, and the training content become irrelevant.

The survey asked three questions regarding support and access to training through an equality and equity perspectives. Of the respondents, 61% believe it is important to work in a place that values an equitable environment. Of the respondents, 58% believe that all employees have an equal chance to participant in training classes and advancement opportunities and 37% responded Strongly Disagree/Disagree. When asked whether it is necessary to provide additional training opportunities for groups that have historically been denied access to [such] trainings or career advancement opportunities, the responses were split between Strongly Agreed/Agreed at 38% and Strongly Disagree/ Disagree at 44%. The response Don't Know/Care was relatively low for this question at 14%.

CHART 33.



5) PF&R values community oriented work. . . BUT

a. Not equipped with the necessary language skills to work with linguistically diverse community members

PF&R members recognized that when serving non-English speaking communities, language barriers are a major issue in an emergency situation. In non-emergency situations, language barriers prevent a deeper connection between the community member and the firefighter. In the non-emergency situations, it Is easier to use some adaptive technologies available to PF&R members, such as translation services apps on iPads, but many express the need to have better technological solutions, better technology training, or have employees who can speak the native language.

Consequently, the level of service provided to the linguistically diverse community may not be at the same level of service that English-speaking communities receive.

b. Workforce not diverse enough to relate to the culturally diverse communities

The focus group and interview participants shared some incidences where PF&R could have benefited from having employees who understood the cultural norms of the community they were working with. In one case, they were dealing with a Native American daily ritual, and not having anyone at PF&R understand the Native American culture lead to a minor misunderstanding. In another example, however, the PF&R firefighter was able to make connections with the Hispanic community. The study participants noted that having PF&R members who can relate to communities, or having a community liaison, would help develop trust between the community and PF&R.

c. Limited engagement with the community

While PF&R places importance in their community-oriented work, some members indicated that the engagement with the community is somewhat limited. One survey respondent noted, "there doesn't seem to be a lot of community involvement by the line staff." This is partially due to a disconnect between the community seeking out more engagement and involvement from PF&R in its community, and partially a lack of active outreach effort from PF&R to seek out community volunteer opportunities. Community engagement may be determined by the community the station services.

III. Changes in perceptions of workplace culture over time

Surveys were conducted in 2002 and 2008 for PF&R to explore similar issues addressed in this 2018 Workplace Assessment Study. Previous surveys focused more directly on diversity issues, where this study broadened topics from previous surveys. There are a number of survey questions that were retained from the 2002 and 2008 surveys to allow for comparisons over time. The results of the comparisons over time are discussed in this section.

Relationships with supervisors continue to improve, responses in 2002 and 2008 were at 87% total agreement, that agreement grew to 91% in the 2018 survey.

Perceptions of communication have dropped since the 2002 and 2008 surveys. Respondents do not believe communication on policy updates at PF&R are as effective as they used to be.

The workplace environment is, in general, similar to the last survey, with the exception of jokes about accents. When asked whether people at PF&R do not make fun of other people who speak with an accent the current survey showed lower agreement compared to both 2002 and 2008 responses. This one question stood out from the other questions in the current survey related to whether sexually explicit jokes and derogatory jokes regarding race, gender and sexual orientation where heard. Of the respondents, 60% indicated comments related to accent are heard at PF&R, while only 23% to 47 % of the respondents indicated jokes related to other categories are heard in PF&R.[10]

In general, promotions are seen as merit based. The 2002 survey reported a high-water mark for the perception that race or gender was a way to be promoted. The perception that these groups are treated more favorably has decreased between 2002 and 2018. The decrease supports the idea that promotions are less about the person's traits and more about what they know. Though this is slightly contradicted by a small decrease in agreement that Promotions are based on what you know, rather than whom you know.

The effectiveness of PF&R in dealing with discrimination complaints are perceived worse in 2018; however, research design may have played a role in the downward trend. While the three discrimination questions trended downward compared to 2002 and 2008, there is a chance that how the questions were asked impacted the responses. In previous surveys the questions asked if the individual respondent felt they were the subject of

10 See Chart 9.

discrimination, that it [the discrimination] would be dealt with well. The aforementioned question was asking two questions: (1) would the individual respondent report the discrimination, and if so, (2) would it be dealt with correctly. For surveys, answers to these types of questions with two parts are hard to interpret. The 2018 survey simplified the question. The change in wording might explain the different response.

On the last question about the complaint process, a similar trend emerges of uncertainty or lack of trust in the process. In 2008, only 26% did not respond to this question, and in 2018, 56% of respondents replied Don't Know. This jump in Don't Know to be the majority answer suggests the process may not be used as much so there is not a common sense of how it functions.

Survey Question	2002	2008	2018	Change from 2008
My supervisor makes me feel like a valued member of the team.	87%	87%	91%	4%
I feel I can discuss problems with my current supervisor.	87%	86%	90%	4%
I receive regular updates about things going on at PF&R that affect my work.	82%	85%	75%	-10%
PF&R policies are effectively communicated to me.	79%	89%	73%	-16%
People at PF&R do not make fun of other people who speak with an accent.	62%	72%	60%	-12%
I can rely on my co-workers for my personal safety on the job.	81%	93%	94%	1%
I feel comfortable cohabitating with members of the opposite sex during shift work.	69%	84%	86%	2%
Knowledge of other cultures improves my job performance.	76%	86%	84%	-2%
It is easier to get a promotion at PF&R if you are a person of color.	52%	39%	34%	-5%*
It is easier to get a promotion at PF&R if you are a woman.	29%	27%	22%	-5%*
Promotions are based on what you know, rather than whom you know.	45%	65%	62%	-3%

* Note: decreases are desired on this statement.

** Question changed substantially in 2018

Survey Question	2002	2008	2018	Change from 2008
If I report being racially harassed at PF&R, it will be dealt with effectively.**	51%	52%	43%	-9%
If I report being sexually harassed at PF&R, it will be dealt with effectively.**	60%	59%	47%	-12%
The employee complaint process at PF&R is effective in dealing with discrimination.	49%	53%	24%	-29%
* Note: decreases are desired on this statement. ** Question changed substantially in 2018				

The survey asked respondents if they had experienced or witnessed various forms of discrimination or harassment in the past two years. Previous surveys had asked a similar question, but for the past three years. We shortened the period out of a concern that three years was not as reliable a period of time. Though this makes comparisons more difficult with previous years, we believe it provides a more accurate representation of current experiences.

An important statistical item to note, the 2008 survey had a margin of error of +/-5%, and this survey is at +/-3%. Therefore, for any difference from previous years to be comparable, the difference between values must be at least 8%.

Based on these methodological differences and statistical changes, the researchers do not believe the comparisons are useful, though they are included for reference. Current year reported data can be understood with the +/-3% margin of error to compare to other categories in the list. Respondents do report varying levels of experiencing and witnessing discrimination or harassment. For experiencing discrimination or harassment, gender and physical appearance based examples are most reported. For witnessing, race is also reported higher, along with gender and physical appearance.

Within the last three years I have experienced … discrimination or harassment.	2002	2008	2018	Change since 2008
Racial	5%	3%	6%	3%
Gender	7%	7%	13%	6%
Disability	2%	3%	4%	1%
Age	11%	9%	8%	-1%
Ethnic Background	5%	2%	N/A	N/A
Sexual	9%	N/A	N/A	N/A
Sexual Orientation	3%	2%	4%	2%
Religious	8%	4%	5%	1%
Language	3%	1%	3%	2%
Physical Appearance	15%	18%	11%	3%

Within the last three years I have witnessed … discrimination or harassment.	2002	2008	2018	Change since 2008
Racial	14%	9%	10%	1%
Gender	16%	13%	16%	3%
Disability	4%	4%	6%	2%
Age	16%	11%	8%	-3%
Ethnic Background	12%	6%	N/A	N/A
Sexual	17%	N/A	N/A	N/A
Sexual Orientation	11%	13%	9%	-4%
Religious	11%	7%	5%	-2%
Language	7%	6%	5%	-1%
Physical Appearance	22%	14%	10%	-4%

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the workplace culture assessment of PF&R, this section outlines recommendations for next steps in the following categories.

1. Norm setting
2. Accountability
3. Recruit, outreach, and hiring
4. Promotion and professional development
5. Training

Many of the specific recommendations in this section came from PF&R members who shared their insights about the workplace culture, through various channels, such as their participation in a focus group, interview, and or the open-ended responses on the survey. In considering next steps, it is important to build on the strengths that the workplace culture exhibits while changing the things that may inhibit improvement. Thoughtful and deliberative planning processes should take place to make a meaningful cultural change.

1. Norm setting

PF&R will benefit from taking steps to set norms to engage in difficult communication, such as speaking up when one's interests are affected, calling out the unprofessional behaviors, or engaging in open discussions about diversity, equity, and inclusion. Norms are informal behavior guidelines that are mutually shared and agreed upon among the organizational members. While policy creation may contribute in developing norms, some behaviors may not be regulated by policies. For culture change, it is sometimes more effective to set up processes to facilitate the development of the norms, rather than relying on policies.

- Develop processes and places for deeper conversations to be held, with the intent of generating a more inclusive and strong family culture.
- In setting up the processes for conversations, develop a guideline on how to allow people to speak up when impacted.
- Build in time and steps to be reflective on one's action and on the inclusiveness of the process as part of generating meaningful conversation.

- Develop guidelines to call out the unprofessional behavior that will lead to a constructive discussion and reflection without being punitive.
- Develop shared understanding of the purpose and goal of PF&R's diversity, equity, and inclusion effort.

2. Accountability

PF&R will benefit from clarifying the policies and processes that hold people accountable, ensure consistency in how people are held accountable, and make the process transparent. When people are not held accountable in a consistent manner, it will cause distrust within the organization. Decisions on how people are held accountable needs to be transparent. Ensuring accountability and transparency will allow PF&R members to be more 'bold' in how they share ideas and make innovative suggestions.

- Review personnel management policies and examine whether the procedures and practices in applying the policies are consistent, fair, and equitable.
- Review the process for holding people accountable and examine if the procedures and practices in holding people accountable are consistent.
- Develop a system to make policy decisions and implementation processes transparent.
- Develop mechanisms for people to speak up and be 'bold' without being afraid of retribution and backlash.

3. Recruitment, outreach and hiring

Continue making efforts to recruit, reach out to, and hire employees with diverse backgrounds. In order to further improve recruitment, outreach, and hiring efforts, PF&R can take the following actions to review the change in demographics, clarify its goals, assess the outcomes of various existing efforts, identify what new approaches are necessary, and allocate appropriate budgetary resources for the efforts.

- Establish a mechanism to track the changes in the demographics of PF&R employees. Make the information easily accessible by all PF&R members.
- Based on the review of PF&R employees' demographics, identify goals for recruitment, outreach, and hiring.
- Assess the outcomes of various recruitment and outreach efforts and evaluate the

impact of these approaches.

- Develop a comprehensive plan for recruitment and outreach efforts with a realistic budget. In developing the plan, consider how to engage firefighters more in the recruitment and outreach efforts.
- Review existing hiring practices and processes to identify areas for improvement.

4. Promotion and professional development

PF&R will benefit from reviewing the existing promotional and professional development processes to identify if there are any areas for improvements. Also, PF&R members requested to make the path for career development and advancement clearer and transparent. Consider implementing a formal mentoring program.

- Review the existing promotional and career development and advancement processes and procedures. This includes the processes for leadership and management career development. Assess if the existing processes and procedures are implemented in a consistent manner across the board.
- Identify areas where the promotional and professional development processes can be improved. It may require introducing new techniques for promotional assessments to accommodate differences without lowering standards. Continue to support and nurture a culture that accepts all who meet the standards.
- Clarify paths and processes for career development and advancement, including paths for leadership and management positions, and ensure that all PF&R members understand the paths and processes.
- Consider developing a formal mentoring program.

5. Training

PF&R will benefit from investing in, developing, and implementing trainings for interpersonal and personal development skills for communication, conflict resolution, team development, and stress management. For those who are moving into management and leadership positions, a special emphasis needs to be placed on supervisory skills, management skills, and leadership skills training. To further strengthen PF&R's efforts to promote diversity, equity, and inclusion, it may be worthwhile working with the Office of Equity and Human Rights and the Bureau of Human Resources to

review how existing DEI training can be made more applicable to the members of PF&R. PF&R's equity manager can work with the Office of Equity and Human Rights and the Office of Human Resources to co-develop a new training that approaches areas of concern specific to PF&R.

- Develop and implement training to develop "soft skills" such as communication, conflict resolution, and team development.
- Develop self-care and self-develop training for coping with stress and maintaining overall health. Consider including inclusive and readily available counselors for those who may benefit from the service.
- Develop supervisory, management, and leadership training for those who are already in management and leadership positions, as well as for those who are planning on moving into management and leadership positions.
- Review existing diversity, equity, and inclusion training efforts offered by the Office of Equity and Human Rights and the Office of Human Resources. Review conversation-based diversity, equity, and inclusion trainings offered by the Office of Equity and Human Rights and the Bureau of Human Resources. Discuss with these offices how the content of the trainings can be made more relevant to PF&R. Also, discuss how the mode of delivery can be made more accommodating to PF&R members' work schedule.
- The PF&R equity manager can take a lead role in developing and implementing diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) training specifically tailored for PF&R members. The training should engage PF&R members in a way where they leave having learned more about DEI concepts, and get the "buy in" for promoting DEI in PF&R. It should make it clear to PF&R members how DEI is applicable to their day-to-day work, and what tools are available. Small group facilitated discussion approach may be more impactful than the large class lecture approach.

PROMISING PRACTICES AND PF&R POLICY REVIEW

This section provides a brief summary of promising practices based on the review of the existing literature and reviews the current PF&R policies.

Diversity initiatives in public and private organizations have become increasingly common since the 1970s. The need for diversity initiatives continues to be important today due to a recognition of several factors. The demographics in America continue to change. More people of color and more women can enter the workforce due to changes to federal policy as well as shifts in the US culture. There is a recognition that internal productivity of the organization improves when there is a diverse workforce. For example, Williams and O'Reilly (1998) demonstrate through a review of 80 lab and field experiments that the heterogeneity, or having diverse representation of different genders, races, and ages, within a group impacts the effectiveness of the group. Those who see value in having diverse workforce support the idea that diversity within groups and among the leadership is beneficial because a diverse environment enhances organizational effectiveness (Cox & Blake, 1991). Also, Ely and Thomas (2001) provide an example of an organization where employees with a diverse range of insights and skills are well integrated and where there is an emphasis on learning from each other's differences resulted in strengthen the organization's performance. Ely and Thomas advocate for the importance of integrating learning from each other with diverse cultural backgrounds, in particular, from those who share cultural backgrounds of the community they serve (e.g., language, customs, and traditions). This approach, that emphasizes integration and learning, helps the organization create better strategies to engage with and support diverse community.

Currently, PF&R workforce demographics show some discrepancies in its composition of certain minorities groups, when compared to the overall population in the City of Portland. According to 2017 U.S. Census data, the dichotomous gender divide (male/female) in Portland is 50.6% female and 49.4% male (U.S. Census, 2018). For PF&R, the workforce is 89.7% male and 10.4% female (Office of Equity and Human Rights, 2018). The minority groups underrepresented in PF&R as of 2017 are Hispanic/Latino, Asian, Black/African American, and Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander.

Race/Ethnicity	PF&R	2017 City of Portland
White/Non Hispanic	80%	71.6%
Hispanic/Latino	6%	9.7%
Asian	6%	7.6%
Black/African American	4%	5.7%
American Indian and Alaska Native	3%	0.7%
Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander	<1%	0.6%
Two or more race	2%	5.2%

In the following, promising practices relating to (1) recruitment strategies, (2) hiring, (3) career advancement and development, and (4) diversity, equity, and inclusion are discussed.

1. Recruitment

Many fire departments across the United States have wrestled with the challenge to diversify their workforce. Some fire departments such as the Baltimore, Maryland Fire Department, the Fire Department of the City of New York, and Fort Lauderdale, Florida Fire Department have reported some success in their efforts to increase diversity in their workforce. The following recruitment strategies are commonly used and recommended as promising practice in recruitment of a diverse workforce.

Engaging local communities. The most common strategy for recruiting a diverse workforce is to engage the local community and to let them know what firefighters do. For example, a few fire departments open their fire stations to the community, encouraging community members interested in the firefighter profession to come to the station to see "a day in the life" of a firefighter. At these open station events, community members get the opportunity to see firefighters in action. They see how they respond to a call, and what they do when they are at the station. For example, Baltimore Fire Department collaborated with the local radio station and promoted the event, and also publicized the sites where people can go to apply for the job at the fire department. They also allowed the community members to access the computers at the station to make it easier for those who do not have a ready access to the online application form to

apply for the job. They also attended community meetings and distributed recruitment material, conducted presentation at career days at the local high schools, community colleges, and career-development centers (Johnson, 2016).

The San Francisco Fire Department collaborated with the City of San Francisco's Department of Human Resources and held information nights on a monthly basis at different recreation centers around the city. At these information sessions, they described their emphasis on increasing diversity in their workforce and encouraged community members from various communities to ask questions on the processes on becoming a firefighter (Miller, et al., 2016).

Attending and being present at local community events where people with diverse background gathers (e.g. culture-specific festivals) also serve to introduce fire services as career path to broader range of future workforce. For example, San Francisco Fire Department's Latino employee group took a lead in participating in culture specific events, such as fairs and parades organized by the Latino community. They set up a booth and provided information about fire service careers for Spanish speakers (Miller, et al., 2016).

Partnering with community organizations and having designated community liaisons are noted as the promising practices that strengthen engagement with community. For example, San Francisco Fire Department formed a partnership with the Alice B. Toklas LGBT Democratic Club, a political action group in San Francisco, where the department's LGBT employees actively participate in the Club's activities. They attribute this partnership as the major factor in the hiring of the first openly gay fire commissioner (Miller, et al., 2016). Some organizations maintain close community relationship by having an employee designated as community liaison. Those who serve as liaisons typically share specific demographic characteristics with particular communities and can help recruiting from diverse local communities. (Miller, et al., 2016),

Engaging youth. Engaging with youth is an important strategy that helps cultivate future workforce for the fire service. By partnering with the local youth clubs, high schools and colleges, fire departments can build a positive image of the fire service profession among the youth and their families. Many first responder organizations, including fire departments, have student intern programs, which can be an indirect recruitment tool. For example, the San Francisco Fire Department employees visit local schools and

colleges to speak about fire service careers and provide fire safety education.

The community engagement increases the community exposure to the fire service profession, and helps educate the potential workforce to consider the fire service as a career path. Baltimore Fire Department reported success in such recruitment efforts noting application "increased by 142 percent from 1,000 in 2009 to 2,4525 in 2015, and application from minorities increased 207 percent, from 1,230 to 3,781" (Johnson, 2016).

Targeted intentional recruitment. Targeted intentional recruitment is an approach used to reach out to specific populations that typically are not represented in the existing workforce. For example, San Francisco Fire Department's Latino employee group reach out to schools in the school district where Latino students have a high concentration to speak about fire service careers. Examples of targeted intentional recruitment for female firefighters include: going to speak to all-girls high school and college sport teams; speaking at college's women resource centers; and having information booths where the attendees are likely to be predominantly female. The Fire Department of New York City, for example, has created recruitment positions such as the Women's Outreach Coordinator and Veterans' Outreach Coordinator, specifically for forming relationships with organizations that assistant in helping these underrepresented populations in finding employment (Dolan, et al., 2014; Willings, 2017).

A succession plan that identifies what types of employees are going to retire in the coming future, and what types of employees should be succeeding those who are going to retire, provides the organization a clear idea on what types of employees to be targeted in the intentional recruitment (Avsec, 2000). Thus, recruitment strategies created with succession plans can strengthen targeted intentional recruitment (Avsec, 2000).

Review recruitment material. Photographs and images in the organizations' brochures and websites are important in trying to recruit diverse workforce. These photographs and images need to convey the intention of the organization to be diverse and inclusive (Avery, 2003; Flory, Leibbrandt, Rott, & Stoddard, 2018; Walker, et al., 2012).

Incentives for bilingual staff. One of the more recent promising practices that are increasingly becoming more common, is to provide incentives to bilingual staff. This bilingual incentive can serve two purposes. One it attracts applicants from diverse population who speaks multiple languages, and also helps improve services to

communities whose dominant language is not English. For example, San Francisco Fire Department offers stipends for Spanish and Cantonese speaking employees (Miller, et al., 2016)

PF&R

PF&R has taken several actions steps to recruit diverse employees.

- PF&R has one dedicated recruitment staff member.
- PF&R has been conducting Portland Metro Fire Camp for Young Women
- PF&R actively takes opportunities to engage in community events. (e.g. Portland Pride Parade, Walk with Refugees and Immigrants Event, Neighborhood events).
- PF&R started a "two list" hiring approach to open the avenue for those who do not have fire service experience to apply. The two list approach emerged from a recognition that access to the needed requirements to apply for employment at PF&R was limiting who was able to apply. The education requirement was disproportionately hurting minorities who wanted to become firefighters but did not have access to the needed training resources. PF&R created a concurrent hiring process. Perspective employees with the required credentials would be places on a hiring list where all potential employees had fire experience. Alternatively, those who did not have a fire training background would be part of another hiring classes. PF&R would provide the necessary education and training to be qualified to enter the Firefighter Trainee Process.

2. Hiring

Literature suggests promising practices that can contribute to further diversity in the fire service workforce: leadership involvement in applicant screening, and modification of screening exams (Miller, et al.,2016).

Leadership involvement in applicant screening. Miller, et al (2016) suggest that close involvement of the members of the leadership team in the hiring process can help identify potential unintentional discrimination or implicit bias in the hiring process. For example, at Atlanta Police Department thanks to a deputy chief who closely monitors the screening process, they identify that their policy to not hire anyone with tattoos on their face or neck, was misinterpreted by the hiring officers and was extended to all tattoos.

Consequently, many qualified applicants had been turned down. They were able to clarify the policy and expand the applicant pool.

Screening/Exam modifications. Miller, et al (2016) note that "both written and physical exams can be a source of bias against applicants from underrepresented groups and female applicants, resulting in a loss of sought-after applicants" (p. 42). They suggest that the first responder organizations take a look at these exams, and identify tests that incorporates "more practical scenario of a real life situation and job relevancy" (p. 42). In 2013, the San Francisco Fire Department introduced a "continuous testing process" for entry-level firefighting exams, where the exams are administered regularly by the National Testing Network (NTN) at multiple facilities. They also implemented a system to keep the candidate's name on the eligibility list for 2 years for the San Francisco Fire Department to select any candidates for hire from the list. The change in exam schedule with the continuous testing provided more flexibility and convenience for the applicants, which contributed to more applicants and possibility of more diversity among the applicants.

PF&R

PF&R has taken several actions steps to hire diverse employees.

- The "two-list" approach mentioned above is both a recruitment and hiring action step.

3. Career development and advancement

In addition to the recruitment and hiring efforts, fire departments need to facilitate employee development and advancement to retain diverse employees. Mentoring and employee groups are suggested as strategies for career development and advancement to help retain diverse employees.

Provide clear career development and advancement pathways. To help employees develop and advance their career, it is important employees have a realistic career development plan that matches their needs for advancement within the organization. The individualized plans need to communicate expectations and steps that need to be accomplished to qualify for promotion (Healy, Meagher, & Cullin, 2009). Employees also need to know how to access or locate resources if they need assistance (i.e., mentoring,

training opportunities).

Mentoring. Providing formal mentoring can help employees' career development and advancement. Formal mentoring programs can be part of succession management where the focus would be having the mentors passing along institutional knowledge to their mentees (Miller, et al., 2016).

Mentoring programs targeted for women or racial minority relationships gives the new firefighter an employee to confide in who potentially faced similar barriers. The idea is such that the mentor has completed similar steps or experienced similar barriers and can work with the mentee to problem solve (Kalev, et al., 2006; Pitts, 2009).

While some mentoring programs focus on matching the mentor/mentee's demographics, some mentor programs do not match race and/or gender. The trajectory of the mentoring should match the goals of the bureau and the reason for the mentoring program (Miller, et al., 2016; Stalcup, et al., 2005).

Ultimately, mentorship programs open-up doors for firefighters to expand their workplace network through facilitating opportunities for firefighters to engage with others they may not normally meet, and it increases opportunities for more workplace engagement such as serving on a committee or participating in a training (Stalcup, et al., 2005).

Diverse leadership as a motivation for minority firefighters. Mentors who are also in positions of upper administration not only help firefighters find avenues for career advancement, but their visibility as a minority in a position of leadership contributes to other minority firefighters seeking career advancement opportunities. A diverse leadership staff serves as a way for younger minority employees or aspiring employees to "see" themselves as potential future leaders (Miller, et al., 2016). When leadership reflects the bureau's demographics, employees are more likely to perceive their voice as being heard. Leadership cannot satisfice diversity and inclusion efforts by having one person represent a minority group. There should be a continuous effort to engage and promote diversity in leadership.

PF&R

PF&R has taken action steps to enhance the career development and advancement

process.

- Firefighters who have received informal mentorship describe that having a mentor helped them understand the culture of the workplace and develop "soft" leadership skills.

4. Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Related Policies

Diversity, equity, and inclusion policies communicate to employees that their needs and identities are valued. Booysen (2014) compiled a list of 13 policies to consider when assessing the degree of inclusion and equity communicated to employees through workplace policies. Booysen's (2014) list includes 1) discrimination and harassment policy, 2) performance management system, 3) conflict management procedures, 4) system for complaints, 5) safe space for dialogue, apology, and acceptance, 6) published code of conducts, 7) recruitment practices, 8) employee orientation and induction programs, 9) performance appraisals, 10) compensation, 11) benefit packages, 12) promotion, and 13) leadership and organizational training. The list provided by Booysen is not an all-inclusive list of policies and policy topics. Instead, the list is a starting point as organizations begin to assess which policies and procedures should be modified to increase inclusiveness and equity within the organization.

PF&R

Some of the policies that fit under Booysen's categories are policies with the City of Portland. Other policies and procedures specific to PF&R include:

- There was an intentional and successful effort to change the name to firefighters from fireman. The change to firefighter recognizes that any gender is able to have a career in the fire service.
- A review of and change in grooming policies communicates PF&R recognizes generational change. The change in policy opens up opportunities for individuals who would not have previously qualified to be a firefighter to become perspective employees.

5. Diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) training

DEI training in theory, provides a foundation to begin a conversation around equity in

the workplace (Cox & Blake, 1998). Training should be seen as the first step in helping an organization achieve its DEI goals, and also be continuous (Cox & Blake, 1998). The goal of training should be to educate and bring awareness on the organizational need for valuing and managing diversity (Cox & Blake, 1998, Nishishiba, 2012). After diversity training, follow-up opportunities to ask questions or reflect on the training helps instill the lessons learned. It is important to provide opportunities for training attendees to ask outstanding questions, debrief, and identify applications from the training into their line of work. Continuous training on helping employees recognize bias improves behaviors and attitudes towards DEI (Willing, 2017). Being able to see DEI in action, reinforces the importance and impact of an equitable workplace.

PF&R

PF&R has taken actions steps to strengthen diversity, equity, and inclusion training.

- PF&R employees must attend DEI centered trainings hosted by the City of Portland's Office of Equity and Human Rights.
- PF&R has established an active equity committee within the bureau.
- There are known individuals within PF&R employees feel comfortable talking to about DEI.

6. Leadership

Nishishiba (2012) in her study of various local government diversity initiatives identified that the support and commitment of leadership is critical in promoting diversity initiatives. She notes that obtaining an explicit statement of support or demand from action from formal leaders of the organization help successful implementation of DEI policies and initiatives. The leadership also needs to support "diversity champions" in the organization who ensure that the DEI polices and initiatives are implemented.

In 2007, a study carried out by the Society for Human Resource Management, found 30% (n=31) of respondents reported their organization had a definition of diversity. In other words, over half of the surveyed organizations do not have a uniformed definition of diversity. Leadership also needs to help the organization develop common definitions specific to diversity, equity, and inclusion, to facilitate more meaningful conversations on DEI strategies. A retired fire chief from Atlanta, GA reported having difficulty with

diversity initiatives because of the many different ways employees were understanding diversity (McNeil, 2008). The firefighters in Atlanta thought diversity initiatives centered around either cultural diversity such as religion and traditions; subcultural diversity such as generational differences, or individual diversity such as individual attributes and demographics. Firehouses and divisions with the bureau were taking on their own conceptualization of diversity creating organizational goal distortion and goal tension (Thomas, 2011).

Along with forming a common rhetoric to use, leaders are also charged with setting goals for their employees. Goal creation and goal measurement provide one strategy to help create benchmarks and trace change over time.

Bagshaw (2004) worked with the London Fire Brigade to improve their diversity efforts. The study identified 4 C's that, when utilized, aid in creating a workplace more receptive to diversity. First, bureaus need to create process and spaces were assumptions about diversity and inclusion are checked and tested, bureaus need to be comfortable communicating empathy and respect, bureaus need to work towards creating a climate of inclusion, and challenging inappropriate behavior. Additionally, the environment needs to be created with a diverse leadership team.

PF&R

PF&R has dedicated leaders.

- PF&R has adopted the City of Portland's definition of diversity as its own which helps upper level administration frame DEI initiatives.
- Chief Myers took a lead in Workplace Culture Study and funded the development of the equity plan.

7. Conflict management procedures

Minority employees report having more difficulty feeling confident or comfortable reporting experiences of discrimination. Even when organizations have a clear set of policies and procedures to follow, minority employees file formal complaints less often compared to non-minority employees.

A hindrance to creating a stronger and safer workplace is when formal complaints are not filed, when there is no known safe place for employees to go to decompress, or

complaints are handled in an informal way. Employees will also not file complaints if they fear being further stigmatized or they perceive that nothing will happen. Creating a safe place for employees to file complaints will curb underreporting. Typically, the human resource manager or equity manager is charged with creating a safe, stigma free environment to file complaints.

PF&R

PF&R has taken actions steps to ensure conflict management procedures are known to employees.

- PF&R follows the City of Portland's formal policy, 2.02 "Prohibition Against Workplace Harassment, Discrimination, and Retaliation" which defines harassment, discrimination, and retaliation, and outlines supervisor's expectations, employee's expectation, and the investigation process once a complaint is filed.

Conclusion

Despite the many promising practices and initiatives adopted by organizations, minority firefighters still report perceiving their position within a fire bureau as "outsiders within" (Collins, 1986). In other words, minority firefighters may find it hard to fit in at a fire station given the societal stereotype of what a firefighter looks like, and a bureau's policies may not include language that communicates the bureau's attempt to value, enable, and manage equity and inclusion. The literature suggests that diversity, equity and inclusion efforts must come from the top-down, bottom-up, and middle-out. All employees, and most importantly, all leaders, need to be equipped with the necessary tools required to bolster and strengthen an organization's goal to implement DEI initiatives.

The promising practices reviewed in this section are aimed at helping PF&R continue to strengthen its workplace policies to be more equipped to value, enable, and manage diversity as the City of Portland grows and shifts in the upcoming decades so no employees feel like an "outsider within."

References

Avery, D. R. (2003). Reactions to diversity in recruitment advertising--are differences black and white? Journal of Applied Psychology, 88(4), 672-679.

Avsec, R. (2000). Succession planning in Chesterfield Fire and Emergency Medical Services. Retrieved from https://nfa.usfa.fema.gov/pdf/efop/efo23548.pdf

Bagsahw, M. (2004). Is diversity divisive? A positive training approach. Industrial and Commercial Training, 36, 153-157.

Booysen, L. (2014) The development of inclusive leadership practice and processes. In B. Ferdman & B. Deane (ed.). Diversity at Work: The Practice of Inclusion. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass. (pp. 296 – 329).

Collins, P. (1986). Learning from the outsider within: The sociological significance of Black feminist thought. Social Problems, 33, S14–S32.

Cox, T. H. & Blake, S. (1991). Managing cultural diversity: Implications for organizational

competitiveness. Academy of Management Executive, 5 (3), 45-56.

Dolan, E., Ribowsky, M., Gribbon, F., Malvasio, J., Kimmerly, J., Clements, K. (2014). FDNY Strategic Plan 2015-2017. Retrieved from http://www.nyc.gov/html/fdny/pdf/ofc/FDNY_strategic_plan_2015_2017.pdf

Ely, R., & Thomas, D. (2001). Cultural diversity at work: The effects of diversity perspectives on work group processes and outcomes. Administrative Science Quarterly, 46, 229-273.

Flory, J., Leibbrandt, A., Rott, C., & Stoddard, O. (2018, April). Increasing Workplace Diversity: Evidence From a Recruiting Experiment at a Fortune 500 Company. CESifo Working Paper Series No. 7025. Available at SSRN: https://ssrn.com/abstract=3201995

Healy, K., Meagher, G., & Cullin, J. (2009). Retaining Novices to Become Expert Child Protection Practitioners: Creating Career Pathways in Direct Practice, The British Journal of Social Work, 39, 299–317.

Johnson, S. (2016). How fire departments could look like the communities they serve. Retrieved from http://www.governing.com/gov-institute/voices/col-steps-improve-fire-department-diversity.html

Kalev, A., Dobbin, F., & Kelly, E. (2006). Best practices or best guesses? Assessing the efficacy of corporate affirmative action and diversity policies. American Sociological Review, 74, 589-617.

Lumby, J. (2012). Leading organizational culture: Issues of power and equity. Educational Management Administration & Leadership, 40, 576-591.

McNeil, J. (2008). Diversity in the fire service: A problem or a solution? Retrieved from https://www.fireengineering.com/articles/print/volume-161/issue-10/features/diversity-in-the-fire-service-a-problem-or-a-solution.html

Miller, A., Clery, S., Richardson, S., Topper, A., Cronen, S., Lilly, S., Hinkens, E., & Yin, M. (2016). Promising practices for increasing diversity among first responders. Retrieved from https://www.dol.gov/asp/evaluation/completed-studies/FirstResponders_Full_Report.pdf

Nishishiba, M. (2012). Local government diversity initiatives in Oregon: An exploratory study. State and Local Government Review, 44(1), 55–66.

Office of Equity and Human Rights. (2018). City of Portland government workforce – demographics dashboard. Retrieved from https://www.portlandoregon.gov/oehr/article/595121

Pitts, D. (2009). Diversity management, job satisfaction, and performance: Evidence from US federal agencies. Public Administration Review, 69, 328-338.

SHRM (Society for Human Resource Management. (2007). 2007 State of workplace diversity management: A survey report by the SHRM. Retrieved from https://www.shrm.org/about-shrm/news-about-shrm/Documents/The%20State%20of%20Diversity%20Managment%20surevey%20report.pdf

Stalcup, G., Fangman, K., Gorman, E., Hampton-Manley, E., Hogan, S., Martin, B., Therodoropoulos, K., Volpe, M., & Wilmoth, G. (2005). Expert-identified leading practices and agency examples. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Accountability Office.

Thomas, D. (2011, January). What do need to understand about diversity? Retrieved from https://insights.som.yale.edu/insights/what-do-leaders-need-to-understand-about-

diversity

United States Census Bureau. (2018). Portland. Retrieved from https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/portlandcityoregon/SEX255217#viewtop

Walker, H. J., Feild, H. S., Bernerth, J. B., & Becton, J. B. (2012). Diversity cues on recruitment websites: Investigating the effects on job seekers' information processing. Journal of Applied Psychology, 97(1), 214-224.

Williams, K., & O'Reilly, C. (1998). Demography and diversity in organizations: A review of 40 years of research. Research in Organization Behavior. Greenwich: JAI Press.

Willing, L. (2017, November). The diversity paradox: A true commitment to change needed in the fire service. Retrieved from https://www.firechief.com/2017/11/06/the-diversity-paradox-a-true-commitment-to-change-needed-in-the-fire-service/

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: DESCRIPTION OF THE CENTER FOR PUBLIC SERVICE AND THE RESEARCH TEAM

Center for Public Service

Center for Public Service (CPS) is housed within the Mark O. Hatfield School of Government at Portland State University. Its mission is to help connect academic professionals, practitioners, consultants, trainers, and students who have expertise in consulting, research, and professional development, with practitioners in the public service sector who share our interest in public service leadership and organizational capacity building.

With decades of experience delivering high quality consulting, research and professional development to public and nonprofit organizations located in the Pacific Northwest as well as in international settings such as Vietnam, Japan, and China, CPS offers the cost competitiveness of a not-for-profit organization, the intellectual content of a leading academic center, and the client-driven flexibility of a traditional consulting firm.

Research Team

Masami Nishishiba, Ph.D.

Masami Nishishiba is the Chair and an Associate Professor in the Department of Public Administration at the Mark O. Hatfield School of Government, Portland State University (PSU). She also serves as the Associate Director of the Center for Public Service within the Hatfield School of Government.

Dr. Nishishiba has been engaged in community-based research and professional training for public agencies including, City of Portland, Washington County, State of Oregon, Clackamas County, City of Longview, City of Medford and many others.

Dr. Nishishiba is an author of Culturally mindful communication: Essential skills for public and nonprofit professionals (In print, Routledge, New York, NY.), Local Government Diversity Initiatives in Oregon: An Exploratory Study (2011, State and Local Government Review, 44(1), 55–66.), and many other articles, book chapters and books.

Dr. Nishishiba completed her doctorate in Public Administration and Policy at PSU in 2003. Her dissertation involved developing and evaluating a cultural competency plan for the Department of Community Justice, Multnomah County, Oregon. She completed her master's degree in Communication Studies at PSU in 1998, and her bachelor's degree in linguistics from Osaka University in 1983.

Charles (Corky) McReynolds, Ph.D.

Corky McReynolds, PhD, CPF, is Founder and Principal of LeadTeam Consulting, LLC. LeadTeam builds leadership and team capacity for organizations to create direction and action to accomplish their mission. He was the Director of the Treehaven Field Campus and a Professor of Human Dimensions of Natural Resources in the College of Natural Resources, University of Wisconsin/Stevens Point. At UWSP, Dr. McReynolds developed and taught graduate courses in strategic planning, non-profit management, facilitation skills, qualitative research techniques, and leadership.

Dr. McReynolds has facilitated and trained facilitators for strategic planning processes at non-profits, agencies, professional associations, and national organizations. His research, teaching, and consulting focuses on leadership and enhancing organizational change through effective individual and group processes. In addition to consulting, he currently serves as Adjunct Faculty for Portland State University and Pacific University.

Dr. McReynolds has authored numerous articles on organizational capacity building and leadership including a published monograph, In Search of Extraordinary Leadership (2006) Association of Nature Center Administrators. Logan, UT.

Paul Manson, MPA

Paul Manson is a Senior Research Assistant with Portland State University's Center for Public Service. His research has focused on new tools for the representation and assessment of public input and engagement. Most recently he has been studying the expansion of participatory geographical information systems into policy processes in Oregon. Paul also supports the CPS program to understand the impact of shifting demographics and voting with Phil Keisling. He focuses on quantitative analysis tools to understand these shifts, and in particular to explore impacts on local elections as new tools for registration and voting are deployed. Paul also manages a suite of disaster resilience research projects with CPS. These include the producing planning tools to

assess social and community vulnerability to large natural and technological hazards. Paul has a BA in Anthropology from Reed College, and an MPA from Portland State University. He is currently a PhD candidate in the Public Affairs and Policy program at Portland State University.

Sara Spiers, MPA

Sara Spiers is a research assistance for the Center for Public Service in the Mark O. Hatfield School of Government at Portland State University. At PSU, she studies the representation of marginalized groups in government and policy, policy process, and organizational change.

Sara received her Masters in Public Administration from Virginia Tech in 2017. Even though she is now on the west coast, she continues to be engaged with projects on the east coast. In both Virginia and Oregon, Sara works closely with local and state-level organizations to conduct community and workplace needs assessments and evaluate program effectiveness. In addition to the Portland Fire and Rescue Bureau project, she has evaluated an inmate therapeutic program for a state correctional facility. She presented findings from the evaluation to the program's stakeholders, as well as to a national audience interested in strategies to reduce prison recidivism. Sara has worked with rural community's local non-profits to form a service network with the goal of easing access to services for vulnerable families and children.

Zoe Flanagan, MPP

Zoe Flanagan graduated in June of 2018 with a Master's in Public Policy from the College of Urban and Public Affairs at Portland State University. Her concentration was policy analysis and research pertaining to policies affecting immigrant and refugee communities. She is a passionate advocate for community based research and community engagement in the development of public policy.

Zoe was awarded the Presidential Award for Community Engagement from Portland State University and the Dean's Award for Community Engagement from the College of Urban and Public Affairs at Portland State University in June of 2018 due to her dedication and work on this project and many other projects she completed during her time at PSU.

APPENDIX B: DATA COLLECTION

I. Leadership Interviews

Interview procedure

Potential Interviewees were originally contacted by email. The email described the scope and purpose of the study. It asked the individual to respond to the email and confirm if they would like to be contacted to learn more about the interview process. After the second round of communication and the potential interviewee confirmed their willingness to participate, an interview date and time was scheduled. All but one interview took place in a conference room at PF&R Station 1 in Portland, Oregon. Two days prior to the interview an email was shared with the interviewee reminding them of the interview time and asking them to read through an attached informed consent. The interviewer went over the informed consent on the day of the interview. The interviewer also reviewed the purpose of the PF&R Workplace Assessment study and discussed the expected duration of the interview. Any questions that the interviewee had were answered. The research team collected the consent form once the purpose was explained and the interviewee's questions were answered.

For each interview, there were three people in the conference room. The interviewee and two PSU researchers (one researcher was the lead researcher). The lead researcher guided the interview by asking questions and soliciting ideas from the interviewee. The second PSU researcher ensured the recording equipment worked, took detailed notes, and occasionally asked clarifying questions.

Interview participants

There was a total of 17 leadership interviews. Leadership, for the purpose of the study, included any PF&R employee who holds a position of Deputy Chief or higher. A former member of PF&R leadership and PFFA Local 43 Union leadership were also included among the interviewees. Demographics of the interviewees are not reported to assure confidentiality.

Interview questions

The interview consisted of 8 open ended questions. The questions aimed to understand the perceptions of PF&R leaders on the past workplace culture, current workplace culture, and recommendations on how to modify policies, programs, and processes moving forward. The questions also measured the level to which each interviewee valued diversity, enabled diversity, and managed diversity. The following are the 8 open ended questions prepared for the interview.

1. Can you tell me your background and the history with PF&R?
2. How do you describe the work environment/workplace culture of PF&R as a whole and the units you oversee? Any key words that come to you mind? Anything special about the PF&R workplace culture that you would like to highlight?
3. In your observation, how do you see PF&R address the issue of "diversity, equity and inclusion"? What do you do well, and what are some concerns?
4. To what extent do you think diverse, equitable and inclusive work culture is important for PF&R, and why? How do you think your colleagues and the members of PF&R think about this issue?
5. What are the kinds of things you think PF&R and yourself as a member of leadership have been doing to diversify PF&R?
6. What are the kinds of things you think PF&R and yourself as a member of leadership have been doing to assure equity among the PF&R employees and create inclusive environment?
7. Moving forward, what kinds of things would you like to see happening at PF&R to further improve the overall work environment?
8. Do you have any questions or anything else you would like to add? Is there anything that we haven't discussed that you feel it's important for me to know about PF&R's workplace culture?

Analysis

Each interview was transcribed and thematically coded. The coding was an iterative process. Three members of the research team individually read through the transcribed interviews, looked for common themes individually, and met several times over the course of the study to compare and merge codes.

II. Focus Groups

Focus group procedure

Narrowing down focus group participants was an iterative process. The research team asked PF&R to establish a PF&R Workplace Assessment Planning Committee comprised of PF&R employees of all ranks, backgrounds, genders, and races. This group was used to help the research team learn current workplace norms, ask about survey distribution, and make sure the research team used the correct jargon. Additionally, this group helped identify what demographics would be recruited for the ten focus groups. The working group completed a survey with different key demographic information listed. The survey participants identified the different demographics they would like to hear from regarding their experiences as firefighters. Once the demographic information for each focus group was established, all PF&R employees interested in participating in the focus group could sign-up for the focus group they identified with. Random numbers were assigned to each volunteer, and a random number generator identified the individuals the research team would contact. The individual would be called and told they were selected for a focus group, asked if they were still interested, and further information was shared. Upon accepting the initial verbal offer to participate in the focus group, the dates and times were scheduled. An informed consent form was sent to each participants' email 48-hours before the focus group. Another informed consent form was given to the participants at the focus group, reviewed by the focus group facilitator, and collected before the focus group began.

Present during each focus group were the PF&R employees, a facilitator hired by CPS who worked with the research team to form the questions, a research assistant to help with note taking and the audio equipment, and an observer who listened to the exchange and also took notes.

Before the facilitator began the focus group, they went over the research purpose and protocol. The focus group was guided by the following principles:

1. Respect everyone and all opinions.
2. Equal opportunity to participate.
3. One person talks at a time.
4. Practice active listening.

5. **Keep the discussion focused on the topic, rather than individuals.**

All focus groups were scheduled for 90 minutes. All focus groups took place at a conference room in a Portland Water Bureau facility.

Focus group participants

The demographics for the eleven focus groups included employees identifying as:

- Less than 5 years of experience at PF&R
- More than 20 years of experience at PF&R
- Captains
- LGBTQ
- Women
- Non-Sworn
- Two representatives per Division
- Steering Committee members - First FG
- Steering Committee members - Second FG
- African American
- Bureau-wide volunteers

Focus group questions

The FG Guide included six key questions that were asked of all groups. In addition, the researchers occasionally, asked probing or clarifying follow-up questions within the context of one of the key questions. Participants were not given or viewed the questions in advance of the Focus Group.

Key Questions

1. **What are the highlights of the PF&R culture?**
2. **What are the concerns that you have with the PF&R workplace culture?**
3. **In your direct experience or observation regarding Diversity, Equity and Inclusion what does PF&R do well?**
4. **In your direct experience or observation regarding Diversity, Equity and Inclusion what are concerns?**

5. Moving forward, what would you like to see happen at PF&R to improve the overall work environment?
6. Is there anything we have not discussed that is important for us to know about PF&R's workplace culture?

Analysis

Each focus group was transcribed and coded using qualitative research techniques. Codes were created for relevant statements to the key questions followed by the creation of code categories of similar statements. Once code categories were established the team reviewed the data to create themes that represent and interpret the meaning of the data as it relates to the purpose of the project.

III. Survey

Survey procedure

In discussions with PF&R staff, in order to assure confidentiality of the survey respondents' identity, the survey was developed as a paper survey distributed to all fire stations, offices, and support facilities. The survey included a business reply envelope addressed to PSU to allow for respondents to complete the survey anywhere and at their own pace.

The surveys were distributed by Battalion Chiefs on their visits to fire stations and other locations. At the same time the PF&R staff developed a series of communications to encourage participation in the survey. This included a memorandum from Chief Myers, an internal promotional video message, and peer to peer encouragement.

The surveys were delivered by PSU to PF&R May 14, 2018, and immediately distributed to PF&R locations. Responses were collected through July 13, 2018.

Survey participants

In total 418 surveys were submitted, and three of the surveys sent in were blank or with comments indicating a desire not to complete the survey. Item completion rates were generally very high (above 95%) - indicating that almost all of the questions were

completed on the returned surveys.

Demographic data was one area where item completion rates dropped, approximately 25% of respondents chose not to indicate race or ethnicity, gender, or religion. 15% of respondents did not report their PF&R division and 13% did not report their education level.

The charts below present the different demographic categories that were reported to us in the survey. Note that the very high refusal rate on some items makes comparisons challenging.

Category

Gender	Survey Responses	Bureau Data
Female	12%	10%
Male	64%	90%
Did Not Provide	23%	N/A

Race	Survey Responses	Bureau Data
African American	2%	4%
Asian	2%	6%
Hispanic/Latinx	3%	6%
Native American	2%	3%
Pacific Islander/Hawaiian	1%	<1%
White	55%	80%
More than one	6%	2%
Other	4%	N/A
Did Not Provide	26%	N/A

Disability	Survey Responses	Bureau Data
Yes	6%	18%
None	77%	82%
Refuse	17%	N/A

Sworn Status	Survey Responses
Sworn	86%
Non-Sworn	9%
Refuse	5%

Division	Survey Responses
Emergency Operations	68%
Medical Services/Training	2%
Prevention	8%
Chief's Office/Management Services	6%
Refuse/Multiple	16%

Survey questions

The survey instrument was developed by PSU research team in collaboration with key Portland Fire & Rescue stakeholders. The survey development started with a review of the 2002 and 2008 cultural assessment surveys to identify key questions or items to include for 2018 allowing for a measure of change over time. The team also worked with PF&R leadership and stakeholders to broaden the survey to include other workplace assessment concerns.

See Appendix C for the survey instrument.

Analysis

Paper surveys were scanned in for data entry using Remark OMR software. The data was preprocessed in the optical recognition software. Most preprocessing involved

resolving recognition errors due to smudges, respondent corrected answers, and multiple responses. If there was no clear indication which of the multiple responses was intended, then the item response was coded as multiple response and omitted from analysis. Multiple responses were rare and did not impact the item completion rate heavily.

The survey responses were analyzed based on the seven categories of the questions that the survey was constructed. These categories were:

1. Mission, leadership, and values
2. Supervision, promotion, training, and workplace climate
3. Employee team environment
4. Diversity, equity, and inclusion
5. Witnessing and experiencing discrimination or harassment
6. Recruitment and retention
7. Coordination with equity policies and communications

Frequency tables for each question were examined to identify key patterns. Responses to the three open ended questions were transcribed manually from the scanned survey copies. The codes that were developed to analyze leadership interviews and focus groups were applied to analyze the responses to the open ended questions.

The survey questions that were retained from the 2002 and 2008 surveys were analyzed for comparisons over time among the three surveys.

APPENDIX C: SURVEY INSTRUMENT

The following pages include the survey instrument used for this study.

2018 Portland Fire and Rescue

Workplace Assessment Survey

Who is doing this survey?

Over the past decade, Portland Fire & Rescue (PF&R) has conducted periodic workplace assessments that includes a survey of employee experiences and opinions. This year, PF&R partnered with Portland State University's Center for Public Service (CPS) to conduct this survey as a third-party assessment specialist that will assure objectivity and protect the anonymity of the information collected through this research.

What questions are being asked in this survey?

This survey includes a series of questions designed to assess the workplace experience. Some questions we have included are repeated from previous surveys, so we can measure change over time. Other questions were developed for this survey to assess more current interests related to PF&R workplace culture.

Why conduct this assessment?

The workplace survey is an opportunity for each and every member of PF&R to share their observations, experiences, and opinions about working at PF&R. The survey will provide information that will inform policy choices for PF&R. The survey is 100% anonymous, allowing you to be as candid as you would like to be.

How will my information and responses be protected?

The survey is being conducted by faculty and researchers at Portland State University. The raw survey responses will not be shared with PF&R. Only the PSU team will have access to the data. PSU will provide summaries of the survey responses to PF&R. Comments without identifying elements may be included in the summaries.

Under law the PSU research team will not share raw responses or data with anyone outside of the PSU team, even if a public records request is submitted. Your responses will be kept anonymous and we will not be able identify you by your responses.

What if I have any questions or concerns?

If you have questions about the PF&R Workplace Assessment you can contact Dr. Masami Nishishiba at 503-725-5151 or nishism@pdx.edu.

Instructions

Please read each question and indicate your response by filling in the circle that best fits your response. We offer "Don't Know" and "Don't Care" as options. Use "Don't Know" if you feel you do not have the right information to respond or if the question is not clear. Use "Don't Care" if you feel the question does not matter for you or the organization or is not an issue that should be addressed.

Returning the Survey

We have provided a self-addressed business reply envelope to return the survey. This can be mailed from any mailbox, PF&R mail collection, or from your home. If for some reason an envelope is missing you can mail this survey to:

Paul Manson, Portland State University, PO Box 751 PA, Portland, OR 97211

THANK YOU FOR SHARING YOUR OPINIONS AND PERSPECTIVES!

Section I

To begin the survey, we would like to ask you some general questions about your experience within Portland Fire & Rescue. Please indicate your level of agreement with each of the following statements. If you have any comments, feel free to write in the margins of the survey.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Don't Know	Don't Care
1. Portland Fire & Rescue is a great place to work.	○	○	○	○	○	○
2. I am proud of the work I do in PF&R.	○	○	○	○	○	○
3. Chief Myers's leadership is taking PF&R in the right direction.	○	○	○	○	○	○
4. The Executive Team's leadership is taking PF&R in the right direction.	○	○	○	○	○	○
5. I believe in PF&R's mission statement: "Portland Fire & Rescue aggressively and safely protects life, property, and the environment."	○	○	○	○	○	○
6. The PF&R mission statement fully captures our values.	○	○	○	○	○	○
7. I receive regular updates about things going on at PF&R that affect my work.	○	○	○	○	○	○
8. PF&R policies are clearly communicated with me.	○	○	○	○	○	○
9. I feel comfortable and respected in my work environment.	○	○	○	○	○	○

Section II

The following questions focus on supervision, promotions, training and workplace climate.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Don't Know	Don't Care
10. I feel I can discuss problems with my current supervisor.	○	○	○	○	○	○
11. My supervisor makes me feel like a valued member of the team.	○	○	○	○	○	○
12. I receive constructive feedback on my job performance from my supervisor.	○	○	○	○	○	○
13. All employees have an equal chance to participate in training classes and advancement opportunities.	○	○	○	○	○	○

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Don't Know	Don't Care
14. Promotions are based on what you know, rather than whom you know.	○	○	○	○	○	○
15. PF&R actively supports my career development.	○	○	○	○	○	○
16. It is easier to get a promotion at PF&R if you are a **person of color**.	○	○	○	○	○	○
17. It is easier to get a promotion at PF&R if you are a **woman**.	○	○	○	○	○	○
18. I experience resistance when I suggest new ideas for improving our organization.	○	○	○	○	○	○
19. All employees have equal opportunities for promotion.	○	○	○	○	○	○
20. It is easier to get a promotion at PF&R if you are white.	○	○	○	○	○	○
21. I have the necessary conflict resolution skills to resolve person-to-person conflict at work.	○	○	○	○	○	○
22. Those who are in managerial positions at PF&R do a good job.	○	○	○	○	○	○
23. My immediate supervisor is effective at resolving conflicts that involve racial and gender differences.	○	○	○	○	○	○
24. PF&R managers and supervisors are culturally competent (knowledgeable of various racial and ethnic groups' cultural values, norms, and expectations).	○	○	○	○	○	○
25. PF&R managers and supervisors respond to gender issues in the workplace.	○	○	○	○	○	○
26. Managers and supervisors at PF&R are well trained in resolving discrimination (including harassment) complaints.	○	○	○	○	○	○

Section III

The following questions focus on the relationships among employees at PF&R. These questions ask you about how well teams work together, and the way individuals experience working at PF&R.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Don't Know	Don't Care
27. I can rely on my co-workers for my personal safety on the job.	○	○	○	○	○	○
28. Civilian (non-sworn) employees are appreciated by sworn employees for their contributions to PF&R.	○	○	○	○	○	○
29. I feel comfortable cohabiting with members of the opposite sex during my work shift.	○	○	○	○	○	○
30. People at PF&R do not make fun of other people who speak with an accent.	○	○	○	○	○	○
31. I feel comfortable working with those who identify as members of the lesbian, gay, and bisexual community in my workplace.	○	○	○	○	○	○
32. I feel comfortable working with those who are transgender in my workplace.	○	○	○	○	○	○
33. Derogatory jokes and comments about **gays and lesbians** are heard at PF&R.	○	○	○	○	○	○
34. Derogatory jokes and comments about **women** are heard at PF&R.	○	○	○	○	○	○
35. Derogatory jokes and comments about **race** are heard at PF&R.	○	○	○	○	○	○
36. Sexually explicit jokes and comments are heard at PF&R.	○	○	○	○	○	○
37. Gay men who are PF&R members generally hide their sexual orientation.	○	○	○	○	○	○
38. Lesbian women who are PF&R members generally hide their sexual orientation.	○	○	○	○	○	○
39. Persons of color have to prove themselves more than white coworkers do on the job.	○	○	○	○	○	○
40. Women have to prove themselves more than men do on the job.	○	○	○	○	○	○
41. Women must present themselves differently (compromise their identity) to succeed in PF&R.	○	○	○	○	○	○

Section IV

The following questions focus on your opinions on equity within PF&R. For this section we define **equality** as the equal treatment of individuals regardless of their identity or background. **Equity** is defined as the treatment of individuals recognizing past or present barriers created for groups that unfairly target them based on their identity. The goal of equity is to create a workplace where one's identity cannot predict career or personal outcomes.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Don't Know	Don't Care
42. The concept of **equality** provided above is how I defined equality before reading the definition.	○	○	○	○	○	○
43. The concept of **equity** provided above is how I defined equity before reading the definition.	○	○	○	○	○	○
44. Knowledge of other cultures improves my job performance.	○	○	○	○	○	○
45. It is important to have a diverse workplace.	○	○	○	○	○	○
46. I am an advocate for gender **equity** in the workplace.	○	○	○	○	○	○
47. I am an advocate for racial **equity** in the workplace.	○	○	○	○	○	○
48. I receive support from my colleagues when I share my feelings about the stresses of my job.	○	○	○	○	○	○
49. It is important to work in a place that values an **equitable** environment (e.g. accommodations are made for different types of team members.)	○	○	○	○	○	○
50. I am comfortable addressing disputes which involve racial and gender differences.	○	○	○	○	○	○
51. Training offered by PF&R has helped me develop my conflict resolution skills.	○	○	○	○	○	○
52. If I report being **racially** harassed at PF&R, it will be dealt with effectively.	○	○	○	○	○	○
53. If I report being **sexually** harassed at PF&R, it will be dealt with effectively.	○	○	○	○	○	○
54. Executive Staff (Chief, Division Chiefs and Deputy Chiefs) are committed to promoting diversity, equity and inclusion.	○	○	○	○	○	○
55. There are people who I can consult with and receive advice from at PF&R who are sensitive to **racial** concerns.	○	○	○	○	○	○

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Don't Know	Don't Care
56. There are people who I can consult with and receive advice from at PF&R who are sensitive to **gender** concerns.	○	○	○	○	○	○
57. My immediate supervisor is an advocate for **racial** equity.	○	○	○	○	○	○
58. My immediate supervisor is a advocate for **gender** equity.	○	○	○	○	○	○
59. PF&R leadership consistently seeks input regarding racial equity work, including issues regarding workplace culture.	○	○	○	○	○	○
60. The employee complaint process at PF&R is effective in dealing with discrimination.	○	○	○	○	○	○
61. When I hear a derogatory joke, I feel comfortable saying something to stop the joke.	○	○	○	○	○	○
62. When a derogatory joke is made, I see others jump in to stop the behavior.	○	○	○	○	○	○

Section V

Next, we would like to know if you have experienced or witnessed any types of harassment or discrimination in the workplace. We want you to think about the past two years as you complete these questions. Have you **experienced** harassment or discrimination in the **past two years** that are based on any of the following categories?

63. Type of Harassment or Discrimination	Yes	No
Racial/Ethnic	○	○
Gender	○	○
Disability	○	○
Age	○	○
Sexual Orientation	○	○
Religious	○	○
Language	○	○
Physical Appearance	○	○
Other:	○	○

_____

If you mark "Yes" above, **please provide a brief description** of the incidents:

Have you **witnessed** harassment or discrimination in the **past two years** that are based on any of the following categories?

64. Type of Harassment or Discrimination	Yes	No
Racial/Ethnic	○	○
Gender	○	○
Disability	○	○
Age	○	○
Sexual Orientation	○	○
Religious	○	○
Language	○	○
Physical Appearance	○	○
Other:	○	○

_____

If you mark "Yes" above, **please provide a brief description** of the incidents:

CONTINUE ON NEXT PAGE

Section VI

The next set of questions ask about how well PF&R does in recruiting and retaining firefighters and staff.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Don't Know	Don't Care
65. Recruiting efforts improve diversity at PF&R.	○	○	○	○	○	○
66. Practices exist to retain people of color.	○	○	○	○	○	○
67. Practices exist to retain women.	○	○	○	○	○	○
68. Diverse recruitment is critical to fulfilling the core principles of PF&R.	○	○	○	○	○	○
69. The Firefighter Trainee Program produces qualified candidates for the Firefighter Recruit Academy.	○	○	○	○	○	○
70. It is necessary to provide additional training opportunities for groups that have historically been denied access to trainings or career advancement.	○	○	○	○	○	○

Section VII

Portland Fire & Rescue, along with other bureaus in the City of Portland, are charged with developing diversity and equity plans and policies. These questions ask you about how you have interacted with these plans and policies.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Don't Know	Don't Care
71. I understand how my work is connected to the broader equity vision of **PF&R's strategic plan**.	○	○	○	○	○	○
72. I understand how my work is connected to the broader equity policies put forth by the **Portland City Council**.	○	○	○	○	○	○
73. Publicly distributed PF&R materials are assessed for racial bias and reviewed to ensure materials reflect the diversity in the community served.	○	○	○	○	○	○

CONTINUE ON NEXT PAGE

Section VIII

Now, we'd like to offer you a chance to share your experiences or concerns in your own words. These following questions include space for you to write short responses. Anything you share here will be kept in confidence. We may use excerpts if we believe they will not identify who wrote the response.

74. What makes you proud to be a part of PF&R?

75. If you could change three things about PF&R, what would they be and how would you change them?

76. What are some challenges you have working with diverse populations or communities, either today or looking into the future?

77. What training or skills would you like to access or obtain to help you do your job at PF&R?

78. What else would you like to share about PF&R that we have not asked about on the survey?

Section IX

Finally, we would like to ask some questions about your demographics. This information will help us in two ways. First, it will allow us to compare responses to this survey to PF&R-wide demographic data and understand how well this survey represents PF&R. Second, the data will allow to better understand how different concerns and opinions are distributed across the organization.

79. Are you a **sworn or non-sworn** employee?

○ Sworn ○ Non-Sworn

80. What is your **age**? Use the bubbles below for the first and second digit of your age.

0	0
1	1
2	2
3	3
4	4
5	5
6	6
7	7
8	8
9	9

81. Did you enter through the **Firefighter Trainee Program**?

○ Yes ○ No

82. Which of the following describes your **race or ethnicity**? (Check all that apply.

- ○ Asian
- ○ African American/Black
- ○ Hispanic or Latino/a
- ○ Native American/Alaskan Native American Indian
- ○ Pacific Islander/Native Hawaiian
- ○ White
- ○ Prefer not to say
- ○ Other: _____

83. What is your **gender**?

- ○ Female
- ○ Male
- ○ Transgender
- ○ Prefer not to say

84. What is your **sexual orientation**?

- ○ Straight
- ○ Gay or Lesbian
- ○ Bi-sexual
- ○ Prefer to self describe:

  _____
- ○ Prefer not to say

85. Do you have a **disability**?

- ○ Yes
- ○ No
- ○ Prefer not to say

86. If you have a disability, have you asked for an **accommodation**?

- ○ Yes
- ○ No
- ○ Prefer not to say
- ○ Don't know

87. If you observe or identify with a **religion**, which one do you identify as?

- ○ Christian
- ○ Jewish
- ○ Muslim
- ○ Buddhist
- ○ Hindu
- ○ Agnostic
- ○ Not religious
- ○ Prefer not to say
- ○ Other: _____

88. What is your **length of service** with PF&R in years? Use the bubbles below for the first and second digit for length of service.

⓪	⓪
①	①
②	②
③	③
④	④
⑤	⑤
⑥	⑥
⑦	⑦
⑧	⑧
⑨	⑨

89. What Division do you work in at PF&R?

- ○ Emergency Operations
- ○ Prevention
- ○ Medical Services & Training
- ○ Management Services Division/ Chief's Office
- ○ Prefer not to say

90. What is your highest level of completed **education**?

- ○ Less than high school
- ○ High School or GED
- ○ Some college (no degree awarded)
- ○ Associate's Degree
- ○ Bachelor's Degree
- ○ Master's Degree or Higher
- ○ Prefer not to say

Returning the Survey

We have provided a self-addressed business reply envelope to return the survey. Mail from any mailbox, PF&R mail collection, or from your home. If the envelope is missing you can mail this survey to:

Paul Manson
Portland State University
PO Box 751 PA
Portland, OR 97211