

Update for Portland Utility Board on *Hiring, Retention and Promotion*

Portland Water Bureau

The People Operations Team, supporting recruitment efforts, and the Employee Experience and Development Team, supporting inclusion, retention, and belonging are a result of goals and actions identified in the [2020-2024 Water Bureau Strategic Plan](#) and are in alignment with the [Water Bureau's Plan to Advance Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion](#).

The work plans of both teams are responsive to the Strategic Plan as well as the 2021-2022 Employee Engagement Survey (the *Employee Engagement Analysis Final Report*, employee handout, and communications guidance for managers and supervisors are attached separately).

People Operations

The People Operations unit was created in 2023 as part of the bureau's strategic planning efforts to provide comprehensive support for improving recruitment, retention and payroll operations. The People Operations team delivers employee lifecycle services and resources to the entire bureau to provide best practices in how the bureau can improve the experience of applicants and employees. Their charge is to analyze and identify complex administrative tasks, administer survey instruments, analyze data, and provide solutions to enhance the experience of employees.

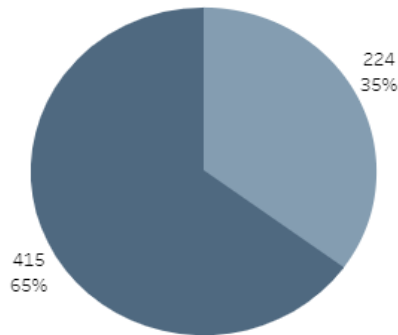
The creation of this organization does represent a "reorganization" of duties, in that functions that were dispersed across the bureau are now coordinated through the People Operations unit. The unit is divided among two teams, and this role has been coordinating the recruitment needs since July 2023. The unit is not yet fully staffed as the manager has been focused on recruiting for three vacancies, and the unit is expected to have all vacancies filled by July 1, 2024. Once fully staffed the team will continue to make efforts to advance the methods for targeted recruiting within underrepresented communities.

When we examine the data, the bureau continues to lag the city as a whole in the demographic makeup of the workforce by one to five percentage points depending on the category (Chart included below). In light of this, the bureau has made significant financial investment in reaching communities underrepresented in the organization. There has been more than \$30,000 in advertising spent using forums such as Urban League of Portland, Facebook targeted advertising, and sites such as Minority Professional and Mosaic Blueprint, and professional associations such as National American Indian Science and Engineering, National Society for Black Engineers. The pandemic caused a pause in attending in-person events, and the bureau as resumed person-to-person outreach at events such as Women in Trades and the Black Student Success Summit. Working with the Employee Experience and Development manager will be useful as we investigate the reasons that BIPOC employees have are leaving at a higher rate per capita within their first year (see chart below). Only one (1) of the five (5) employees that left did so involuntarily, so we have some areas of focus we can take as we examine causes for the transition.

Employee Demographics

Total Employees = 639

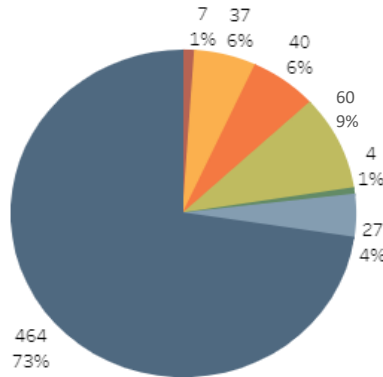
Gender



Gender
■ Female
■ Male

Note: If you select a Class Title with fewer than 5 employees, no data will be displayed to maintain confidentiality.

Race/Ethnicity



Race/Ethnicity
■ American Indian or Alaska Native
■ Asian or Asian American
■ Black or African American
■ Hispanic or Latino/a/e/x
■ Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander
■ Two or More Races
■ White or European American

Roster Date

Bureau

Representation

Class Title

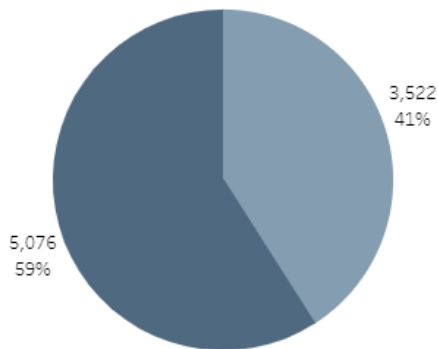
Casual or Non-Casual

Employee Group

Employee Demographics

Total Employees = 8,598

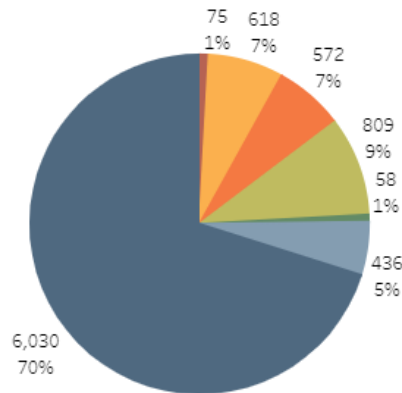
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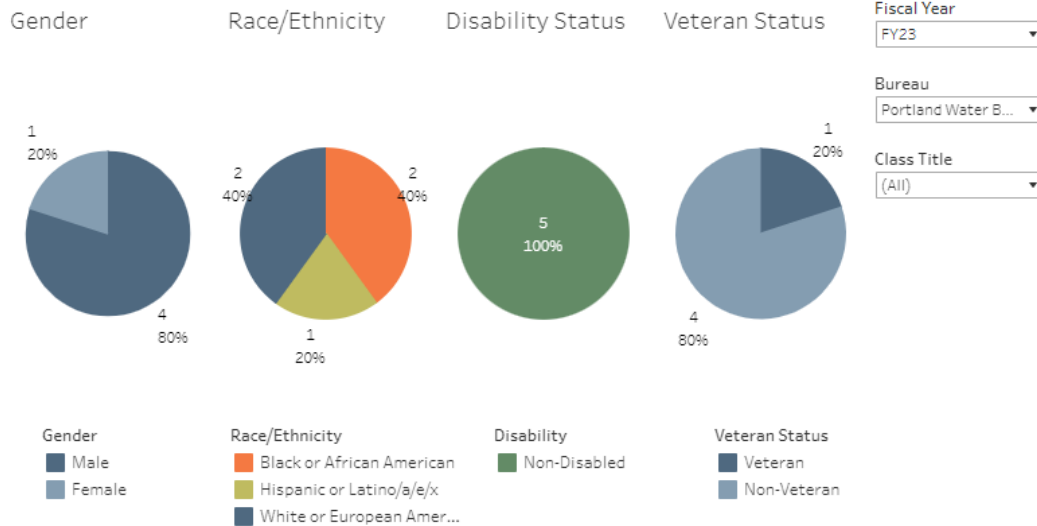
Class Title

Casual or Non-Casual

Employee Group

Quality of Hire Metrics - Attrition Demographics

Employees Leaving Within First Year = 5



Employee Experience and Development

Retention improvement efforts have been led by both Employee Experience and Development manager Jill Winsor and People Operations Manager Blake Dye. Jill and Blake are currently collaborating to develop a People Management Learning Journey to train Water Bureau managers and ensure that they are providing supportive people management to their team.

The EED team has also implemented the following:

- Relaunching [SOAKED](#) to provide staff an opportunity to more deeply understand the work of the bureau.
- Supporting Water's participation in City Mentorship program and Path to Leadership Program.
- Preparing to launch the Watering Hole, a monthly, optional learning opportunity for Water staff to build relationships and learn about each other's work, major projects happening across the bureau, technology, and essential development skills.

Other work groups have also made impactful changes to improve the employee experience. Customer Service is developing job shadow program, and Maintenance & Construction have created a structure to support flexible schedules.

In addition to continuous improvement of existing programs, the EED team has plans to develop and expand job shadow and mentorship opportunities and explore employee professional development options.

The EED team has begun exploring how to support and expand career development, mentorship, and skills training program(s) at the Water Bureau. We've decided that this won't look like our historic job shadow program, which had a one-size-fits-all approach. Instead, we are focused on addressing specific needs, and plan to engage with managers and employees in all work groups to identify these needs and design solutions.

Equity and Policy Team

The bureau's Equity and Policy team collaborates with both the People Operations unit and the Employee Experience and Development team to advance equitable outcomes within the Water Bureau's workforce. The Workforce and Culture sections of the [Water Bureau's Plan to Advance Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion](#) have recently been updated to align with the workplans of the two teams.

FY 22-23 selected workforce highlights from the Equity Achievements Report

- The share of female employees remained constant at 34 percent, while female hires increased 1 point from 38 percent to 39 percent.
- The share of Black, Indigenous, Latinx, Asian, Pacific Islander, and multiracial employees increased from 22 to 25 percent, while hires in these categories increased significantly from 35 percent to 43 percent. *Bureau representation still lags behind the 33.6 percent of the community population who identify as Black, Indigenous, Latinx, Asian, Pacific Islander, and multiracial, but the trend is moving toward proportional representation.*
- The Water Bureau Operations group created a recruitment resource to assist hiring managers in broadening their applicant search when recruiting for open positions. The Operations Recruitment Resource was designed to provide hiring managers access to a curated list of recruitment advertising platforms specific to the position for which they are hiring. The list of recruitment platforms can be sorted based on applicant demographic and specialty field to ensure that job announcements are reaching the appropriate candidates.

FY 21-22 selected workforce highlights from the Equity Achievements Report

- Posted job announcements to diverse websites and recruitment boards, specifically targeting groups that are underrepresented at the bureau.
- Supported and educated managers on hiring diverse applicants.
- Launched work group Equity Champions for Engineering, Customer Service, Operations, Finance, and Resource Protection and Planning. They received the Water Equity Foundations training and will support their groups in implementing actions from the equity plan as well as serve as liaisons with the Equity and Policy Team.
- In Customer Service, improved rotation of work assignments to distribute learning opportunities among Meter Technicians equally. This was done in two ways: (1) Ensured meter technicians had equal opportunities to learn the Meter Tech III role, and (2) created a standard rotation for meter technicians to work on small meters and large meters. Customer Service started these programs in the previous fiscal year and refined them into more structured and methodical programs this year

Accessibility Policies: Workforce

The Water Bureau Accessibility Policies also include a *Workforce* section to address language access and disability access for employees, supporting the bureau to meet its obligations under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act and Title I of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). The workforce accessibility policies include conducting an accessible recruitment, reviewing job descriptions, creating a welcoming workplace, providing language access services and disability accommodations for employees, and training accessibility for employees.