



**MICHIGAN
ECONOMIC**



TPMA

Bold Solutions.
Empowered Communities.



Assessment + Strategic Action Plan

DIVERSITY, EQUITY, INCLUSION



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Introduction

During the development of MEDC's strategic plan in 2019, equitable, high-wage growth was identified as an organizational guiding principle. This was reaffirmed through the 2022 refresh of the plan, as MEDC declared integrating equitable growth across the state a priority in every aspect of MEDC programs and operations. As such, MEDC seeks to become a leader in driving accessible and transparent processes to incorporate under-resourced communities' priorities and lived experiences into program design and decision-making. MEDC aims to create meaningful economic mobility and prosperity pathways for all Michiganders. Ultimately, MEDC seeks to create an inclusive economic landscape that grows, retrain, and attracts businesses in Michigan.



Goals and Objectives

To accomplish its organizational goals, MEDC released a public request for proposals (RFP) to solicit a professional service firm to help it achieve several relevant goals and objectives. Those goals and objectives include:

- | Gain insight and knowledge on DEI best practices, particularly in hiring and procurement.
- | Gain insight through an audit and review of MEDC's current strategy regarding Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI).
- | Understand how MEDC programming compares to organizational best practices across the county.
- | Better understand how MEDC can leverage its quasi-government status to model DEI principles for other government agencies with significant procurement opportunities.
- | Gain insight and knowledge into how DEI can consider location and socio-economic factors such as first-generation college attendance, which are critical in Michigan, without diluting the continuing required work on gender, racial, religious, and sexual orientation underrepresentation.

Additionally, MEDC, through their RFP process, was seeking a professional services firm to help the organization:

- | Review key programs and design elements and provide recommendations or changes to ensure inclusivity.
- | Identify key partners MEDC to develop a corresponding outreach strategy.
- | Provide recommendations for tools to encourage the businesses and communities MEDC serves to adopt DEI best practices.
- | Develop recommendations of initial strategies for MEDC to invest in to achieve recommended strategic action steps.
- | Provide recommendations for MEDC to develop an official DEI Toolkit.

Methodology

The Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC) hired professional services firm, TPMA, in June 2023. TPMA collaborated with MEDC to develop the following methodology to achieve MEDC's organizational goals related to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion:

- **Environmental scan and best practice review.** TPMA researchers vetted an initial list that most closely matched the current MEDC DEI landscape profile. TPMA reviewed preliminary data with MEDC leadership to examine and consider existing relationships, historical context, and programs relevant to research.
- **Internal audit and assessment.** TPMA examined both externally and internally, considering how MEDC represents DEI principles and equitable outcomes for clients and partners, as well as how effective MEDC has achieved these standards in its own ranks.
- **Stakeholder engagement, focus groups, and one-on-one interviews with internal and external stakeholders.** TPMA convened numerous internal and external focus groups of MEDC partners to establish ownership, participation, and accountability in the DEI principles and strategies to be developed.
- **Development of a DEI toolkit.** TPMA developed a toolkit that can be used to assess, institute, and measure the progress of DEI principles. The toolkit focuses on how principles can be implemented in all aspects of economic development, including hiring and procurement practices. The DEI toolkit includes higher-level guidance on overall policy development and implementation strategy. This will be designed for MEDC and its constituent ecosystem to utilize and support the collective adoption of DEI principles across the state.
- **Development of a DEI Strategic Action Plan Recommendations.** This report includes key findings from data collection, best practices review, key partners outreach, as well as recommendations for incorporating DEI principles & practices into the MEDC's future hiring, operations, services delivery, and training (and how, more generally, these same principles can be adopted and applied externally). The report will be a roadmap to guide this important work in alignment with the Strategic Plan's vision, making Michigan's economy the nation's fastest-growing, most equitable, and most resilient, by helping achieve "Top 10" status for equitable job growth and becoming the top-ranked EDO.



Environmental Scan and Best Practice Review

Introduction

Equitable economic development provides a pathway to enhanced wealth, better jobs, and quality of life. Traditional economic development practices sometimes overlook populations that only sometimes benefit from communal assets. Economic Development Organizations (EDOs) must work diligently with community partners, government entities, and other stakeholders to identify the best tools and strategies to support the community’s Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion goals. By incorporating “best practices,” organizations can address opportunities to improve economic disparities across the state and to leverage underrepresented communities in economic development strategies.

Based on the research collected for this study, equitable economic practices generally fall within six domains (three internal domains and three external domains):

Internal Practice Domains

- 1) DEI Organizational Commitment: The organization’s outward commitment to incorporating DEI internally and externally.
- 2) DEI Leadership Coaching for Employees & Volunteers: The organization’s commitment to providing DEI training for its employees and volunteers.
- 3) Internal DEI Alignment: The organization’s internal evaluation of how it is implementing its DEI goals and strategies.

External Practice Domains

- 1) Intentional Outreach & Partnership Building: The organization’s ability to build holistic development with organizational alliances.
- 2) Equitable Programs & Services: The organization’s implementation methods to provide equity-based programs and services.
- 3) External DEI Alignment: The organization’s external evaluation of how it implements DEI goals and strategies.

EDOs across the country face the challenge of balancing economic impact and growing their internal economic development DEI competencies due to the ever-changing global business climate, emerging industries, workforce needs, limited community resources, and other social and political complexities. However, EDOs proactively facing these challenges see success in their community’s prosperity compared to EDOs that take a less proactive approach.

The following section outlines common best practices, key indicators, and community examples of EDOs that have revolutionized their own practices, policies, and programs to become more equitable in the face of tomorrow’s most pressing economic challenges and future economic priorities.



Internal Best Practice Domains

DEI Organizational Commitment

A DEI commitment or written statement is a priority when developing DEI strategies. A DEI statement is the beginning stage of inclusivity; it is not meant to be a standalone commitment. Coupled with the other outlined strategies, a DEI statement provides a pathway to acknowledging DEI both internally and externally and aligning DEI goals and strategies.

Best Practice	What Does It Mean	Key Indicators
A) WRITTEN DEI STATEMENT OR COMMITMENT OF THE ORGANIZATION.	Does the organization commit to incorporating DEI into internal and external practices?	I. Creation and distribution of DEI statement to guide all organizational DEI vision, goals, and actions.
B) THE IDENTITY OF AN ORGANIZATION'S COLLECTIVE PERSPECTIVE, VALUES, AND CULTURE.	Has the organization identified its values and culture?	I. Identify the most relevant opportunities for change, then select 2-3 strategic actions to drive the desired results. This could be in the form of an internal survey, including identifying the demographic makeup.
C) DEDICATED STAFF TO DEPLOY DEI INITIATIVES.	Does the organization have a dedicated staff to implement and monitor DEI goals and strategies?	I. Create DEI recruitment strategies and discover ways the recruitment/interviewing process creates barriers for certain populations. II. Establish Employee Resource Groups (ERGs)/ Affinity groups. These groups are formal and informal employee-led groups that aim to foster a sense of belonging and contribute to a more inclusive company culture.

FURTHER READING

The Five Elements of a Meaningful Statement on Racial Justice, International Economic Development Council



DEI Leadership Coaching for Employees & Volunteers

As organizations embed DEI into practice, it is just as important to embed DEI into internal values and leadership practices. Aligning internal efforts will help support equitable programs and services MEDC aspires to accomplish.

Those in leadership positions must be committed to expanding awareness of equitable practices in their roles and among other staff. Executive leaders must emphasize an internal culture where DEI is prioritized. By doing so, these practices could increase staff acceptance and application of DEI across departments within the organization. The DEI commitment should include other stakeholders, partners, and volunteers.

Best Practice	What Does It Mean	Key Indicators
<p>A) VISIBLE EXECUTIVE SUPPORT OF DEI INITIATIVES.</p>	<p>Does the organization’s leadership understand the DEI goals and vision, and do they actively practice and encourage staff to engage with DEI priorities?</p>	<p>I. Transition to a strong, sustainable, and systemic approach to change in organizational culture, specifically designed to support your business strategy, and assess against the baseline to measure progress.</p>
<p>B) PROVIDED DEI-BASED TRAINING FOR EMPLOYEES AND VOLUNTEERS.</p>	<p>Does the organization provide periodic DEI training for all staff and volunteers?</p>	<p>I. Implement safe mechanisms to report DEI incidents. II. Provide training to enhance understanding of equity across organizational practice areas.</p>

FURTHER READING:

How To Deploy Training Effectively to Improve Diversity and Inclusion ([forbes.com](https://www.forbes.com))



Internal DEI Alignment

Although some EDOs aspire to demonstrate DEI principles and practice, many do not set DEI performance metrics. Establishing a baseline to build upon can measure the impact of DEI internally and through its programs for its employees and volunteers. The organization must be conscientious about DEI goal accomplishments and setbacks and how those are communicated to its stakeholders. This allows organizations to be a national leader in setting DEI standards and serve as an advocate for the business community.

Best Practice	What Does It mean	Key Indicators
<p>A) ESTABLISHED DEI PERFORMANCE BASELINE FOR THE ORGANIZATION.</p>	<p>Has the organization defined key performance indicators for DEI strategies?</p>	<p>I. Defined and established organizational DEI goals and strategies. II. Share trends in performance metrics with all employees.</p>
<p>B) DEVELOPED DEI METRICS DASHBOARD.</p>	<p>How is the organization monitoring its DEI goals and strategies?</p>	<p>I. Develop and implement systems for collecting disaggregated demographic data for the board and staff. II. Analyze disaggregated demographic data and share results with organizational stakeholders. III. Use disaggregated demographic data to inform DEI planning and decision-making.</p>

FURTHER READING:

Sample Equity Strategies, Meyer Memorial Trust



External Practice Domains

Intentional Outreach & Partnership Building

Although with the right intentions, many EDOs miss the mark when working with their partners and allies on community outreach. Organizations need to take the time to learn about the people, businesses, neighborhoods, partner organizations, and events that they serve. Understanding what drives the targeted community and how the past has shaped reality is critical for providing essential services.

For the organization’s community outreach to be effective, the organization needs to work with community-led organizations that impact the holistic development of a community. Additionally, the organization must think “outside the box” and not rely on traditional methods to collect information. Instead, the organization should employ tactics unique to each community and utilize “multicultural brokers” to assist with relationship-building within underrepresented communities.

Best Practice	What Does It Mean	Key Indicators
<p>A) INCLUSIVE ADVOCACY AND KNOWLEDGE DISTRIBUTION PRACTICES.</p>	<p>How inclusive is the organizational knowledge distribution to its constituents, partners, and service users?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I. Actively work with community-led organizations that impact holistic development. II. Engaging in non-traditional community forums. III. Employ representative staff from served communities who can act as “multicultural brokers.”
<p>B) INCLUSIVE REAL ESTATE PRACTICES.</p>	<p>How is the organization building or improving equity in real estate practices, including incentivizing development in areas with people of color, assisting with home-ownership programs, and inclusive redevelopment?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I. Advocating for property ownership. II. Advocating for land reclamation/ownership. III. Incorporating holistic redevelopment practices (financing, mixed-use planning). IV. Access to affordable housing units. V. Access to amenities, goods, & services (quality childcare, fresh food, internet access, health care, financial services, open spaces).

Best Practice	What Does It Mean	Key Indicators
<p>C) HOLISTIC NEIGHBORHOOD DEVELOPMENT AND PRESERVATION PRACTICES.</p>	<p>How is the organization building equity in neighborhood preservation practices?</p>	<p>I. Support community-based organizations. II. Address residential needs for amenities and services. III. Support home-ownership-assistance programs.</p>
<p>D) HOLISTIC TALENT DEVELOPMENT AND OPPORTUNITY PRACTICES.</p>	<p>Does the organization have an intentional focus on cultivating talent within underserved communities?</p>	<p>I. Assess the quality and quantity of workforce partnerships. II. Assess the presence of coordinating partners. III. Assess public awareness of programs, services, and employment opportunities. IV. Assess the availability and outcomes of support to counter barriers to employment.</p>

FURTHER READING:

Building an equitable community engagement practice, City of Philadelphia.



Equitable Programs & Services

Organizations must embed the DEI goals and strategies into the programs and services that target underserved business communities. Establishing evaluation and monitoring metrics of DEI efforts helps evaluate the impact of DEI goals and strategies. Additionally, it is important to evaluate the accessibility of programs and services the EDO offers and where those efforts are lacking for the underserved business community.

Best Practice	What Does It Mean	Key Indicators
<p>A) ACCESSIBILITY TO SERVICES AND PROGRAMS.</p>	<p>Are the programs and services the organization accessible or promoted within underserved communities?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I. Outreach to businesses in underserved communities. II. Translated programs and services content. III. Outreach outside of typical office hours and commercial areas. IV. Partner with affinity groups or networks of small business owners the organization can connect with to reach unserved businesses.
<p>B) INCORPORATION OF ECONOMIC RESILIENCY AND ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE.</p>	<p>Does the organization incorporate economic resiliency and environmental justice lenses within its programs and services?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> I. Build organizational capacity for economic recovery by developing and establishing pre- and post-disaster roles of the EDO. II. Build local economic resiliency by developing business continuity mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery strategies with local stakeholders. III. Develop capital and technical assistance strategies for small business post-disaster. IV. Develop a resource allocation plan for post-disaster recovery. V. Establish information networks among the various stakeholders in the community to encourage active and regular communications between the public, private, education, and non-profit sectors to collaborate on existing and potential future challenges. VI. Develop a community-based Recovery and Resiliency Plan. VII. Provide training on business continuity planning for local businesses.

Best Practice	What Does It Mean	Key Indicators
<p>C) EQUITABLE MARKETING & ATTRACTION STRATEGY.</p>	<p>Does the organizational strategy incorporate DEI lenses when promoting business attraction and marketing?</p>	<p>I. Integrating DEI commitment into marketing strategy. II. Highlight Opportunity Zones. III. Develop & promote equity-based incentives. IV. Sharing stories that accurately reflect the people and businesses in the community.</p>
<p>D) HOLISTIC SMALL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT & ENTREPRENEURSHIP PRACTICES.</p>	<p>Does the organization focus on supporting and developing small businesses within underserved communities?</p>	<p>I. Provided succession planning for underserved business communities. II. Targeted technical assistance. III. Strong collaboration between anchor institutions & small business assistance providers.</p>
<p>E) ACCESS GAPS IN ACCESS TO CAPITAL/ ALTERNATIVE FUNDING.</p>	<p>Does the organization provide alternative funding for its emerging businesses?</p>	<p>I. Established alternative funding programs.</p>

FURTHER READING:

Economic Development Recovery and Resiliency Playbook, California Association for Local Economic Development



External DEI Alignment

External partners must be well-communicated outside the organization to support organizational DEI goals. Additionally, organizations should consider how accomplishments and setbacks are communicated to external stakeholders. Having an aligned DEI vision will help create “buy-in” with stakeholders and enhance the organization’s goals.

Best Practice	What Does It mean	Key Indicators
A) ESTABLISHED DEI PERFORMANCE BASELINE.	Has the organization defined key performance indicators for DEI strategies?	I. Defined and established DEI goals and strategies.
B) DEVELOPED DEI METRICS DASHBOARD.	How is the organization monitoring its DEI goals and strategies?	I. Develop and implement systems for collecting disaggregated demographic data to track the progress of goals. II. Use disaggregated demographic data to inform and modify DEI planning and decision-making.

FURTHER READING:

Indicators for an Inclusive Regional Economy, The Center for Economic Inclusion



Partner Engagement Analysis

This section contains an overall summary of the partner focus group responses conducted throughout this project.

In February 2024, TPMA conducted two external focus groups to learn and understand diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) initiatives and implementation efforts across the MEDC Collaborative Development Council (CDC) and MEDC DEI-based partners. This report outlines the summary of questions asked by TPMA facilitators, emerging themes, and responses.

Level Setting

Before participants were asked targeted questions, TPMA facilitators encouraged them to freely share their thoughts and opinions and started each session with “level-setting” questions below.

1. Define DEI in the context of your work.
2. How engaged or committed are you and your regional partners to DEI and DEI practices?
3. Barriers and Challenges (including accessibility, constitutional constraints, missing pieces in programs, populations).
4. How does your organization or partners address these barriers or challenges?
5. How does political climate (local, state, federal) impact DEI strategies?
6. What should be a top priority in advancing DEI within your network?



Key Questions

Key questions were more targeted questions for participants to engage in. TPMA facilitators were able to obtain feedback and dive deeper into participants' responses, as needed. Both focus groups were asked similar questions but are differentiated below.

MEDC CDC Specific Partner Questions

1. How can MEDC improve DEI Efforts for MEDC partners (including policy changes, communications, and constitutional constraints)?
2. How could MEDC support CDC DEI efforts and initiatives?
3. How can MEDC support your clients in DEI initiatives?
4. What should be a top priority for MEDC in advancing DEI across Michigan?

MEDC DEI Partner Questions

1. How could MEDC support Partner DEI efforts and initiatives?
2. How can MEDC support your clients in DEI initiatives?
3. What should be a top priority for MEDC in advancing DEI across Michigan?
4. Would your organization be interested in serving on an MEDC external DEI advisory board?

Partner Focus Group Emerging Themes

Over twenty MEDC partners participated in one of two focus groups to provide insight into the partner network. Partners identified existing strengths and areas of improvement in DEI within the MEDC network. The discussions included feedback on barriers, challenges, impact, priorities, and the future vision of DEI with MEDC partners.

Trends were identified from aggregated responses to the questions outlined in the previous section. The table below summarizes emerging themes and trends.

Emerging Theme	Trends in Responses
TARGETED TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support the implementation of DEI strategies locally and organizationally. • The need for continued DEI-based education and training opportunities. • Strategies to identify and address barriers to sustainable and equitable business development. • How to address and alleviate DEI “pushback” in political, communal, and business settings.
BUSINESS ADVOCACY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How to support immigrant inclusion and talent retention. • The need for DEI-based policy at the state level. • The need for DEI commitment to obtain MEDC-based funding and incentives.
ALTERNATIVE FUNDING SOURCES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The need for DEI implementation funding for community-based organizations. • How to identify and address alternative funding needs for traditionally underserved, diverse businesses.
COLLABORATION BETWEEN MEDC PARTNERS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The need to create a unified DEI vision with partners. • The need to implement a DEI plan with performance metrics.



Targeted Technical Assistance

SUPPORT THE IMPLEMENTATION OF DEI STRATEGIES LOCALLY AND ORGANIZATIONALLY.

Many participants voiced the concern of not having a clear idea of DEI and how that plays into their organization, roles, and community. Without context or understanding of how DEI shapes community outcomes, programs, and services, participants traditionally shy away from acknowledging or implementing DEI-based efforts.

THE NEED FOR CONTINUED DEI-BASED EDUCATION AND TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES.

In addition to implementing DEI strategies locally and organizationally, participants also agreed that continued DEI-based education and training opportunities are needed for MEDC partners and stakeholders. Many participants, for example, recognized that Michigan legislation creates challenges for many entities to understand and navigate appropriate DEI implementation efforts. The lack of knowledge discourages participants from prioritizing DEI-based strategies.

STRATEGIES TO IDENTIFY AND ADDRESS BARRIERS TO SUSTAINABLE AND EQUITABLE BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT.

Participants shared concerns about their perspective communities and clients regarding how they support or address barriers for traditionally underserved businesses. Many participants felt MEDC could implement or improve their technical support efforts by creating opportunities to identify and address barriers for underserved businesses across Michigan.

HOW TO ADDRESS AND ALLEVIATE DEI "PUSHBACK" IN POLITICAL, COMMUNAL, AND BUSINESS SETTINGS.

Participants strongly indicated that political, communal, or business pushback is challenging when implementing DEI-based strategies into their perspective roles and organizations. Participants recommended that MEDC identify strategies, tactics, or best practices to support resilient DEI strategies amid pushback from stakeholders.

Business Advocacy

HOW TO SUPPORT IMMIGRANT INCLUSION AND TALENT RETENTION.

MEDC partners prioritize immigrant support and inclusion. Many focus on how to support, retain, and train the immigrant workforce across Michigan. Many participants expressed the need to advocate for immigrant population workforce retention on a state level.

THE NEED FOR DEI-BASED POLICY AT THE STATE LEVEL.

Like the suggested targeted assistance need, participants agreed to have a concise, unilaterally accepted DEI policy within state-based organizations. A clear, defined DEI policy would allow local organizations and communities to have clear guidance on navigating the DEI space in their respective roles.

THE NEED FOR DEI COMMITMENT TO OBTAIN MEDC-BASED FUNDING AND INCENTIVES.

To gain commitment from communities and prospective businesses, participants suggested that MEDC include a DEI commitment to obtain MEDC-based funding or incentives. Doing so would ensure communities, organizations, and prospective businesses are fully committed to improving DEI locally. However, other views from participants suggested this recommendation may be difficult to implement for communities that traditionally struggle with DEI acceptance and implementation.

Alternative Funding Sources

THE NEED FOR A MORE COORDINATED NETWORK OF MISSION-BASED LENDING.

Participants suggested funding is one of the biggest challenges to serving their constituents when addressing DEI barriers. Although many participating organizations target traditionally underserved businesses, many do not have the funding to implement DEI-based resources like hiring a Chief Diversity Officer or supplementing the cost of DEI-based employee and volunteer training.

Further Reading

[Do You Know Why Your Company Needs a Chief Diversity Officer? \(hbr.org\)](https://hbr.org)

HOW TO IDENTIFY AND ADDRESS ALTERNATIVE FUNDING NEEDS FOR TRADITIONALLY UNDERSERVED, DIVERSE BUSINESSES.

Like the need for DEI implementation funding for partners, participants suggested their customers also have a similar challenge of accessing alternative funding to grow local businesses. Participants voiced their concern for the continual challenge of providing alternative funding sources for traditionally underserved businesses. Participants recommended that MEDC identify and address how underserved businesses can access alternative funding to grow and sustain locally owned diverse businesses.

Collaboration Between MEDC Partners

THE NEED TO CREATE A UNIFIED DEI VISION WITH PARTNERS.

Participants were concerned that without a unified DEI vision, MEDC would struggle to implement clear and concise DEI strategies internally and externally. Participants recommended that MEDC work with its DEI-based partners to create such a vision. Additionally, participants were overwhelmingly supportive of establishing an external DEI advisory committee to support MEDC further.

THE NEED TO IMPLEMENT A DEI PLAN WITH PERFORMANCE METRICS.

Partners suggested that MEDC create performance metrics to maintain momentum and transparency in implementing set strategies. Doing so would allow MEDC to provide a transparent view of how well it implements strategies and whether they need to be modified.



Strategic Recommendations

MEDC External Recommendations

Take intentional steps to make MEDC DEI’s vision, goals, and priorities more visible and accessible.

- ▮ Develop and promote a clear DEI vision and goals for MEDC.
- ▮ Create internal structures to support DEI strategies that withstand state-based political shifts and priorities.
- ▮ Create an external-facing dashboard to provide data on key indicators for stakeholders to monitor progress on DEI-related goals and metrics. Metrics may include the following:

ECONOMIC GROWTH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employment/Unemployment Rate • Poverty Rate • Occupational Average Wages • Living Wages • Median household Income • Gross Domestic Product (GDP) • Annual Job Growth • Wage Gaps (Gender, Race, Ethnicity) • Total Population 	HOUSING	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rent-Burdened Households • Homeownership Rate • Home Loan Mortgage Denial • Vacant Housing Units • Eviction Filing Rate • Individual Experiencing Homelessness • Median Home Purchase Price • Annual Change in Median Apartment Rent
BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Available Venture Capital • Business Ownership (Gender, Race, Ethnicity) • Loans to Businesses Under \$1M in Revenue • New Business Establishments (Gender, Race, Ethnicity) • Establishments Surviving 5 Years • Percent of households that earn income from financial assets (interest, dividends, rental income, etc) 	PUBLIC HEALTH & SAFETY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Population that is Obese • Number of Violent Crimes Committed (Per 100k Residents) • Life Expectancy (Gender, Race, Ethnicity) • Infant Mortality Rate • Perception of Neighborhood Safety • Unmet Need for Mental Health Treatment Rate • Access to Emergency Services • Reliance on State Benefits for Childcare (Gender, Race, Ethnicity)
TALENT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Net Migration of 25-34 Year Olds • Females Aged 16-64 Year Olds Working • Foreign-Born Population Working (Aged 16-64) • Employment Discrimination 	TRANSPORTATION & INFRASTRUCTURE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Population That Has Access to Advertised Broadband Speeds of 1gb or Higher • Population Living Within 30 Minutes Of 100,000 Jobs by Transit or Walking • Population With Commutes Less Than 30 Minutes • Neighborhood Walkability Score
EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Population 25+ with Associate’s Degree or Higher • Population 25+ with Bachelor’s Degree or Higher • High School Graduation Rate • Preschool Enrollment • Quality of Public Schools 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▮ Increase transparency for DEI-related metrics by integrating them into the organizational strategic plan and the MEDC scorecard. ▮ Increase accessibility (including language translation) to MEDC content, affiliated websites, and programmatic marketing materials. 	

Develop a holistic approach to business advocacy to promote all Michigan businesses and communities.

- | To improve utilization, conduct targeted marketing and promotion campaigns about MEDC programming, resources, and technical service provision to designated Opportunity Zone and Qualified Disadvantaged census tracts across Michigan.
- | Develop success stories, case studies, and storytelling campaigns featuring businesses and owners from diverse backgrounds.
- | Promote diverse business ownership through a minority-owned business directory through the MEDC website.
- | Work with appropriate businesses to create strategies to increase supplier diversification across the state.
- | Collaborate with partners to create local networking groups for diverse businesses to connect with regional MEDC business units, specifically addressing procurement spending to “GDB Businesses” and monitoring census tracts.
- | Collaborate with partners to develop diverse talent retention strategies for non-US citizen students, especially in the mobility industry.
- | Encourage DEI commitment from MEDC partners that demonstrate equitable economic development.
- | Identify and address alternative funding needs for traditionally underserved, diverse businesses.
- | Continue to collaborate with the Michigan CDFI Network to ensure equitable funding opportunities are available across Michigan.
- | Develop and apply equity framework to evaluate funding applications & allocation of resources, especially for the Business Development, Community Revitalization, and Community Development programs.

Increase collaboration, DEI alignment, and training opportunities with MEDC partners.

- | Create an external DEI advisory board with relevant partners to publish a DEI glossary of terms and how to create “buy-in” from Michigan communities and businesses.
- | Create a directory with relevant DEI partners and their resources across Michigan to make business services and programs more accessible.
- | Hold regular forums, trainings, and discussions regarding DEI and how it impacts service provision across MEDC.
- | Develop a ‘train the trainer’ model to help external economic development stakeholders better understand the importance and economic value of incorporating DEI principles into their regional service.
- | Host regular and consistent training on equitable economic development, and DEI implementation.
- | Consider how MEDC and affiliated regional partners can celebrate Heritage Month and other cultural celebrations through an economic development lens.

MEDC Toolkit Outline

A toolkit outline was developed to guide MEDC, MEDC Members, and other Michigan-based organizations to incorporate DEI in economic development practices.

See the toolkit on the following pages.





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DEI Toolkit Outline



INTRODUCTION

Executive Summary

MEDC Story & DEI Journey

- | MEDC DEI Statement
- | Strategic Priorities/Framework
 - Plan
 - MEDC Data/Scorecard to Support Priorities
- | MEDC Past & Journey
 - How MEDC Started the Journey
 - » Historical context of Michigan, MEDC, timeline
 - » Equitable Economic Development & the Michigan Constitution
 - Mission
 - Vision
 - Values
 - Implementation Partners
- | Concepts & Definitions
 - Foundation/Model-Foundation or model for state-wide approach (alignment of goals and change).
 - Concepts- Specific concepts users need to know for additional context.
 - » DEI, what is it?
 - » Forms of Racism
 - » Targeted vs Universal Strategies
 - » How MEDC refers to groups of people we serve
 - Glossary of Terms – Common language for shared understanding.
- | Internal MEDC Initiatives
 - Links to necessary supporting documents



About the Toolkit

- | Background
 - Why the toolkit is necessary?
 - Why focus on DEI?
 - Who should use the toolkit?
 - How the toolkit is structured
 - Goal of the toolkit



Stage 1: Exploration

The first step in DEI exploration is simply starting. It's important to recognize your knowledge, baseline, and biases to identify where you are in your DEI journey and continue to develop your skills to be applied independently, organizationally, and communally.

Not all journeys are the same, and they do not always start at the exploration stage. However, the resources outlined in the toolkit are tools, examples, and best practices to support journeys at each stage that apply to every person, organization, and community across Michigan.

Foundation of Exploring DEI

Exploring DEI independently and organizationally builds a foundation for understanding dimensions of DEI, including personal experiences and backgrounds, biases, inequalities, discrimination, and other considerations of diversity, equity, and inclusion. Understanding where we are individually and organizationally on the DEI journey helps create a vision and focus on meaningful goals to accomplish.

- I [Culture Self Assessment](#)¹
- I Organizational Culture Assessment (*recommended source needed)
- I [The Five Stages of DEI Maturity](#)²
- I [Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion](#)³
- I [Working Together for Racial Justice and Inclusion](#)⁴
- I Internal & External Domain Scorecard PDF

DEI Organizational Commitment

A DEI commitment or written statement is the organization's outward commitment to incorporating DEI internally and externally. It is the beginning stage of inclusivity; it is not meant to be a standalone commitment. A DEI statement and the other outlined strategies should provide MEDC with a pathway to acknowledging DEI internally and externally and aligning DEI goals and strategies.

- I [5 Ways to Take Action on DEI](#)⁵
- I [A DEI strategy framework for success](#)⁶
- I [The Five Elements of a Meaningful Statement on Racial Justice](#)⁷
- I [Equity Statement](#)⁸
- I [Sample Equity Strategies](#)⁹
- I [Investing in our own diversity, equity, and inclusion journey](#)¹⁰
- I [W.K Kellogg Foundation HR Toolkit for Racial Equity](#)¹¹
- I [Organizational Commitment – Inclusive Recovery Toolkit](#)¹²
- I [Brookings Inclusion and Diversity](#)¹³
- I [Inclusive Economic Development: Good for Growth and Good for Communities](#)¹⁴
- I [University of Michigan DEI 2.0 Strategic Plan](#)¹⁵



Stage II: Action and Integration

Organizational Based

CEO Action for Diversity & Inclusion

Those in leadership positions must be committed to expanding awareness of equitable practices in their roles and among other staff. Leaders must emphasize an internal culture where DEI is prioritized. By doing so, these practices could increase staff acceptance and application of DEI across departments within any organization.

- I [CEO Action for Diversity & Inclusion](#)¹⁶
- I [A Framework for Holistic Economic Development Framework](#)¹⁷
- I [Equity Framework](#)¹⁸
- I [Equity Policy](#)¹⁹
- I [Construction Business and Workforce Equity Policy](#)²⁰
- I [Incremental Awakening™ Framework](#)²¹

Diverse Talent Retention & Attraction

Talent retention strategies are critical to retaining the workforce, especially in the post-COVID business climate. Identifying gaps in talent retention and attraction strategies could bring awareness of how to make the hiring process more holistic and intentional.

- I [Global Epicenter of Mobility \(GEM\)](#)²²
- I [Talent Development Playbook](#)²³
- I [Your DEI recruitment strategy: What are your action items?](#)²⁴
- I [Talent Solutions](#)²⁵
- I [Aligning Talent Attraction, Retention & Promotion](#)²⁶
- I [Equity Metric #3: Access to Employment Opportunity](#)²⁷

DEI Training & Awareness for Employees, Board Members, and Volunteers

Aligning DEI training for employees, board members, or volunteers provides a consistent knowledge base for those involved in the organization. DEI training allows the business to own DEI, intentionally providing safe mechanisms to report DEI incidents.

- I [Do Your Employees Feel Safe Reporting Abuse and Discrimination?](#)²⁸
- I [5 Keys To Effective Incident Reporting & Tracking](#)²⁹
- I [How To Deploy Training Effectively To Improve Diversity And Inclusion](#)³⁰
- I [Michigan Department of Civil Rights training](#)³¹
- I [Business Diversity & Inclusion \(BDI\)](#)³²

Additional Resources for Businesses

- I [How People With Disabilities Help The Economy Grow And Thrive](#)³³
- I [Center for Economic Inclusion](#)³⁴
- I [Racial Equity Tools](#)³⁵
- I [Playbook for the Advancement of Women in the Economy](#)³⁶



Community-Based

Community Engagement

Organizations need to take the time to learn about the people, businesses, neighborhoods, partner organizations, and events that serve their community. Understanding what drives the targeted community and how the past has shaped reality is critical for providing essential services.

For the organization's community outreach to be effective, it needs to work with community-led organizations that impact the holistic development of the community. Organizations should employ tactics unique to the community and utilize "multicultural brokers" to assist with relationship-building with underrepresented communities.

- I [Racial Equity Toolkit](#)³⁷
- I [Equitable Community Planning Toolkit](#)³⁸
- I [Case study: Building an equitable community engagement practice](#)³⁹
- I [Advancing Racial & Health Equity & Shared Community Power](#)⁴⁰

DEI in Real Estate Development & Community Planning

Building DEI strategies in real estate development and community planning addresses how an organization creates or improves property ownership equity, incentivizes development in underserved communities, and assists with home ownership programs and inclusive redevelopment strategies. Additionally, this lens provides an opportunity to identify inefficiencies in access to amenities, goods, & services (quality childcare, fresh food, internet access, health care, financial services, and open spaces).

- I [How to Engage your Community in Housing Plans or Proposals](#)⁴¹
- I [Maximizing Affordable Housing Production Under Inclusionary Zoning](#)⁴²
- I [Pre-Development Grants Available to Community-Based Developers](#)⁴³
- I [Equitable Economic Development](#)⁴⁴



Holistic Neighborhood Development & Preservation

Holistic neighborhood development and preservation include both quality of place and people. These both identify assets of individuals and communities. Focusing on developing communities of people provides an opportunity to cater to the needs of the residents of a specific area while also preserving what matters most to residents and maintaining the culture of the community.

- I [Strategic Neighborhood Development](#)⁴⁵
- I [Freedom Walkway](#)⁴⁶
- I [Residents First: Effective, Efficient & Accessible Operations](#)⁴⁷
- I [The Digital Inclusion Startup Manual](#)⁴⁸
- I [Atlanta Beltline, Inc.](#)⁴⁹

Economic Resiliency & Environmental Justice

Economic resiliency and environmental justice practices address developing business continuity planning and identifying mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery strategies with local stakeholders and businesses.

- I [Spark](#)⁵⁰
- I [OneEastside Foundation and the Eastside Small Business Resiliency Fund](#)⁵¹
- I [Wake Forest Business & Industry Partnership](#)⁵²
- I [Economic Development Recovery and Resiliency Playbook](#)⁵³
- I [How states can empower local ownership for a just recovery](#)⁵⁴

Economic Development Organizations

Equitable Business Marketing & Attraction

Equitable business marketing and attraction strategies are commitments that integrate DEI into the overall organizational marketing strategy. This includes sharing stories that accurately reflect the people and businesses in the community or highlighting opportunity zones.

- I [Shop Philly Black- and Brown-Owned Businesses](#)⁵⁵
- I [Michigan Opportunity Zones](#)⁵⁶
- I [Maryland Opportunity Zone Enhancement Credits](#)⁵⁷

Small Business Development & Entrepreneurship

Small business development and entrepreneurship DEI address strategies that focus on underserved business communities. This could include developing targeted technical assistance programs, networking groups, or creating collaboration between anchor institutions & small business assistance providers.

- I [Business Diversity & Inclusion](#)⁵⁸
- I [The Black Economic Leadership League of Rock Hill](#)⁵⁹
- I [Prospera](#)⁶⁰
- I [Re/Cast, Advisors in Ownership Succession](#)⁶¹
- I [Tactical Guide: Inclusive Small Business Support](#)⁶²

Access to Capital and Alternative Funding for Diverse Business Owners

Access to capital is the number one concern of all small business owners and start-up businesses in the United States. Removing barriers for minority-owned firms to access capital provides an opportunity to develop and grow locally-owned Michigan businesses.

- I [CIE Spotlight: Boosting Minority-Owned Businesses in Jackson, MS Through Microlending](#)⁶³
- I [Neighborhood Business Works \(NBW\) Program: Opportunity Zone Microgrant Funding](#)⁶⁴
- I [Philadelphia Anchors for Growth and Equity](#)⁶⁵

Equitable Business Advocacy Services

Many economic development organizations' main priority is serving the local business community, ensuring businesses' views and concerns are represented and voiced. Reevaluating current business advocacy efforts could help identify which businesses are being overlooked and how to serve them best.

- I Targeted outreach to businesses in underserved communities. (*recommended source needed)
- I Translated programs & services content. (*recommended source needed)
- I Outreach outside of typical office hours and commercial areas. (*recommended source needed)
- I Partner with affinity groups or networks of small business owners the organization can connect with to reach unserved businesses. (*recommended source needed)
- I [Projects & Programs - Prosper Portland](#)⁶⁶

Additional Resources for Economic Development Organizations

- I [A Playbook for Equitable Economic Development](#)⁶⁷
- I [Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Toolkit](#)⁶⁸
- I [Toolkit - Inclusive Economy](#)⁶⁹
- I [New Orleans Business Alliance \(NOLABA\)](#)⁷⁰
- I [National Equity Atlas](#)⁷¹

Stage III: Performance and Evaluation

The third step in the DEI journey is applying performance metrics to actions taken to identify where actions are being met or need improvement. Because DEI is ever-evolving, it is essential to recognize that tools, resources, and best practices also evolve.

Performance & Evaluation Measures for Michigan Businesses

Businesses and organizations should set and evaluate DEI performance metrics to continue committing to the DEI journey. Setting measures guides how well the organization progresses through the DEI journey and whether adjustments must be made. Committing to performance metrics allows the organization to be transparent to its stakeholders and guides leadership on overarching organizational goals.

- I [The Business Case for Racial Equity](#)⁷²
- I [Regularly Monitoring, Using DE&I Data Is Key to Closing Organizational Gaps](#)⁷³
- I [Meaningful Metrics For Diversity and Inclusion](#)⁷⁴
- I [Building the perfect scorecard to achieve DE&I goals](#)⁷⁵

Performance & Evaluation Measures for Community and Economic Development Organizations

Although some EDOs aspire to demonstrate DEI principles, many still need to set DEI performance metrics. By establishing a baseline for the organization to build upon, the EDO can measure the impact of DEI internally and externally. The organization must be conscientious about DEI goal accomplishments and setbacks and how those are communicated to its stakeholders. This allows the EDO to be a communal leader in setting DEI standards and advocating for the business community.

The EDO must embed the DEI goals and strategies into offered programs and services to provide for the underserved business community. The EDO must establish an evaluation and monitoring lens for its DEI efforts to evaluate the impact of the DEI goals and strategies. Additionally, it is essential to assess the accessibility of programs and services the EDO offers and where those efforts are lacking for the underserved business community.

- I [Regional Indicators Dashboard](#)⁷⁶
- I [Economic Development Performance Measures](#)⁷⁷
- I [Indicators for an Inclusive Regional Economy](#)⁷⁸
- I [Prosper Portland Equity Framework](#)⁷⁹
- I [Advancing Cities](#)⁸⁰
- I [Regional Blueprint for Inclusive Growth](#)⁸¹
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