



CENTERING RACIAL JUSTICE IN PLANNING FOR URBAN FLOOD RESILIENCE

PRINCIPLE #2 | INSTITUTIONALIZE REPRESENTATION

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Representation is key to racial justice in urban flood resilience. Fair representation leads to greater likelihood that urban flood resilience plans and evaluations will be embraced by communities and produce racially equitable outcomes. Municipalities should consider whether racial groups are fairly represented in terms of workforce composition, advancement, retention, and hiring practices.

Putting this Principle into Action

Local governments and their planning departments can:

- Benchmark the racial and gender composition of their workforce against the composition of the community served
- Compare racial composition at each wage classification level to community racial proportions
- Conduct surveys or focus groups to assess workplace culture and climate
- Implement expansive inclusive hiring practices
- Commit to ongoing racial equity trainings, policies, and action plans
- Establish protocols to address incidents of racial bias

Example from the Great Lakes

The Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewerage District (MMSD) is a regional agency providing water reclamation and flood management services to the Greater Milwaukee Area. The District, as it is colloquially called, runs its Workforce and Business Development Resource Program (WBPD) to help create co-ownership and institutionalize representation of historically marginalized or underrepresented groups.

Through the Business Capacity Development workshop, the District offers one-on-one coaching and consulting services as well as networking opportunities to local small businesses owned by

veterans, minorities and women. The WBPD also includes an apprentice-readiness and workforce-planning workshop, which serves to recruit minorities and women for construction and workforce-planning roles and provide them with free training.

By increasing access to jobs and actively recruiting and supporting women and minority community members, MMSD has effectively integrated fair representation within its capital improvement and green infrastructure work.

USEFUL TOOLS AVAILABLE

The **Urban Sustainability Directors Network** has published a [fact sheet](#) providing guidance on centering equity in recruitment, hiring, and retention for sustainability departments, environmental organizations, and all others interested.

The **International City/County Management Association's** 2019 report, [Beyond Compliance](#), is a guide for cities on recruiting and retaining marginalized community members for positions in local government. The report presents case studies and methodology from four US cities that have succeeded in creating diverse and inclusive workforces.

The **Government Alliance on Race and Equity** has released an [issue brief](#) on the current status of racial equity in the public sector workforce barriers, and presents strategies for improvement.