



City of Duluth: Equity Action Team Strategic Planning QUALIFICATION PROPOSAL

Submitted by: UPD Consulting

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**APPENDIX A - PROPOSAL COVER SHEET
CITY OF DULUTH
RFP# 23-99265 RFP for Equity Action Team Strategic Planning**

Consultant Information:	
Entity/Individual Name	Urban Policy Development, LLC dba UPD Consulting
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UPD's Experience

UPD Consulting (“UPD”) is an equity implementation firm. Based in Baltimore, UPD is a Black-owned public sector management consulting firm that provides services to state and local agencies, colleges and universities, school districts, non-profits, and foundations that support public sector transformation. The 30-person firm has been in business for over 16 years and has successfully completed projects in 34 states and the District of Columbia. UPD is a certified Minority Business Enterprise in 15 states and several localities.

We provide a comprehensive array of services in the furtherance of antiracism, diversity, equity, and inclusion, with a focus on organizational transformation, change management, data use, and continuous improvement. We rely on our deep expertise in leadership, performance management, organizational design, and large-scale implementation to find and apply the right solutions for our clients.

One of the keys to our success is the fact that our people have senior and executive level experience working in large public agencies, not just as consultants, but also as managers and leaders inside those organizations. This hands-on experience informs our approach so that our work progresses beyond good theoretical ideas and actually translates into improved outcomes.

Our mission is to help public agencies improve the life outcomes of the people they are charged with serving. As an organization, we have been purposeful about our hiring, professional development, and advancement policies and practices to ensure our company reflects the communities in which we work, and we are proud of the level of diversity we have achieved at every level.

References

Since our formation in 2006, UPD’s service offerings have mirrored the organizational change management process: organizational assessment, strategic planning, action planning, implementation assistance, and ongoing continuous improvement. We also provide DEI support in training, professional development, and leadership coaching. Below we are providing three references from large-scale public agency DEI initiatives.

Project References

SUMMIT COUNTY, OHIO: EQUITY ASSESSMENT & STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT

October 2021–June 2022

Contract size: \$235,000

Following Summit County’s declaration of “Racism as a Public Health Crisis,” UPD was engaged by the County Administration to take an in-depth view through a DEI lens of all



employees in all agencies at all levels of compensation compared to the county as a whole. The analysis covered policy, practices, priorities, and initiatives especially as they relate to recruiting, hiring, training and professional development, turnover, advancement, tenure, and compensation. The assessment also covered operational budgets and procurement spending. UPD was retained by Summit County to provide guidance and facilitation in the development of strategic initiatives to improve the County's equity outcomes based on the DEI assessment.

Reference: Ms. Elizabeth Walters, At-Large Council Member and Co-Chair of the Special Review Committee on Racism as a Public Health Crisis, Summit County Council, 175 S Main St #200, Akron, OH 44308, elizabethmwalters@gmail.com, (330) 322-6361.

VANCOUVER PUBLIC SCHOOLS: EQUITY AUDIT

December 2020–May 2021

Contract size: \$219,000

UPD performed a comprehensive equity audit for Vancouver Public Schools, including data analysis, focus groups, surveys, and individual Intercultural Development Inventory assessments and coaching calls for 162 district administrators and staff.

Reference: Ms. Janell Ephraim, Chief Equity Officer, Vancouver Public Schools, 2901 Falk Rd, Vancouver, WA 98661, Janell.Ephraim@vansd.org, (360) 313-1017.

ILLINOIS BOARD OF HIGHER EDUCATION: EQUITY-FOCUSED STRATEGIC PLAN

September 2020–June 2021

Contract size: \$225,000

UPD was engaged by IBHE to provide technical assistance to a newly formed Advisory Council, conduct extensive stakeholder engagement throughout the state of Illinois, and facilitate the development of an equity-focused statewide strategic plan for higher education. That plan is intended to improve the State's performance compared to other states against equitable outcomes across all subgroups in higher education. (An online version of IBHE's strategic plan can be found [here](#).)

Reference: Ms. Ginger Ostro, Executive Director, Illinois Board of Higher Education, 1 N Old State Capitol Plaza, Suite 333, Springfield, IL 62701, ostro@ibhe.org, (217) 557-7300.

Organization/Consultant Qualifications

Mission Statement

At UPD we believe all of us have a responsibility to address the societal harm caused by institutional racism and the systemic oppression of marginalized communities. And all organizations can play a critical role in creating a more equitable and inclusive world while strengthening their own effectiveness, performance and competitive positioning in the market.



UPD Mission: We empower change leaders to achieve better, more equitable organizational outcomes for their employees, customers, and communities.

UPD Vision: Organizations placing racial equity at the center of their business create greater social and economic value and are best positioned to thrive.

Approach (Ability to Assess and Create Strategies)

Since its inception, UPD has been working with public sector agencies to address the underlying systems that impede equitable outcomes. In doing this work for over 16 years, we recognize that it is not just those things that are recorded and repeated that determine how a system impacts individuals and outcomes inequitably, but also those things not said—the customs and culture of an organization.

UPD’s Action-Oriented Equity Framework

There is a deliberately practical approach to our methodology. Our work focus is on identifying what needs to change and setting our clients up to effectively plan for and manage those changes. Our approach is rooted in our action-oriented equity framework, called Intrinsic Racial Equity (“IRE”). As shown below, the IRE assessment addresses four “Critical Areas” within an organization.

Critical Area	 <p>Talent Opportunity</p>	 <p>Inclusive Decision Making</p>	 <p>Culture & Belonging</p>	 <p>Business Practices</p>
IRE Assessment Focus	<p>The organization’s competencies at identifying and bringing in a diverse pool of talent, and purposefully managing their development and advancement.</p>	<p>The organization’s willingness and effectiveness at sharing power in ways that positively impact employee agency and equity.</p>	<p>The organization’s attention to and effectiveness at optimizing the organization’s cultural experience for a diverse and diversifying workforce.</p>	<p>The organization’s systems and processes for purposefully driving improved equitable outcomes.</p>

The Philosophy Behind UPD’s Approach

The focus on equity has intensified rapidly in recent years, and the work of restructuring systems and sharing power inherently requires new and different ways of working, which is



hard work for even the most equity-literate leaders. We understand that a major part of our job is helping your team grapple with the discomfort that might emerge over these types of changes so they can push through that discomfort and effectively manage the organizational changes necessary to improve outcomes.

Many organizations, and the consultants they hire, approach DEI work in the typical “study, plan, act” process. While we believe all three of those elements are necessary, our approach emphasizes getting to action as quickly as possible, because it is in the “act” phase where organizational change really occurs. How and why this happens has been borne out in countless implementation projects UPD has been a part of:

- Organizational DEI change is not a technical process. This work is adaptive, meaning we can't know in advance all of the variables that will affect success. Many of them will only emerge as we test the assumptions we've made. Rather than spending precious time up front trying to plan for every possible contingency, it is more effective to start the work and build short-cycle performance management processes around implementation that enable us to rapidly test and modify the action plan as we get smarter about what those variables are.
- *Knowing* what needs to change isn't the hardest part of the change process. That is reserved for actually *doing* the change. You can read all the books and articles about running ever written, but until you lace up your shoes and start running, you're not going to get good at it. Humans learn best by doing, and getting better at what we learn is best achieved by practice. Learning new habits, and unlearning old ones, requires action, and that is equally true for DEI implementation work as it is for running.
- Getting to the implementation work quickly demonstrates organizational and leadership commitment to change much better than spoken and written words can. The phrase “talk is cheap” is not just a cynical retort. It has been nearly three years since the social reckoning George Floyd's murder inspired, and that reckoning was long overdue when it arrived. Engaging in lengthy study, training, planning, and design processes—as valuable as those activities may seem—can engender frustration and discouragement if they are perceived as delaying action. Some activities (such as training) can happen concurrently with implementation work, and others (like planning and design) can happen much more quickly if focused on narrowly defined initiatives rather than on comprehensive organizational overhauls. By taking on *something* very quickly, organizations can buy the benefit of the doubt and the patience from their stakeholders on aspects of DEI change that will take longer.
- No matter how much preparation and planning you do, and no matter how much training, professional development, and coaching your staff members receive, very few of them are going to be good at DEI change management right out of the gate.



The development of the skills and competencies necessary to be effective at this work takes time and practice. Furthermore, what people actually need help learning about or struggling through might not become clear until they attempt to do something new or different. An early emphasis on training may give some a false sense of security about their own preparedness for what's ahead, and it could unfairly raise expectations about post-training organizational readiness. Alternatively, diving into the change management work more quickly while simultaneously communicating clearly and transparently that we're approaching implementation in "learning mode," with full expectation that we're not going to be good at it yet, can make it easier for people to push themselves through their early struggles while setting organizational expectations at a more reasonable level.

For all of these reasons, our approach to equity planning is to move quickly and deliberately through the planning process; prioritize work that the client has the will and capacity to tackle; and ensure the plan is useful as a management tool, not just as a communications document.

UPD's Change Management Methodology

UPD has over 16 years of experience working with public sector organizations to implement big changes. And we owe our success in this area to thoughtful and dogged application of change management principles. There are many scholars in the change management field, but UPD most subscribes to the work of Chip and Dan Heath, particularly their book *Switch: How to Change Things When Change is Hard*. Their framework is based on the simple thesis that for anything to change, people have to start acting differently. And to start acting differently, you have to change your situation. The management of the delicate balance between people and their environment throughout the change process is the focal point of our work.

In the Switch framework, change is made up of three parts—the rational mindset of the team undergoing the change, the emotional mindset, and the environment in which the change will occur. In order for change to take place (and hold), you must pay attention to all three components. And when you find impediments to change, examining your situation by focusing on imbalances in these three components can be immensely useful to identifying creative solutions to overcoming implementation barriers.

Attention to people's reasoning

Change requires planning and direction. What looks like resistance may be lack of clarity or direction.



Attention to people's emotions

Change requires energy and drive. When staff are slow to move, they may need greater inspiration to overcome the fatigue of change.

Establishing the environment for change

Sometimes what looks like a people problem may be a situation problem. A pathway needs to be illuminated if it is to be followed.

The practical application of this framework is evident in the design of our consulting work.

The Rational: Point to the Destination. UPD facilitates stakeholders to articulate and point to a clear horizon line, a roadmap or “north star.” UPD and the Parks Department leadership will work together to build a clear, concise, and compelling set of “destinations” for its staff to anchor around.

The Emotional: Grow Your People. Change is impossible without creating a positive emotional response to the rational appeal. Motivation and sustainability come from here, as do exhaustion and fatigue. Our methods help create an identity for staff around the change. This work fosters a growth mindset for the staff.

The Path: Build Habits. The ongoing work of change is less laborious for staff if new habits (based on the changes) can be built into existing routines. Building positive habits requires explicit and thoughtful planning and practice. The process of planning creates dedication in participants to the performance tasks to which they have committed, but they also need structure and support as they're developing the necessary skills for the new work.

Approaching equity planning with both a DEI framework and a change management process is critical to achieving better equitable outcomes. As difficult as DEI conversations can be, and as powerful as awareness and understanding can be for people involved in those conversations, *change*—and the work of planning and managing that change—does not come solely from enlightenment. And if we simply align on goals and objectives without also planning for the hard work of change management within the organization, success of the plan will be elusive.

Project Team

As detailed in our resumes, our team of consultants is itself very diverse, and each of the proposed team members has significant experience facilitating large and diverse groups through assessments, training, planning, and implementation activities as members of public sector DEI engagement teams. Brief bios of our lead consulting team are provided below.

**Ann Willemsen, Project Director**

Ann is a Director at UPD with expertise in strategic planning and performance management. She directs UPD's organizational transformation work, helping clients identify, navigate, and sustain large change initiatives in the public sector, and she developed UPD's strategic planning framework. She has directed equity strategy projects for San Diego County and the Illinois Board of Higher Education. Ann was also the lead designer of a school-centered housing model for the City of Baltimore. Prior to joining UPD, Ann worked for the City Administrator of the District of Columbia implementing strategic initiatives across agencies, and she led performance improvement projects for DC's Office of the State Superintendent of Education. She also worked for the US Department of Agriculture on their low-income nutrition programs. Ann holds a Master of Public Policy from the University of California at Berkeley and a BA in Economics from Oberlin College. Ann grew up in La Crosse, Wisconsin, and spent her young adult years in the Twin Cities.

Jenni Greene, Project Manager

Jenni has over 20 years' experience as an educator, school leader, and executive leader who has transformed organizations by strategically constructing and cultivating authentic partnerships at the organizational and individual level. Jenni is a member of the Lumbee Tribe in North Carolina enabling her to blend personal experience and professional expertise in her antiracism and DEI work. Currently, Jenni leads projects in UPD's DEI strategic planning and professional development content development and delivery teams. Jenni has specialized training and experience in adaptive leadership and change management, as well as in designing and facilitating professional learning. Her recent DEI clients have included the Queens Public Library, the Massachusetts Department of Education, and the Tulsa Public Schools. Jenni holds a BA in Education from the University of North Carolina at Pembroke and a Master of Science Curriculum and Instruction from Concordia University.

Adha Mengis, Senior Consultant

Adha is an experienced project manager and an expert in human-centered design. He has designed and implemented programming to support instructional coaches, teachers, and administrators, and he has facilitated several organizational strategic plans. Adha most recently worked with Boston Public Schools to reinvision their school funding formulas to be equitable. Prior to joining UPD, Adha was a Project Director for Digital Promise where he led equity-centered assessment, training, and program design. And prior to that, he was a Program Manager for IDEO where he led over 30 professional development workshops in Design Thinking. Adha was a Lecturer at the Goldman School of Public Policy at Berkeley where he taught an undergraduate course in Race, Ethnicity, and Public Policy. And he spent five years as a public-school teacher in Oakland, CA. Adha holds a BA in Political Economy from Georgetown University, and a Master of Public Policy from the Goldman School of Public Policy at UC Berkeley.

**Ian Brown, Senior Consultant**

Ian has experience creating and facilitating engaging and evidence-based workshops, courses and training toolkits that support organizations in bringing antiracism, equity, diversity, inclusion, and mental health literacy into their business and organizational culture. His projects include delivering hundreds of assemblies and training presentations to students, school communities, faculty, and administration in multiple school districts across North America. And he co-designed and co-facilitated antiracism and DEI professional development for a Massachusetts state agency. Ian also recently worked on a DEI assessment and plan for New York City's Queens Public Library, and a DEI action plan for San Diego County. He holds a master's in social justice education from Ontario Institute of Studies in Education, and a BA in Urban and Regional Planning from Ryerson University.



ANN WILLEMSEN

director

RELEVANT EXPERTISE:

- Change management practices
- Program design
- Data use/Metric development
- Performance management
- Strategic Planning
- Project Planning
- Antiracism, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (ADEI)
- Analytics & Data Use
- Economic Mobility
- Data storytelling

EDUCATION:

- Master of Public Policy, University of California at Berkeley, Goldman School of Public Policy, 2006
- Bachelor of Arts, Oberlin College, 2001
- Hansen Prize for Outstanding Achievement in Economics; Jerome Davis Grant for Economic Research, 2001

Ann directs UPD’s economic mobility and analytics service areas, helping public sector and foundation clients identify, navigate, and sustain large change initiatives. She also provides subject matter expertise on UPD’s city and county equity assessment and strategy projects. Her work centers on how we can better use data to improve people’s lives while focusing on the human-side of programmatic and organizational change.

Recent projects include the design of a [school-centered housing model](#) for the City of Baltimore, the creation of a [national set of data use cases](#) to support economic mobility, the creation of San Diego County’s Office of Equity and Racial Justice, a year-long [organization-wide transformation project](#) with the New Mexico Public Education Department’s IT division, and continuous improvement implementation for nine turnaround schools in Virginia. Ann is also the instructor of the University of California Berkeley’s online course Data Governance for Public Decision Making.

WORK EXPERIENCE:

UPD CONSULTING Baltimore, MD	Director 2012-Present
OFFICE OF THE STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF EDUCATION, DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA GOVERNMENT Washington, D.C.	Program Officer, Office of the Director 2010-2012
OFFICE OF THE CITY ADMINISTRATOR, DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA GOVERNMENT Washington, D.C.	Program Analyst 2008-2010
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE Washington, D.C.	Program Analyst, Office of Budget and Program Analysis 2006-2008
SAN FRANCISCO BOARD OF SUPERVISORS, OFFICE OF THE BUDGET ANALYST San Francisco, CA	Budget Analyst 2005
ZENON DANCE COMPANY AND SCHOOL Minneapolis, MN	Managing Director 2002-2004
AMERICAN COMPOSERS FORUM Saint Paul, MN	Executive Assistant 2001-2002



JENNI GREENE

senior consultant

RELEVANT EXPERTISE:

Successfully organized a multi-phase curriculum selection process across a wide array of stakeholders

Created a governance structure at the district level

Curriculum creation for high-quality instructional design, alignment to standards, and inclusive, diverse text sets

EDUCATION:

Bachelor of Arts in Education from her tribally-affiliated institution, the University of North Carolina at Pembroke,

Master of Science in Curriculum and Instruction from Concordia University (OR)

License in Educational Leadership, Superintendent & School Administration

Jenni leads UPD’s professional learning practice and leads several engagements with school districts and state education agencies. She brings over 20 years in educational leadership and focuses on anti-racism, diversity, equity and inclusion (ADEI) and how it intersects with curriculum and instruction, aligned people and processes, and the adult mindsets that are needed to make liberatory change scalable and sustainable. Jenni’s real-world experience leading in large school districts (including Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools, NC) give her the skills needed to help others design and lead with empathy and innovation. Clients have included Tulsa Public Schools (OK), districts in Florida including The School District of Palm Beach County, Miami-Dade County Public Schools, Pasco County Schools, other districts in Florida and throughout the nation. In addition, Jenni has recently partnered with Student Achievement Partners (SAP), the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF), and Impact Florida.

WORK EXPERIENCE:

UPD CONSULTING Baltimore, MD	2020-Present Senior Consultant
CHARLOTTE-MECKLENBURG SCHOOLS Charlotte, NC	2018-2020 Director, Secondary Curriculum
WAKE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS Raleigh, NC	2015-2018 Senior Administrator, High School ELA
WAKE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS Raleigh, NC	2010-2015 Literary Specialist, Foundational + Disciplinary Literacy
HOLLY SPRINGS HIGH SCHOOL Holly Springs, NC	1999-2010 High School English Educator and Leader
SOUTHEAST RALEIGH HIGH SCHOOL Raleigh, NC	
MIDWAY HIGH SCHOOL Dunn, NC	
CLAYTON HIGH SCHOOL Clayton, NC	



ADHA MENGIS

senior consultant

RELEVANT EXPERTISE:

- Equity-Centered Program Design
- Research & Development
- Training & Facilitation
- Design Thinking
- Workshop Design
- Support for Districts, Teachers, and Community-based Organizations
- Teaching
- Math Remediation Program Design
- Blended Learning

EDUCATION:

- Uc Berkeley - Goldman School of Public Policy, Master of Public Policy, 2018
- Georgetown University, Bachelor of Arts in Political Economy (Minor in African Studies), 2011

Adha is an experienced project manager and an expert in human-centered design. He has designed and implemented programming to support instructional coaches, teachers, and administrators, and he has facilitated several organizational strategic plans. Prior to joining UPD, Adha was a Project Director for Digital Promise where he led equity-centered assessment, training, and program design. And prior to that, he was a Program Manager for IDEO where he led over 30 professional development workshops in Design Thinking. And as a Lecturer at the Goldman School of Public Policy at Berkeley, he taught an undergraduate course in Race, Ethnicity, and Public Policy.

WORK EXPERIENCE:

UPD CONSULTING Baltimore, MD	Senior Consultant 2022-Present
DIGITAL PROMISE Remote	Project Director/Program Manager 2020-Present
IDEO/TEACHERS GUILD San Francisco	Program Manager 2018 - 2020
UC BERKELEY - GOLDMAN SCHOOL OF PUBLIC POLICY Berkeley, CA	Lecturer 2019
	Graduate Student Instructor 2017-2018
KIPP BAY AREA SCHOOLS Oakland, CA	Algebra 1 Teacher 2013-2016
ROOSEVELT MIDDLE SCHOOL Oakland, CA	Special Education Teacher 2011-2013



IAN BROWN

senior consultant

RELEVANT EXPERTISE:

- Advancing ADEI goals
- Education Data Use for Performance Management
- Aligning Technology Department with Business and Strategic Goals
- Change management
- Antiracism, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (ADEI)
- Analytics & Data Use
- Community & Stakeholder Engagement
- Professional Learning & Training

EDUCATION:

- Masters in Social Justice Education, Ontario Institute of Studies in Education, 2021
- GIS Certification, Oklahoma University, 2008
- Bachelors in Urban and Regional Planning, Ryerson University, 2008

Ian is experienced in the development and implementation of evidence-based, results-driven, community-informed, and transformative programs that are rooted in decolonial practices and aim to advance the goals of diversity, equity, and inclusion at a system level. His recent engagements as an educational consultant working with school districts across North America has focused on working with historically marginalized communities, navigating institutional resistance and leading equity and anti-oppression work. Ian also has experience in data governance, qualitative data collection and analysis, knowledge management, community-based consultations, program evaluation and research.

His past work has been on UPD’s internal project, Knowledge Management, which sought to create a seamless process and be the vehicle to coordinate and support the sharing of information, ideas and artifacts between UPD entities in support of our strategic business goals.

WORK EXPERIENCE:

UPD CONSULTING Baltimore, MD	Senior Consultant 2008–Present
EMERY SUMMIT DEVELOPMENT Newark, NJ	Planner/Designer 2007–2008
TOWN OF HALTON HILLS Georgetown, ON	Assistant Planner 2004–2006

VOLUNTEERING:

- Executive Board Member, Excellence Conference Toronto East, 2017
- Councilor Candidate Dr. Jennifer McKelvie (Ward 44), Campaign Volunteer, 2014
- Baltimore Mayoral Candidate Otis Rolley, Campaign Volunteer, 2010
- Baltimore Memorial, Youth Leader, 2009
- Lawrence Heights Community Revitalization Project, Community Liaison, 2006



Work Plan

Our proposed project plan encompasses a kick-off process and five additional delivery phases of the Scope of Services. **We anticipate completing our approach over the next 10 months.** A detailed description of each project phase is provided in what follows.

Phase 1: Project Kick-off Session (Weeks 1-2)

Prior to launching into the phased work, we will hold a project kick-off meeting with the project leads from the City. The UPD team will provide a draft detailed project plan along with a summary of our assumptions in advance of the kick-off meeting. The purpose of the kick-off meeting is to align on the target areas and processes for the equity plan, to collaborate on the proposed design of the engagement, and to identify any gaps or inconsistencies between our proposed project plan and the realities of the City's circumstances.

***Phase 1 Deliverables:** A flexible project plan that charts out the entirety of the engagement, and a check-in schedule for project team leads.*

Phase 2: Quantitative and Qualitative Analysis (Weeks 3-16)

UPD proposes the use of four methods during this phase of the work:

- A document review of relevant policy and other DEI documentation
- A quantitative analysis of key city data sets
- UPD's Intrinsic Racial Equity Survey tool
- A series of focus groups

We will start by reviewing existing policy and other documentation the City may have that is relevant to the City's DEI efforts. This review may include any past planning and DEI efforts, as well as connecting with the Duluth Police Department Racial Bias Audit.

Quantitative analysis of existing City data sets will focus primarily on human resource/human capital data, procurement data, and any previous engagement survey data available on DEI topics. We target these areas as they frequently deliver the most valuable and actionable insights during this phase of the process and are often tracked by municipalities. If the City wishes to explore other data analysis, we can discuss this as part of the project plan refinement in Phase 1.

UPD Consulting's Intrinsic Racial Equity ("IRE") Survey tool provides a broad first-level analysis of potential areas of concern throughout Duluth's departments and agencies. The staff perception survey provides a "heat map" on Talent Opportunity, Inclusive Decision Making, and Culture & Belonging which we will use to help prioritize areas of exploration for focus



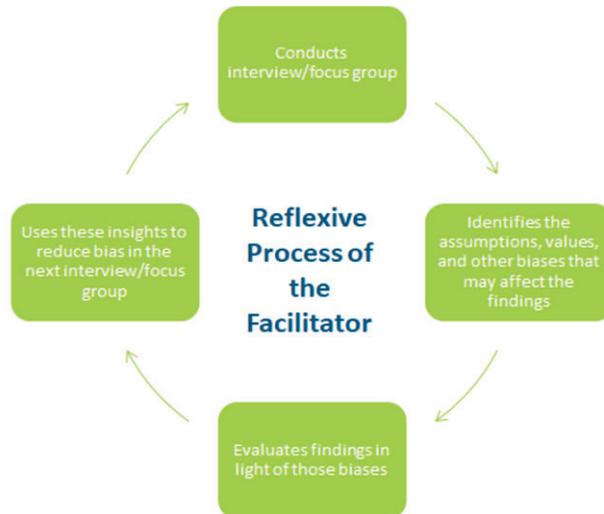
group questions and strategy setting work in the next phase of the project. The survey can be issued broadly, it takes less than 15 minutes to complete, and results can be provided down to the division or work group level. The IRE Survey provides a quick and effective way to increase organizational intelligence prior to making major and long-term investments in organizational reforms and equity activities.

After processing the results of the IRE Survey, the UPD Team will facilitate focus groups with key stakeholders to explore the strategic goals and the barriers to achieving them as they relate to Duluth’s equity outcomes. Through these focus groups we will gain granular input and feedback on the possibilities and limitations of specific equity actions in the various departments and divisions of Duluth City government.

During the focus groups we will:

- Obtain perceptions of the City’s culture and practices as they pertain to the organization’s readiness to implement strategic equity action plans
- Map out the opportunities and barriers to implementing strategic equity goals, gathering information on possible solutions to address barriers
- Obtain recommendations for prioritization of areas of focus

Our approach to qualitative data collection and analysis is intended to deliberately minimize facilitator bias in the findings and recommendations. We do not come into this work assuming that our training, backgrounds, and experience make us immune to bias and its effect on research and analysis. Practicing reflexivity, we will very purposefully examine our own beliefs, judgments, and methods throughout this project and use what we learn about our practices to improve them as we move forward.



While it is difficult to prescribe the composition of the focus groups in advance of the early analysis to be conducted as part of the engagement, we anticipate conducting approximately 15 separate focus group sessions that might include:

- Staff tenure cohorts (0-5 years, 6-10 years, over 10 years), grouped by division/department



- Groups of similar job classifications across division/department lines (to accommodate smaller divisions/departments)
- Priority position groupings (e.g., enforcement personnel, attorneys, recruiters, inspectors, case workers, procurement officials, etc.)
- Cohorts of Duluth residents and representatives of entities (i.e., small businesses, non-profits, local foundations, etc.) who have direct experience and interaction with certain outwardly-facing City programs and services

Throughout this phase, we will work with the Duluth Police Department to coordinate our efforts, and we will incorporate their findings into our work, as well as share our findings with their team.

Phase 2 Deliverables: *The UPD Team will develop a Report of Findings & Recommendations that includes our insights from the document review, our quantitative analysis findings, the heat map results of the IRE Survey, a summary of trends and themes identified in the focus groups, and recommended areas of focus for the planning work of Phase 3.*

Phase 3: Vision, Values & Priority Goals Setting (Weeks 17 - 20)

We have helped many organizations build strategies over the years. Each organization has its own context and has succeeded best when the approach is tailored to their specific needs. The important work is in creating something that is specific and realistic enough to be actionable, but ambitious enough to create meaningful change. We will continually ask these questions in the execution of the planning process:

- Are we reflecting the voices of our stakeholders?
- How is what we are proposing new or different from what Duluth has already done to ensure that meaningful change will occur?
- What specific action needs to happen to bring our ideas to fruition?

As preparation for this work, we will confer with the City to ensure that those involved in the planning work represent diverse organizational stakeholders. This might include representation from groups within the City not normally invited to the table for these types of conversations. Onboarding both named and emerging leaders to the process of working together will be at the forefront of the planning and implementation of the session. And this will be an opportunity to help shape the groups understanding of DEI before undertaking the vision, values, and priority goal setting work.

After we engage in some sessions to onboard the group to the work and DEI concepts, we suggest the vision, values, and goal setting be addressed first through an in-person, day-long retreat with the following exercises.

Vision Setting



We start strategy work by creating a “north star” for the team to navigate by. This helps the organization set an overarching direction and concisely answers the question: “What will the world (or our part of it) look like if we are successful?” This is the organization’s vision and it should anchor the goals and strategies in an understanding of the City’s influence and power. While the work group may refine the vision statement over the course of the process, it should serve as an alignment point for the entire team to ensure they continue to face in the same direction as the strategy and implementation work become more complex.

We plan to have participants start the vision statement creation process through an exercise which asks them to reflect on the data presented from the previous phases of the engagement. UPD will group anonymized stakeholder statements—culled from the focus groups—into categories. For each category, small groups of participants will create a summary statement to reflect the takeaways from the collection of ideas presented in that category. At the end of this exercise, the team will have spent significant time thinking through the words of their colleagues and other stakeholders and the analyses presented, helping the work group to internalize and make sense of those ideas. They will also have a collection of summary statements based on those ideas. This collection of statements will be used in several aspects of the vision and planning process.

With the statements in hand, the work group will next brainstorm a potential vision statement that both reflects the ideas in the summary statements and adheres to the City’s overall strategic objectives. UPD will put these written ideas in front of the full team, in groupings of like-minded concepts, and the participants will build upon and refine the ideas into a single, clear vision statement through a conversation facilitated by UPD.

Value Statements

We will turn our attention toward developing equity value statements for the City. These value statement conversations will start by reviewing the values reflected in other City documents, especially the Strategic Plan and the previous Equity Plan, in light of the newly created vision statement. UPD will facilitate a discussion around whether and how the current values align to the new statement. We will focus on both what will need to be added and what may need to be eliminated or altered to incorporate the current vision for the future.

Goal Identification

The work group will turn its attention to establishing high-level goals the Action Planning team will use to guide their work in the next phase of the project. The goals are meant to be anchors of the City’s DEI strategies. They articulate the high-level accomplishments the City seeks from its work, but more importantly they serve as a memorable set of priorities. We will facilitate the goal setting process to apply the principles of SMART (specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, and timebound).



The draft goal statements will be circulated to the City’s leadership team for review and approval before serving as the basis for the Action Plan and may require a second, shorter virtual session to finalize.

Phase 3 Deliverables: Finalized vision and mission statements and finalized value statements and priority equity goals.

Phase 4: Equity Action Planning (Weeks 21 - 32)

Once the City sets its equity priorities, there is still work that needs to take place in order to connect those priorities to the implementation work. An Action Plan provides the required, detailed information needed to make this connection, charting individual activities that must be completed to accomplish a strategy. In addition, it documents the timeline for completing activities, any metrics that aid in determining if the implementation activity is on track for completion with fidelity (where applicable), and an assignment of ownership for the work using the “RACI” concept. A RACI chart documents who is ultimately *Accountable* for the work, who is *Responsible* for doing the actual work, who should be *Consulted* for feedback as the work is being executed, and who should simply be *Informed* that the work is either in progress or complete (no input, only awareness). An example of how we might chart an action plan appears below:

Goal Identifier	Goal language							
Timeline				RACI				
Key Activity	Start Date	End Date	Metrics	Pat Answer	Angel Heart	Charlie Trotters	Frankie Beans	Jules Crown
Example Activity A	7/1	7/15	Percentage complete	C	A	R	R	
Example Activity B	7/3	7/20	Survey score		C	A/R		
Example Activity C	7/16	8/15	# of units	C	A/R	I		R

It is important to note that an action plan is not the same thing as a project plan. Action plans identify roles and responsibilities for key actions required to accomplish the strategy. However, it does not include the day-to-day tasks that each team member must complete. Action plans should be seen as living documents that are likely to change once implementation work begins. Nevertheless, the action plan team members should be aware of staff bandwidth, capabilities, competing deadlines, and available resources so that the resulting action plans are detailed enough that they can be used by Duluth to establish a routine performance management process to drive the implementation of the action plans over time. We will leverage the small teams from the goal setting phase for the Action



Planning sessions, but some adjustment to those teams may be necessary. Any such adjustments will be made in collaboration with the City.

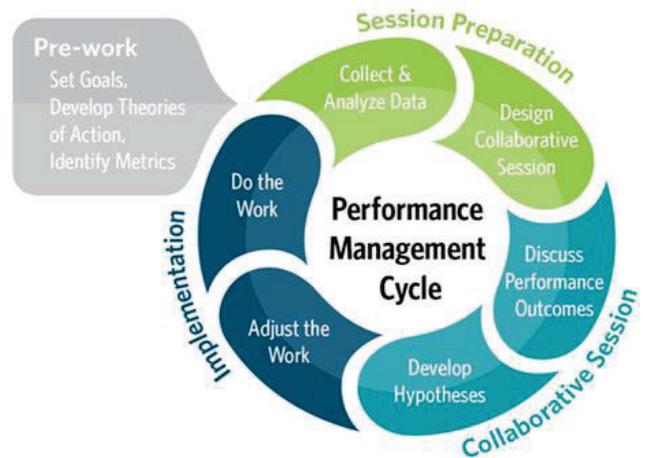
Over the course of three sessions, UPD will facilitate the development of action plan tables for each prioritized strategy of the Equity Plan.

Phase 4 Deliverables: *The UPD Team will produce a narrative Equity Action Plan that identifies Duluth’s vision, goals and priorities for the next three years, including RACI tables for each specified goal.*

Phase 5: Performance Management & Equity Metrics (Weeks 33 - 44)

The hardest aspect of any new work is change management—changing the behaviors and habits of professionals who may even want to change, but for whom that change is daunting. In order to pull off this significant culture change, we have to be able to answer one question: How do we alter our actions and routines so that the same resources, deployed and managed differently, produce dramatically better results?

Our approach to data-informed decision making goes beyond quarterly or annual check points. Structured, guided practice of new skills and methods, in the actual application of the work, is the quickest and most effective way to monitor progress and adjust action, and it will result in better outcomes for the City. The UPD team will develop a straw performance management process tailored to the City’s new equity plan. The process will identify priority strategies for inclusion in the initial performance management process, preferred participants, frequency of sessions, data sources for all necessary metrics, and any pre-process professional development necessary for success. In a meeting with the City’s leadership, we will present our straw process and facilitate a discussion around feasibility, timing, and resource needs for the model, modifying it as a group based on that discussion. UPD will incorporate the results of that discussion in a final written Report of Implementation Recommendations.



Phase 5 Deliverables: *A written Report of Implementation Recommendations that includes a proposed design structure and schedule for performance management of the City’s Equity Plan.*



Detailed Work Plan

Task #	Task	Hours	Timeline
Total		644	Weeks 1-24
1	Project Kick-off	53	Weeks 1-2
1.1	UPD team's due diligence	22	Week 1
1.2	Project Kick-off meeting	11	Week 2
1.3	Revise project plan	8	Week 2
1.4	Preparation and Logistics	12	Week 2
2	Quantitative and Qualitative Assessment	290	Weeks 3-16
2.1	Collect and review previous DEI work and other policy docs	44	Weeks 3-4
2.2	Quantitative data analysis (existing data sets)	34	Weeks 3-8
2.3	IRE Survey	76	Weeks 3-8
2.4	Facilitated focus groups (16 focus groups)	100	Weeks 8-13
2.5	Draft Findings & Recommendations report	28	Weeks 14-15
2.6	Review report with leadership team and revise, as necessary	8	Week 16
3	Vision, Goals & Priorities Setting	74	Weeks 17 -20
3.1	Visioning, value statement, and goal identification (virtual onboarding, and in-person retreat)	42	Weeks 17 - 18
3.2	Follow up virtual session to tweak and confirm vision, value, and goals	10	Week 19
3.3	Draft summary of vision, goals and priorities	14	Week 20
3.4	Review summary with leadership team and revise, as necessary	8	Week 20
4	Equity Action Plan	77	Weeks 21 - 32
4.1	Three facilitated action planning sessions	41	Weeks 21 - 30
4.2	Draft action plan document	26	Week 31
4.3	Review action plan with leadership team and revise, as necessary	10	Week 32
5	Performance Management & Equity Metrics	58	Weeks 33 - 44
5.1	Design straw PM process and metrics	36	Weeks 33 - 39
5.2	Review/revision sessions with leadership team	12	Weeks 38, 41
5.3	Draft report of implementation recommendations (incl. PowerPoint)	10	Weeks 42 - 44
7	Develop Findings and Recommendations Report	0	Weeks 18-24
7.1	Develop written report	0	Weeks 18-22
7.2	Develop slide deck	0	Weeks 21-22
7.3	Presentations (assumes up to 2-3 in person meetings during one trip)	0	Week 24
6	Project Management	92	Weeks 1 - 44
6.1	Client check-in meetings (assumes 1/2 hour weekly)	44	Weeks 1 - 44
6.2	General project management	48	Weeks 1 - 44